

Felicitations of Dr. Rattan Lal, World Food Prize 2020 Laureate

A virtual felicitations function was organized by ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science jointly with the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences – Bhopal Chapter and the Indian Society of Soil Science – Bhopal Chapter in the evening of 21st July in the honour of Indian-American Soil Scientist, Dr. Rattan Lal, the winner of the World Food Prize 2020. He played a major role in developing and mainstreaming a soil-centric approach to increasing food production that conserves natural resources and mitigates climate change. Three separate United Nations Climate Change Conferences have adopted his strategy of restoring soil health as a means to sequestering carbon and combat climate change.

The World Food Prize is the topmost international recognition in the field of food and agricultural sciences, recognizing the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world. **Considered as the Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture**, it was originally conceived by Norman E. Borlaug, the father of Green Revolution, with Dr. M.S. Swaminathan being the first recipient of this award in 1987.

Dr. Rattan Lal is currently the Distinguished University Professor at Ohio State University, Columbus, USA, is a soil scientist of world repute. In his lecture delivered on this occasion, Dr. Lal proposed for a rethink on soil degradation and mentioned that yield of several crops is low in India as compared to that in other countries due to serious soil health problems. Over-emphasis on input based agriculture rather than soil based one not only leads to low crop yield, but also several environmental problems and further soil health deterioration. He emphasised that the COVID-19 crisis necessitates implementation of the “One Health” strategy: health of soil, plants, animals, people, and environment is one and indivisible. He cautioned that one of the lessons learnt is that we can reduce emissions voluntarily by changing our values, lifestyle, and business as usual before Mother Nature does it for us.

The programme was Chaired by Dr. S.K. Chaudhari, DDG (NRM). Dr. Chaudhari while felicitating Dr. Rattan Lal highlighted his major achievements and their importance in attaining food and nutrition security and augmenting climate action as defined under Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. Earlier, Dr. AK Patra, Director, ICAR-IISS, in his welcome address highlighted various research achievements and future activities of the institute. Vice-Chancellors of State Agricultural Universities, viz. Dr. SK Rao, VC, RVSKVV, Gwalior; Dr. Ashok Dhawan, VC, VNMKV, Parbhani; Former Vice-Chancellors Dr. VS Tomar, Dr AK Singh (presently Secretary, NAAS); Dr. IP Abrol, former DDG (NRM); Directors and past Directors of several ICAR Institutes and scientists from across the country and from abroad

participated in the felicitation programme. About 300 researchers and education managers took part in the function.


