



Editorial

BEYOND THE HARVEST: FEEDING THE SOIL THAT FEEDS US

For decades, the success of Indian agriculture has been measured in terms of yield to achieve more income, greater food security. That focus served the nation well during a period when producing enough food was the most urgent priority. Today, agriculture is ready for its next chapter: one that looks beyond the crop of a single season to the soil that makes every season possible. Feeding the crop and feeding the soil, we now understand, are two related but distinct goals, and the most forward-looking farming attends to both.

Balanced fertilizer use, eco-friendly farming, and the integration of organic inputs are no longer confined to research papers; they have become part of everyday talk among farmers, scientists, and policymakers alike. At the heart of this shift is a simple but powerful idea: soil is a living system. A soil rich in organic matter holds water better, supports a wider community of beneficial microbes, and cushions crops against the shocks of erratic weather. The more we nourish these living properties the more generously our soils reward us.

Hence, the path ahead is one of steady, confident progress. Soil health is built patiently, season by season, by combining rigorous science with the practical wisdom farmers have gathered over generations. It is supported by policies that make sustainable choices as easy and affordable as any other. This is not a burden

to shoulder but an opportunity to seize, to farm in a way that grows both the harvest and the very resource that produces it.

This issue of HARIT DHARA carries that conversation forward through a rich set of perspectives. Recognising that rainfed regions is the strength of Indian farming, we examine their soil types and management practices best suited to them. We look at the tangible economic value of ecosystem services under conservation agriculture. Articles on role of soil biodiversity and on extremophile-derived exopolysaccharides open a window onto the living, microscopic engine beneath our feet. An article on microbial decomposer technology shows how crop residue can be transformed from a disposal challenge into a genuine source of soil wealth. Closer to the field, we explore the management of calcium and boron in cucumber, a reminder that balanced nutrition extends to all required nutrients, and we look at opportunities in broadening beyond urea toward more diverse, eco-friendly fertilization.

We hope our readers find these viewpoints valuable and are inspired to carry the conversation forward in their own fields and communities.

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