

World Soil Day Celebrations - 2019

ICAR-Indian Institute of Oilseeds Research (IIOR) celebrated "World Soil Day" on 5th December, 2019 at Gurudhotla, a Farmers First Program (FFP) project adopted village in Dharur mandal of Vikarabad district. The theme for this year is "**Stop Soil Erosion - Save Our Future**". Scientists from ICAR-IIOR visited the crops grown in farmer's fields viz; castor (DCH-519, ICH-66), groundnut (K-6), Sesame (GT-10) of FFP villages i.e. Gurudhotla, Ampally, Rampur Thanda and Gattepalli. A Meeting was conducted in Gurudhotla village to celebrate world soil day. About 250 farmers from 4 FFP villages and from P C M Thanda participated in the meeting.

Dr Aziz Qureshi, Soil Scientist, explained farmers about the importance of soil day and the need to protect the soils. He has mentioned that three basic needs of human beings i.e. food, clothing and shelter comes only from soil. In a spoon of soil @ 10 crore microbes are present which are beneficial to soil, plant and humans. With eroded soil that settles in rivers, storage capacity of rivers is also reducing drastically. So taking care of soil health assumes prime importance. Dr P Padmavathi, Agronomist explained the value of top 2 cm soil layer for crop growth and also the causes for soil erosion. Every year, 100 crore tons of soil is lost due to rain, winds, changing climate and soil management faults. She has suggested farmers to follow ploughing, sowing across the slope, making bunds at every 10 meters across the slope, growing of intercrops to cover the soil to reduce erosion. Also, use of FYM, bio fertilizers, incorporation of crop residues, addition of tank silt, crop rotation along with recommended package of practices help in improving the soil health. Earth worms, growing and incorporation of green manure crops, reducing the use of chemical pesticides, use of bio pesticides, seed treatment, organic farming, keeping bird perches for pest control also help in improving soil health.

Soil samples of 150 farmers were analyzed at IIOR and Soil Health cards were distributed to farmers in this meeting. Scientists from ICAR-IIOR, ADA Vikarabad, AO, AEOs from Dharur, Village sarpanches, staff working in FFP project and representative from SEEDS (NGO) who facilitated formation of FPO in these villages along with farmers attended the celebrations. The meeting ended with vote of thanks by Dr K Aliveu, Principal Scientist.

