

Doing Extension

Recent Efforts made by Indian Potash Limited (IPL) for Promoting Balanced Fertilization in India

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Increase in farm gate prices of muriate of potash (MOP) in India from Rs 4,600 per tonne in 2008 to Rs 17,000 in 2012 has led to a drastic reduction in MOP consumption by farmers in India. During 2012-13, MOP consumption is expected to be only around 40-45 percent of 2011-12 levels. The decline in consumption has been taken as a serious challenge by Indian Potash Limited (IPL), the current leader of potash sales in the country. Recent efforts made by IPL to address the situation are detailed below.

A stakeholder meeting, including potash producers, researchers and industry players, was called by Dr. P.S. Gahlaut, IPL Managing Director, in December 2012 in New Delhi to discuss and plan potash promotion for different crops and regions in general, and particularly for sugarcane. The meeting was attended by IPL senior officials, potash producers active in India and research institutes, including the International Potash Institute (IPI), Potash Research Institute of India (PRII), the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) and the Indian Sugar Manufacturers Association (ISMA). Various strategies, including publishing simple crop leaflets highlighting the economic benefits of potash application even under the increased price regime, as well as TV and radio talks, audio-visual films etc., were discussed and planned for implementation. It was agreed that similar promotion efforts need to be conducted per specific crops in all major growing areas in India.

Follow-up action was quickly initiated:

1. A one-page, very colourful but simple leaflet on sugarcane was brought out in Hindi and other regional languages. Mass copies of the leaflet were distributed to different sugar factories for dissemination among farmer members and other farmers in the vicinity.
2. Large-scale farmers' meetings are being conducted in different states.
3. A TV talk show on "Benefits of Potash Use in Sugarcane" in Hindi was delivered by Dr. Bhisham Pal (IPL) in the Krishi Darshan (Farm Programme) of the National TV Channel called Door Darshan on 1 February 2013.
4. A series of ten-minute radio talks as Potash Pathshala (Potash school) on All India Radio, Delhi has been produced for

broadcast covering ten talks by experts on various topics of potash use during January-March 2013.

5. A special PowerPoint presentation with voice over in several languages on "Yield and Economic Benefits of Potash in Different Crops" is currently being prepared. In addition, all relevant information on different crops' responses in different regions is being collected to provide a precise calculation of the economic benefits of potash application. These will be used by IPL field staff for raising awareness amongst farmers that potash use is beneficial even after recent price increases.

In conclusion, this large-scale communication strategy to Indian sugarcane growers represents a different extension approach, in which selected complementing activities are integrated and targeted to a large group of farmers with clear messages on potash fertilization for a specific crop and timeframe. IPL intend to undertake similar activities for other crops during 2013.



Farmers discuss ways to improve nutrient management. Bihar, India, 2013.
Photo by IPI.

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