

SSSSL Newsletter

SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

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ESAFS
SRI LANKA 2011

ESAFS 10th International Conference

Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka successfully hosted the 10th International Conference of the East and South East Asia Federation of Soil Science Societies (ESAFS) from 10-13 October, 2011. The theme of the ESAFS10 was “**Soil, a Precious Natural Resource: Agricultural Ecosystems, Environmental Health & Climate Change**”. Technical Sessions of the ESAFS10 were held at the Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel, Colombo on 10 – 11 October, 2011 which was followed by a two-day field trip to central hill country of Sri Lanka. The opening ceremony of the conference was graced by the presence of the Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. K. E. Karunathilake, as the chief guest and Prof Fu-Suo Zhang, the Dean of the College of Resource and Environmental Science, China Agricultural University delivered the Keynote Address on “*Integrated-soil crop system management: Reducing Environmental Risk while increasing Crop Productivity and improving nutrient use efficiency in China*”.

Technical Sessions were well attended by scientists from the East and South East Asian Region as well as some invited speakers from other parts of the world. There were 107 foreign and 68 Sri Lankan participants for the conference and deliberations were made on 10 different themes. There were 82 oral presentations and 76 poster presentations during the technical sessions.

3rd ESAFS Award

ESAFS award is presented to recognize and honor exemplary /distinguished contributions to the development/achievement of ESAFS. During the Business Sessions of the Federation, Presidents of soil science societies in all member countries unanimously decided to award this to **Professor Kwang-Yong Jung**, of the Korean Society of Soil Science for his contribution to the soil science research in the East and South East Asia and also to the activities of the ESAFS.

ESAFS10 Field Trip

Field trip was intended to educate the participants on different cropping systems adopted and major soil types found in some agro-climatic regions of Sri Lanka. The field excursion was attended by 74 foreign and 16 local participants. They studied soils and paddy cultivation at the Rice Research and Development Institute at Batalagoda, soil profiles and organically grown spice gardens at the Export Agriculture Research Centre, Delpitiya, intensively cultivated vegetable fields in Nuwara Eliya and soils and hill country tea plantations at the Tea Research Institute, Thalawakelle. During the leisure times the participants also visited the Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawala and the Temple of Tooth Relic in Kandy.

During the conference the organizing committee obtained the views of the foreign participants through a questioner. More than 85% of them described that the ESAFS10 was a success in all arrangements such as the theme and sub topics, abstract evaluation and quality of the proceedings, logistic arrangements, venue and meals and attending to personal needs of them. Below gives excerpts of some of the comments received by the organizing committee through e-mails.

“... I can only imagine how much work it was for you and your Society to host this meeting, and I want to take this chance to tell you how much I appreciated it. From my point of view I was extremely well taken care of, and I heard nothing but good comments from my colleagues. I learned a lot about Asian soils, and especially Sri Lanka....”

– David ROSSITER, The Netherlands

“... I need to thank you for all you have done either for me or the whole conference, I can say the ESAFS10 in Sri Lanka was a big success!...”

– Xuelel ZHANG,, China

“... I am sending this e-mail to express my sincere appreciation for your efforts to make ESAFS10 very successful. Your warm hospitality is very much appreciated....”

– Dar-Yuan LEE, Taiwan

ESAFS10 Organizing Committee

Prof. Srimathie P. Indraratne (President, Convener); Ms. Shifaya Maraikar (General Secretary), Ms. R.M.U.K. Rathnayake (Treasurer), Dr. W.M.A.D.B. Wickramasingha (Chair / Fundraising Committee), Dr. R.S. Dharmakeerthi (Chair / Editorial Committee), Dr. U.W.A. Vitharana (Chair / Scientific Committee), Mr. D.N. Sirisena (Chair / Logistic Committee), Dr. S.H.A. De Silva, Mr. K.M.A. Kendaragama, Dr. P. Weerasinghe, Dr. M.A. Lathiff, Dr. K.B. Nayakakorale, Dr. Lalani Samappuli, Dr. I. Wijebandara, Dr. W.M.W. Weerakoon, Prof. R.B. Mapa, Mr. W.D.L. Gunarathne, Prof. Chandri Rajapaksha, Dr. S.P. Nissanka, Dr. A. Heenkenda, Dr. H.A. Sumanasena, Mr. P. Idamekorale, Mr. M.G.T.S. Amarasekara, Mr. H.R.U.D. Bandara, Dr. W.M.J. Bandara.

SRICANSOL Project Bags another National Award

The Soil Science of Sri Lanka (SSSSL) and the Canadian Society of Soil Science (CSSS) collaborated through the International Twinning Partnership Program (ITPP) on updating information on soils of Sri Lanka through the SRICANSOL project which was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supporting the Agricultural Institute of Canada.

The SRICANSOL project proceeded in three phases, beginning with soils in the wet zone, moving to the transitional, intermediate zone and finally to the dry zone. The new updated classification has already begun to enhance and facilitate the application and transfer of new technologies for land management including crop specific fertilizer application, crop protection practices and the long term maintenance of soil quality, productivity and environmental sustainability.



Prof. Ranjith B Mapa receives the award from the Hon. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

The SRICANSOL project work in the Intermediate Zone was awarded the Third prize of the National Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Agriculture and on August 25, 2011. The project was led by Professor R B Mapa from the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya and other team members from SSSSL included Professor Darshani Kumaragamage from the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Mr. A.R. Dassanayake and Mr. G.G.R. de Silva from the Irrigation Department, and Dr. H.B. Nayakekorale and Ms. Shifaya Marikkar from the Department of Agriculture. Team members from CSSS included Prof. Tee Boon Goh from University of Manitoba and Mr. Robert G. Eilers,

formerly with the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Land Resource Unit in Winnipeg, and now a consultant.

The previous phase of the project which focused on the Wet Zone received the Second Prize for the National Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Agriculture. Receiving this award a second time is a testament to the high quality and value of the work SRICANSOL has done and the positive impact the project results will have on agriculture in Sri Lanka.

Annual General Meeting 2011/12

The 41st Annual sessions of the Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka was held on 24th March 2011 at the SRICANSOL Resource Center, Faculty of Agriculture, Peradeniya with the participation of 76 members. The Joachim Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr. M.A. Lathiff on “Sustainability of organic vegetable production”. Dr. D.B. Wickramasinghe, the team leader of SRICANSOL II project, presented a summary of the outcomes to the membership and officially concluded the project. Certificates were awarded to all those who helped to implement project activities during the past 5 years.

SSSSL Felicitate Dr. C.R. Panabokke

During the AGM 2011/12 a special session was devoted to felicitate one of the founder member of the Society, Vidya Jyothi Dr. C. R. Panabokke, on his 85th birthday. To commemorate this event a felicitation book “C.R.Panabokke –A doyen of soil science” was published by the Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka (SSSSL). Drs Kingsley De Alwis, B.V.R. Punyawardane, M.U.A. Tennakoon, and J. Handawela have contributed by invitation to this special publication. Dr Panabokke’s presidential address made to the Section B of Sri Lanka Association for Advancement Science (SLAAS) in 1969 was reproduced in this book with the permission of SLAAS executive committee. Paper articles published in *The Island* and *Sunday Leader* papers also appeared in this book.



Dr. Panabokke addresses the gathering

To mark this event, Dr. C.R. Panabokke planted a Jak tree at HORDI of the Department of Agriculture, Gannoruwa and it was witnessed by his family members, colleagues, members of the SSSSL and the present Director General of Agriculture, Mr K. N. Mankotte.

Field visit to Nuwara Eliya

After the AGM, the members went on a field trip to inspect soil profiles of intensive vegetable cultivation at Sita Eliya-SRICANSOL-II project site and to the organic tea cultivation at TRI and to observe the tunnel site at Niangamdora, Upper Kothmale Project on the 25th March 2011.



Demonstration at Tea Research Institute



Upper Kothmale Power house –inside the Tunnel Base

Executive Committee of the SSSSL - 2011/2012

President	Dr. S P Indraratne
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Dr.Lalani Samarappuli	Dr.I.Wijebandara
Dr.S.H.A.de.Silva	Mr.D.N.Sirisena
Auditor	Dr. W M J Bandara

Upcoming Event: AGM 2012/13

The 42nd Annual General Meeting of the SSSSL has been scheduled to be held on **March 29, 2012** at the SRICANSOL Resource Centre, Peradeniya. After the technical sessions and the business sessions the members will have an opportunity to study soils in Kalpitiya area. Reserve March 29 and 30 days in your calendar in advance.

Fertilizer Day Programs

The 6th fertilizer day symposium was held on the 17th December 2010 at the SRICANSOL Resource Centre under the theme **“Organic sources as supplements for inorganic fertilizers”**,

with 58 participants. Mr.K.E.Karunatileka, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, was the guest of honour. The Director General of Agriculture, Mr. K. N. Mankotte and Director of Agriculture Extension Ms. Jayanthi Abeygunasekera were special invitees. In his keynote address, Mr.Karunatileka said the fertilizer subsidy was a huge burden on the country's economy and urged the Society to work towards using alternative sources of plant nutrients. Dr.JDH Wijewardena, a SSSSL member and Director, Organic fertilizers, Ministry of Agriculture spoke on *“Substitution of chemical fertilizers through organic manures”*. Dr.Priyantha Weerasinghe, Senior Research Officer, Department of Agriculture, made a presentation on *“Groundnut–A biological urea bag in the dry zone”*. Dr.R.S.Dharmakeerthi, Senior Soil Chemist, Rubber Research Institute made a presentation on *“Biochar: An alternative technology for soil fertility management”*.



Section of participants of the 2010 fertilizer day program

The seventh Fertilizer Day Program was held on the December 16, 2011 under the theme **“Potassium: a nutrient for rice cultivation in Sri Lanka”**. This program was devoted to educate members on the study carried out by a sub-committee appointed by the SSSSL to review the present K status in Sri Lankan soil. Mr K N Mankotte Director, Dept. of Agriculture was the chief guest of the event. The chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. S.T. Dissanayake gave an introduction on developing a report on the *“Status of Potassium as a nutrient for rice cultivation in Sri Lanka”* which was followed by presentations on *“Potassium dynamics, soil test and natural supply”* by Dr. P.Weerasinhe, *“Potassium availability in paddy growing soils and response of rice to applied potassium fertilizer”* by Mr. D.N.Sirisena and *“Potassium as a nutrient in rice cultivation: Policy issues, concluding remarks and recommendations”* by Mr. K.M.A. Kendaragama. The report was published as a SSSSL Special Publication (No.12) with the title **“Potassium as a nutrient for rice cultivation in Sri Lanka : A status review report”** and launched after the deliberations. The Fertilizer Day Program was wrapped up with few comments from the Dr S L Amarasiri regarding this Special Publication.

SRICANSOL II

President and Team leader said the SRICANSOL II declared the end and president thanked the Project team for the hard work and congratulate them for the successful outcomes. Team leader acknowledged the contribution made membership and different institutions such as Department of Agriculture, Department of Export Agriculture, and University of Peradeniya etc. The President said, based on the successes of the SRICANSOL II, the Society has submitted another Project proposal (SRICANSOL III) seeking CIDA funding through AIC and the Executive committee has appointed Mr. K.M.A. Kendaragama as co-leaders for this project.

Seminar Presentation

One of our senior member, **Professor Dharsaini Kumaragamage** who is currently serving as the Director of Environmental Studies, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, visited Sri Lanka recently. She made a presentation on “*Manure Applications and Phosphorus Losses from Soils*” at the SRICANSOL Resource Centre, Peradeniya on the 23rd of November, 2011 to the academia, students and the members of the SSSSL. Together with the Dept. of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, the SSSSL hosted this event.

New Members

During past year 15 professionals from different institutions and have obtained the life membership of the Society. We warmly welcome them to the society and anticipate their active participation during the coming years in society activities and to popularize soil science in Sri Lanka. Details of the new members are:

No.	Name	Affiliation
1	Ms.Samanthi Udayangani Kumari	Dept of Plant Science, University of Colombo
2	Ms.Erandathi Yamuna Kumari Lokupitiya	Colorado State University, USA
3	Ms.Vishani Udayangani Edirimanne	Rubber Research Institute, Agalawatte
4	Ms.U.K.P.S.Sanjeevani	-
5	Ms.W.M.G.D.Wijesundara	Dept. of Education
6	Ms.P.C.K.Ranathungamage	LJM Peiris & Co, Colombo 7
7	Ms.S.H.R.Priyadharshani	University of Ruhuna
8	Ms.C.K.Wickramatunga	Natural Resources Management Centre, Dept. of Agriculture
9	Mr.U.Chandrasiri	Regional Rice Research and Development Centre, Bombuwela
10	Ms.N.D.Sooriyaarachchi	Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University
11	Ms.N.Gamage	Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University
12	Ms.K.H.G.M.Tharanga	Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University
13	Ms.K.A.K.M.M.Gunathilaka	Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University
14	Ms.G.S.N.Perera	Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University
15	Mr.D.S.N.Samaratunge	National Physical Planning Department

Recent Publications of the Society

	<p>Soils of the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka SSSSL Special Publication No. 7</p> <p>Editors : R.B. Mapa, S. Somasiri & A.R. Dassanayake</p> <p>Pages:322 + DZ Soils Map Hard cover binding</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Price : Rs.300/=</p>
	<p>Proceedings of the 10th International Conference of the East and Southeast Asia Federation of Soil Science Societies</p> <p>Editor-in-Chief : R S Dharmakeerthi</p> <p>Pages:329 Soft cover binding</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Price : Rs.300/=</p>
	<p>Journal of the Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka Vol 21 (2009)</p> <p>Editors: R S Dharmakeerthi & H A Sumanasena</p> <p>Pages:58 Soft cover binding</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Price : Rs.100/=</p>
	<p>Journal of the Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka Vol 22 (2010)</p> <p>Editors: R S Dharmakeerthi & H A Sumanasena</p> <p>Pages:79 Soft cover binding</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Price : Rs.100/=</p>
	<p>C R Panabokke - A Doyen of Soil Science SSSSL Special Publication No. 11</p> <p>Editor : R S Dharmakeerthi</p> <p>Pages:79 Soft cover binding</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Price : Rs.100/=</p>
	<p>Potassium as a nutrient for rice cultivation in Sri Lanka: A status review report Special Publication No.12</p> <p>Editors: S L Amarasiri et al.</p> <p>Soft cover binding</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Price : Rs.100/=</p>

To order please contact the Editor, R S Dharmakeerthi at dharmakeerthis@gmail.com or 071-8453573.

“Nature has endowed the Earth with glorious wonders and vast resources that man may use for his own ends. Regardless of our tastes or our way of living, there are none that present more variations to tax our imagination than the soil, and certainly none so important to our ancestors, to ourselves, and to our children”

- Charles Kellogg, The Soils That Support Us, 1956