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PRESS RELEASE

FAO advocates for the Right fertilizer at the Right rate at the Right time in the Right place (“4Rs”)

Sahiwal, 6 October 2015: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership with the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC), the U.S. Department for Agriculture (USDA) and International Potash Institute (IPI) convened a one-day workshop on the “contribution of balanced use of fertilizers towards food security”. The objective was to highlight significance of balanced fertilization and soil health in sustainable agriculture and food security. The workshop promoted use of appropriate balanced inputs and 4Rs (Right fertilizer at the Right rate at the Right time in the Right place) Nutrient Stewardship in partnership with the private sector, including fertilizer and seed companies (FFC, Engro, ICI, and Pioneer Seeds Limited), wholesalers/retailers, farmer associations and academia. The participants of workshop also assessed use of fertilizer management practices at farm-gate level with special focus on maize.

The workshop brought together more than 70 participants from the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, National Fertilizer Development Center (NFDC), provincial agricultural Maize & Millet Research Institute, information and extension departments, academia, fertilizer industry, farmer associations, ICI, seed companies, research institutes and FAO to share experiences, case studies and initiatives.

The inaugural session was chaired by Dr. Nisar Ahmad- Former Chief NFDC, Planning Commission of Pakistan. He emphasized on significance of 4R Nutrient Stewardship for sustainable agricultural intensification in the country with special reference to maize production.

Dr Waqar Ahmad (Soil Expert, FAO) briefed participants on objectives of the workshop and FAO’s role in promoting 4Rs. He highlighted the significance of fertilizer use assessment at farmer gate level, and important role of public private sectors to enhance quality produce. FAO is currently working on a baseline atlas of current soil fertility practices, disaggregated by farm size and cropping systems in Pakistan. The atlas will help to understand required soil fertility management

changes for sustainable intensification. Consequently, appropriate balanced inputs and 4Rs would be promoted.

Invited speakers from public and private sectors talked about fertilizer use practices, impact on crop productivity and environment. Maize growers also expressed their concerns about the commodity prices. It was noted that farmers are keen to adopt 4Rs; however, increasing cost of fertilizer and their commodity prices are the prime concerns. It was suggested that information on 4Rs should be compiled, synthesized, and disseminated to farming communities. Overall role of FAO in bringing together farmers, commodity experts and academia was appreciated by the participants.

FAO is conducting a series of such workshops across the country to promote use of balanced fertilizers and 4Rs. Similar workshops have been conducted in Multan, Karachi and Lahore for cotton, mango and rice growers.

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