

Kanwar Lal Sahrawat (1941–2016)

The agricultural scientist Kanwar Lal Sahrawat (KLS) expired on 3 February 2016. Born on 7 November 1941, KLS had his early education in Rajasthan. He obtained his basic degree in science from Punjab University, Chandigarh in 1962 and moved to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi for his M Sc and Ph D degrees. After graduation he started working as an analyst (1962–67) at the Hindustan Insecticides Ltd, New Delhi and also as an assistant (1967) at the Indian Standards Institution, New Delhi. He was involved in setting up the soil chemistry laboratory at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Hyderabad, India. During this period he initiated research on the seasonal fluxes of mineral nitrogen in the soil, under various cropping systems in red and black soils. He carried out his postdoctoral research at the International Rice Research Institute, Philippines in soil chemistry in the wetland rice soils under the supervision of the renowned scientist F. N. Pongamperuma.

KLS explained the importance of ammonium fixation in rice soils and the urea hydrolysing capacity of flood water, affecting nitrogen economy of wetland rice soils. He took sabbatical from ICRISAT during 1983–84 to work on nitrous oxide emission from different ecosystems at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with D. P. Keeney, and developed three major reviews on various aspects of N fertilizers in rice soils.

As a soil chemist (1978–84) and senior scientist (1980–91) at ICRISAT, KLS

made significant contributions to the basics of N and P fertilizer transformation in soils of the semi-arid tropics and developed suitable fertilizer management strategies to increase crop productivity. He applied his knowledge of basic chemistry to develop many improved analytical methods of soil and plant analyses.



He guided M Sc and Ph D students in the area of soil chemistry and biochemistry and was associated with infrastructural development of the institutes, wherever he worked. KLS was Principal Scientist in the Rainfed Programme, West Africa Rice Development Association, Bouake, Ivory Coast and also worked as the Project Coordinator during 1991–2001. He conceptualized and established laboratories to conduct soil-fertility research in this research station.

After the untimely demise of his wife, KLS returned to India in 2002 as a Consultant at ICRISAT and continued to serve soil science as a writer, editor and

reviewer in the overall theme of global agroecosystems.

KLS was associated with the Indian Society of Soil Science, Association of Rice Research Workers, Chemical Society of the Philippines, American Society of Agronomy, and Asian Agri-History Foundation. He was a fellow of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, India (1999). He has edited several books and bulletins and worked as an Advisor at the International Foundation for Science, Stockholm, Sweden. He also worked as a member of the International Committee on Plant Nutrition (1978–1993). He received the Millennium ICRISAT Science Award in 2008 for his outstanding research contributions.

KLS was a private person and extremely kind-hearted to his fellow researchers, especially students. He was one of those researchers who was serious, sincere, and extremely talented. He had an uncompromising attitude and did not accept anything unscientific. KLS was associated with *Current Science* both as contributing author and reviewer. The last one was as the Guest Editor for the special section on 'Soil and Water Management' to be published in May 2016.

His demise is a great loss to agricultural science worldwide.

TAPAS BHATTACHARYYA

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