

## World Soil Day, 2022

World Soil Day was celebrated by KVK, West Khasi Hills at the office campus on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2022 with the theme, “*Soils: where food begins*”. The programme was attended by 50 farmers and staffs of KVK, West Khasi Hills. Smt. R. R. Dkhar, Asst. Director of Agriculture (Soil Testing), Research Office, Shillong graced the programme as the chief guest on this important day.

In her speech, the chief guest gave a brief introduction about the origin of the world soil day celebration that was initially facilitated by the IUSS in 2002. During the General assembly of the United Nations it was suggested to start celebrating world soil day every year on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December. Citing a quote “**There can be no life without soil and no soil without life**” the Chief Guest stressed about the importance of maintaining soil health to ensure a living soil; Sustainable farming practices for food security by farmers through their farming activities; To avoid burning of forest for Jhum cultivation that leads to the depletion of soil flora and fauna; To avoid over fertilization and higher incorporation of biofertilizers and other manures in crop production for future sustainability of soil. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, 95% of food production comes from soil and there is a need to increase the current food availability by 50% by the year 2050. It is reported that 33% of soil in the world is dead and non-cultivable due to poor soil management, hence, there is a need for good soil management practices.

The soil type found in the state of Meghalaya is red lateritic type of soil characterized mostly by highly acidic and high in iron content. There is a need to address and cater to these properties of the prevailing soil condition through proper soil testing. This will lead to better soil management through sound agricultural practices to keep the soil “alive”, since one handful of soil contains million of life in it. She concluded with a saying ‘a nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself’. This was followed by a brief interaction with farmers. A short speech was delivered by Shri. W. Rani, Scientific officer (Seed Testing) about the significance of testing seeds mainly to check their viability, moisture content and contamination of weed seeds. Other test include physiological test of the seed for their nutritional content. He stated the importance of conserving farmers seeds and land races as they are more vigorous and well adapted to the local environment condition. Technical presentation was delivered by Smt. Mesaya R. Marak,

SMS Agronomy on Natural farming. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Smt. I. Suting, Programme Assistant (Technical).

