



# World Soil Day

It's time to go by ground realities,  
junking the scare mongering !



The word soil is derived from a Latin word '*solum*' meaning earthly material in which plants grow.

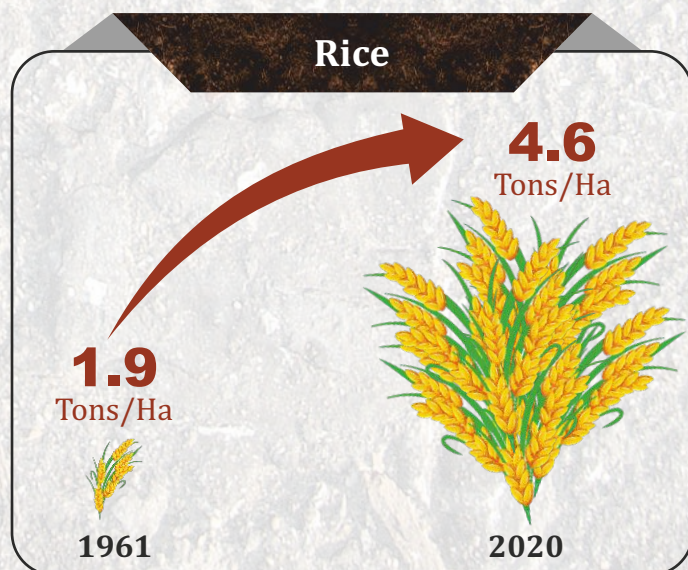
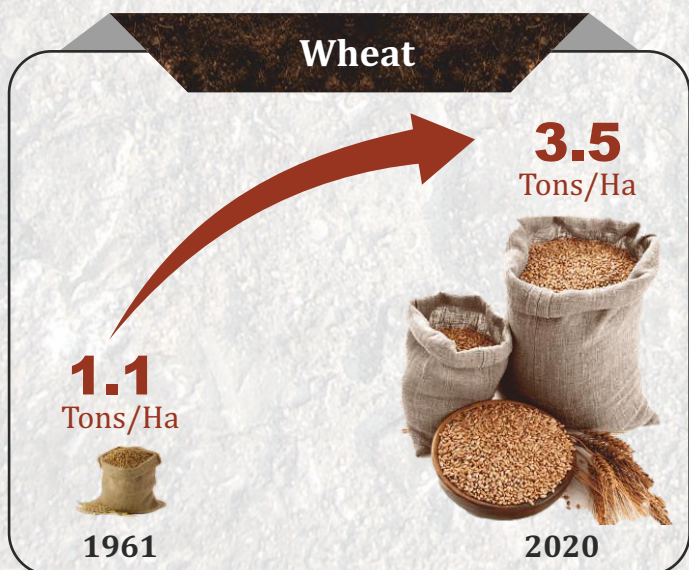
In the year 2014, the UN General Assembly decided to observe 5<sup>th</sup> December as World Soil Day - to focus on the importance of healthy soil for agriculture.

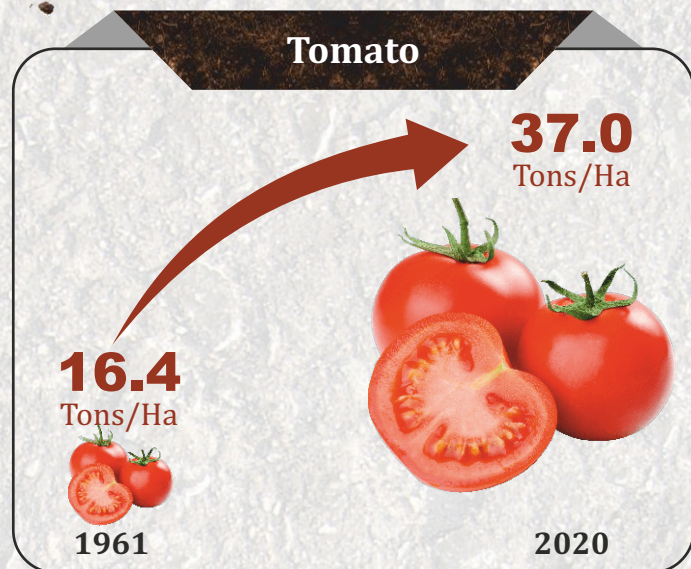
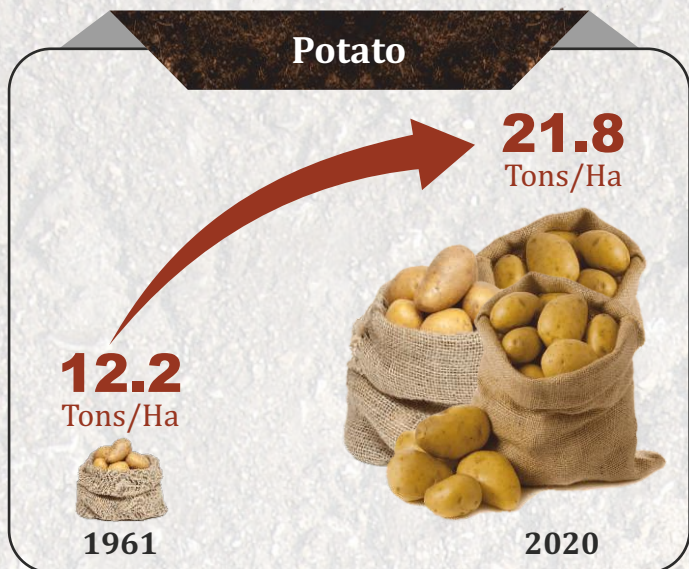
Soil is home to over a quarter of all living species on the earth. It ensures food, fodder, fiber and renewable energy supplies to sustain human, animal, and plant life.

A dominant narrative in the public domain is that our agricultural soils remain largely degraded, putting at risk the future of food production.

This is plain scare mongering and not at all supported by empirical evidence.

Yield growth for a few major crops in the world.



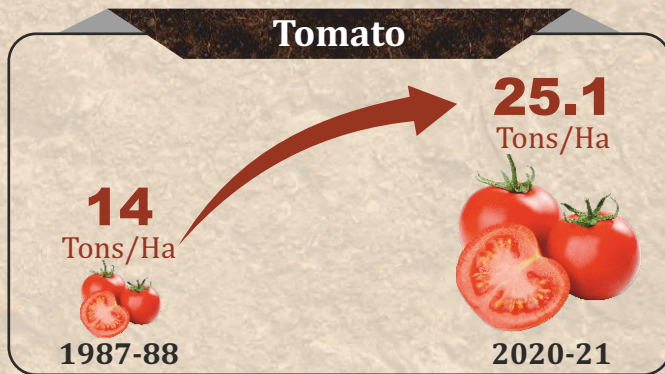
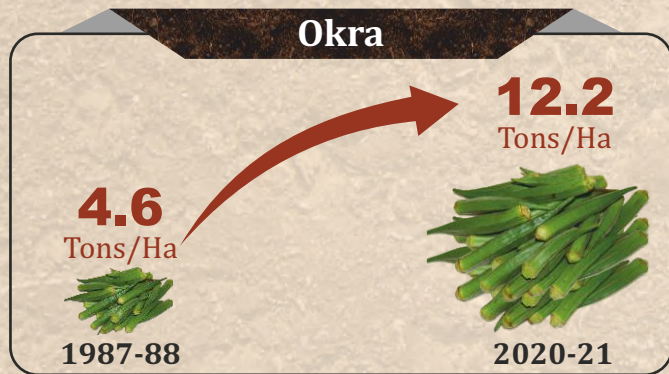
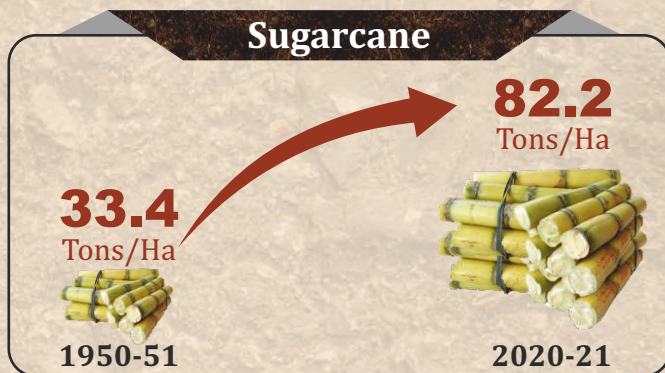
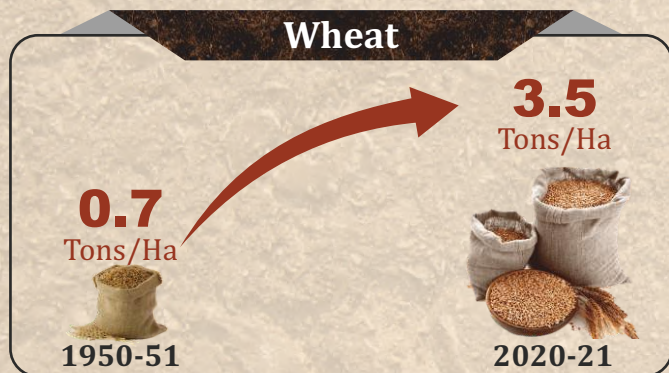


Source: FAOSTAT (Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022)

These are just a few examples.  
All the crops of agricultural importance have registered significant growth in the yield.

**Myth:** Soil productivity in India has declined since use of chemical Inputs.

**Truth:** Soil Productivity in India has increased multifold. The yield of major crops in India has increased exponentially.



Source: Indiastat and Agricultural Statistics at a Glance (Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022)

## Soil health case adjudicated by NGT

In 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020, an activist from UP one Mr. Shailesh Singh filed a petition before the National Green Tribunal (NGT), Delhi (46/2020) alleging that use of agrochemicals had rendered 7 lakh hectares of farm lands barren. Surprisingly, the NGT entertained the petition without knowing the facts given below, which were suppressed by the petitioner.

Yield			
Crop	2014-15	2018-19	Growth
Potato	24.2	33.4	38%
Wheat	2.3	4.1	78%
Sugarcane	57.4	79.3	38%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

This shows how even the NGT goes by implicit bias on matters concerning soil / agriculture ignoring the empirical evidence.



## Et tu, UNEP?

In the year 2014, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) came out with an alarming prediction that *the world is left with only 60 years of harvest, if soil degradation continues*. This has been subsequently criticized by many.

Dr. Hannah Ritchie a researcher from Oxford University called the UNEP's claim "*inaccurate and overblown*".

It suits the urban minds to believe that our farmers are irrational users of agri inputs. In reality, they - especially the small farmers of the world - are the most rational users of diverse agri inputs - both traditional and modern - to sustain the soil health and increase the crop yields.

**On the occasion of World Soil Day – the people of planet earth can rest assured that the farmland soils remain fertile and productive to serve our requirements.**



Issued by Centre for Environment & Agriculture (CENTEGRO), a Mumbai based think tank. We actively work, among others, on matters that concern Indian agriculture, trade, economy, health and environment.

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