BOOK REVIEW

TWENTY STEPS TOWARDS HIDDEN TREASURE: TECHNOLOGIES THAT TRIGGERED POTATO REVOLUTION IN INDIA

Editors: Dr S.K. Pandey and Dr S.K. Chakrabarti
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The potato is the only food crop outside the grass family that sustains more than a billion people over 150 countries. It is a ‘gift’ from the Andes (South America) that has now been recognized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the “food for future”. Though it was introduced to this sub-continent about 400 years ago, it has become fourth most important food crop of the region. Today India produces nearly 25 million tones of potato from 1.3 million hectares annually, and has emerged as the third largest potato producer in the world. Moreover, with the available technology & varieties, potato production in India is projected to double by 2020.

Towards the end of the 20th century, agriculture became a predominantly technological vocation. Boom in potato production occurred in India during this period mainly because of scientific cropping coupled with innovative farming tradition of Indian farming community. The potato production revolution in India is a reflection of the indigenous technological advances and competence available in this field.

It was indeed a pleasure going through the chapters of this book. All the chapters have been written as lucid stories depicting the crop’s importance, brief history, the technology per se and its adoption/impact. The chapters have been well planned starting with variety development, germplasm resources, seed production technologies, agrotechniques, production systems, disease & pest management, utilization etc. Efforts have been made to capture the full interest of the reader on the topics throughout the book. The present book is a compilation of twenty such technologies that transformed the temperate potato introduced by the European Colonizer into a nutritious, subtropical food crop in India.

The style in which the book is written is certainly unique. It is a welcome deviation from the usual pattern in which such technical books are written. In fact, the entire book is written in such a style that the interest of the reader is sustained till he closes the book. The editors of this book have done an excellent job in maintaining a uniform style of presentation and keeping it free from errors. However a subject index should have been appended. It is a tribute to all those who have contributed towards this revolutionary achievement.

Certainly this book will serve as an excellent textbook for the students and as a reference book for the teachers, planners, and policy makers. For the general readers this book is a pleasant reading on the triumphs of technological innovation in the area of agriculture in India . Its contents and length are ideal for reading even while traveling.

S.M. Paul Khurana
Vice-Chancellor,
Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur-1 (M.P.)