Survey on Fertilizers Applied by Farmers as Basal Dose

Basal application of fertilizers refers to fertilizer applied before or at the time of sowing of crops. It is the first dose of fertilizer that is applied to crops. While multiple doses of fertilizers are recommended (4 doses for irrigated cotton crop and 2 doses for unirrigated cotton crop), basal dose of fertilizers supplies the maximum amount of nutrients to crop.

As part of ATAI soil fertility study, we sent thirteen calls to treatment farmers with customized recommendations on the type and quantity of fertilizer that they should be applying as basal dose for their cotton crop. The recommendations were derived from results of soil tests that had been done in farmers’ fields at time of baseline.

A survey will be administered to collect information on the major fertilizers applied at time of sowing of cotton crop by farmers in the study. Data will be collected only for the plot for which soil test was done at baseline. The survey will be done for both treatment and control farmers.

The survey will be done in last week of July or first week of August, as by that time all farmers would have completed sowing of cotton crop. As part of the survey we will collect information on status of crop sowing (whether or not sowing has been done), time of sowing (week in which sowing was done), irrigation status of crop (whether or not the crop is irrigated), fertilizers applied during or before sowing (name and quantity of fertilizer) and whether or not a particular fertilizer was applied by farmer in the entire plot.

The information from after-basal survey will help us in streamlining the remaining fertilizer recommendation calls. If a farmer has not sown cotton crop in Kharif 2018 in the sampled plot then we may discontinue fertilizer recommendations calls for the farmer. Also, scheduling of subsequent calls may be changed depending upon timing of sowing of crops. If survey reveals that most farmers had sown cotton by July-mid then we will continue sending dose 2 calls upto August-mid, dose 3 calls upto September-mid and dose 4 calls upto October-mid. Lastly, data on irrigation status will be used to send calls selectively. Farmers who have access to irrigation will not be sent calls with fertilizer recommendation for unirrigated crop and vice-versa.

Information from the survey will also give us an estimate of potential impact that can be expected from the ATAI initiative. The data will help us in drawing comparisons between basal fertilizer practices of treatment and control farmers in terms of number of farmers who applied basal dose of fertilizers, the kind of fertilizer applied in basal dose (with special focus on potash and zinc fertilizers) and quantity of fertilizers applied by farmers.