Research and Development in Potato: A Pathological Overview

INTRODUCTION:

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) is one of the most important crops in Nepal. It is utilized as a major vegetable in Terai and mid hills and used as a vegetable and staple food in high hills of Nepal. It occupies the fifth position in area coverage, second in total production and first in productivity among the food crops grown in Nepal (ABPSD, 2021).The first official attempt to improve potato production was initiated in 1962 under a joint program between Nepal and India. During its earlier phase (1960-75), several potato farms and other infrastructures were developed in Nepal. With the increased importance of potato crop in national food production, National Potato Development Program (NPDP) was incepted in 1972 at Kirtipur with a nationwide mandate to conduct potato research and development activities. During the early phase of program, major focus was on seed potato production through contract systems with the farmers. Later on in 1989, a tissue culture laboratory was established with the financial and technical support of Swiss government and the contract growers were encouraged to form a cohesive group for informal production of high quality seed. Source seed as pre-basic seed is to date being supplied by the tissue culture laboratory.

The history of agriculture research and development in Nepal is very short, which started after fifties and received momentum during early seventies in major crops and animals. Some preliminary researches on buckwheat were started when National Hill Crops Research Programme (NHCRP) was established in 1986.

Potato is known as “alu” by Nepalese community. It is believed that it might have been introduced to Nepal. Currently it is grown in…ha producing …MT with a productivity of ….MT/ha (MoALD, 2021).