KAU plan to revive farmlands

Readies post-flood guidelines for soil, crop management

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Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has come up with guidelines to revive severely affected farmlands of the State.

The unprecedented flooding of rivers has caused silting and clay deposition at significant levels.

The thick deposition impedes drainage. This has to be taken care of urgently, say farm scientists.

Small drainage channels should be opened in flood-affected areas to drain out water.

"Thickness of deposits has to be assessed. The basins of tree and crops have to be raked up and loosened by forking to improve aeration. In areas where the mud deposition is too thick, lime/dolomite can be applied at a rate of 1 kg/cent of land to improve soil aggregation," they said.

Potassium loss

There can be severe loss of potassium due to leaching. So crops can be supplemented with mild application of wood ash/MOP/sulphate of potash. Soil analysis should

A flood-hit banana plantation at Pullazhi in Thrissur. ■ K.K. NAJEEB

be done to use proper fertilizers, experts noted.

. There could be an increase in fungal diseases due to heavy rain. Infections caused by Phytophthora on major crops may be severe.

All the severely affected plants and plant parts must be buried.

Aeration and drainage must be improved to reduce disease incidence.

Standing crops, including rice, pepper, nutmeg, coconut, banana, arecanut, cardamom and vegetables, may face severe attack of pests and diseases. The KAU has issued specific guidelines for each crop.

Fighting snails

As snails and slugs prefer humid climate, their incidence can increase.

Farm scientists advise farmers to bait snails and slugs using wet jute bags during night and destroy them by dipping in salt water.

A major outbreak of rodent-borne diseases may occur as flood water recedes. So, rodent management should be a prime priority both in households and fields.

Community-based rodent management campaigns should be organised on a priority basis, they added.