

Rattan Lal calls for millions of farmers to be financially rewarded for their contribution to climate change mitigation

World Food Prize laureate and soil scientist says farmers who engage in conservation practices and carbon sequestration should be compensated

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, August 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Buenos Aires (IICA). [Rattan Lal](#), regarded as the world's foremost soil scientist, said that farmers who engage in environmental conservation practices and sequester carbon in the soil should be financially rewarded for the service they provide, which contributes to the health of the planet and provides solutions to the climate crisis.



Rattan Lal

“If we want to consolidate agriculture’s position as part of the solution to climate change, it is essential that producers receive a payment that incentivizes them to continue doing such a good job. Then, they can cultivate carbon in the soil in the same way they cultivate other commodities,” Lal suggested in a presentation he gave in Buenos Aires to hundreds of producers from Argentina and other countries.

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The scientist was one of the most eagerly awaited speakers at the Congress of the Argentine No-Till Farmers Association (AAPRESID). He took part in a special section of the Congress that addressed the outlook and opportunities for the agrifood systems of the Americas, which was organized in conjunction with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Rattan Lal, who is an IICA Goodwill Ambassador and heads up the Living Soils in the Americas Program with the Institute, said the world's 550 million small farmers should be the main recipients of payments for ecosystem services.

The Ohio State University professor believes that an annual budget of USD 100 billion should be allocated for payments to farmers, to incentivize them to actively contribute to climate change mitigation.

"The source of that financing could be the tobacco industry or fossil fuel exporting countries, which have moral obligations to fulfill. Agribusiness, the private sector and, of course, consumers, should also contribute money. If we want change, we have to pay for it," Lal commented.

During his presentation, Rattan Lal referred to the importance of holding such a large-scale meeting in Argentina, a South American country that, along with its neighbor, Brazil, has a number of noteworthy success stories where agriculture is concerned.

"Today, working with IICA we are building capabilities and extending them to other regions. The Living Soils in the Americas Program we are implementing with IICA is being extended to Africa, so that soils on that continent can also become a carbon sink," he commented.

The expert, who was awarded the World Food Prize in 2020, spoke about the future and the need for a new transformation in agriculture, surpassing the Green Revolution of the 1960s, which prevented the death of millions of people from hunger.

"Times have changed. The Green Revolution began 60 years ago, when there was no awareness of climate change or widespread soil degradation. Today, 38% of soils are used for farming and 70% of water is used for irrigation, while agricultural activities are responsible for 30% to 35% of greenhouse gas emissions. Despite all this, one person in eight is food insecure. It is time for a change, for the Green Revolution of the 21st century," he remarked.

Rattan Lal explained that the new transformation of agriculture must be based on soil health, resilience, ecosystem conservation, and the tools provided by science.

"Today there is a lot of talk about regenerative agriculture, but it is very important to bear in mind that this is a concept, a philosophy, not simply a technique. It is based on innovation, on the use of non-fossil fuels, on the commitment to the circular economy, green infrastructure and the recarbonization of the biosphere," he said.

The scientist closed with a positive message regarding the transformation: "We must not aim for carbon-neutral agriculture, but rather negative-emission agriculture. It has to be and it can be. It is about changing the philosophy, focusing on reduction, reutilization, recycling, regeneration and recovery. And we must be clear that healthy soil is life. "You cannot have clean water and air

unless soils are healthy.”

More information

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