

Have you eaten any soil lately?!

There's nothing better than sitting down to a good meal, and it is easy to take for granted the availability of plentiful, healthy food. However, have you ever wondered where each ingredient comes from, or about the journey it took from the farm to your table? Food gets its start in the

soil. From there it moves along the food supply chain before it gets to the table. Food supply chain has many links! It's made up of all the steps it takes to feed humanity – from preparing soil to preparing dinner!



Picture courtesy: NACD

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World Soil Day

**SOILS,
FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY FARMING**

December 5, 2014 - World Soil Day

In 2002, the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) made a resolution proposing the 5th of December as World Soil Day to celebrate the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human wellbeing. Noting that soils constitute the foundation for agricultural development, essential ecosystem functions and food security and hence are key to sustaining life on Earth, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed and has designated December 5 as the World Soil Day and declared 2015 as the **International Year of Soils**.

The first official World Soil Day Celebration will take place at the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome on the 5th of December 2014. The event that takes place under the framework of the Global Soil Partnership will also include the launch of the **International Year of Soils 2015**. The overall aim of the event is to create full awareness of all stakeholders about the fundamental role of soils for human life.

The theme of 2014 World Soil Day is **'Soils, foundation of family farming.'** Soils are not only the foundation for agriculture, livestock production and forestry, they

also supply clean water, capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and provide many other ecosystem services. However, these functions are jeopardized as many soils are becoming increasingly degraded.



Organic Matter Gone!

Soils are healthy when they contain an adequate amount of organic matter such as living, dead and decomposing plant material, and soil life like earthworms, insects and microscopic organisms. Healthy soils can retain more water and hold more nutrients. With climate change leading to extreme weather events, this is becoming more important than ever

before. Land degradation and soil depletion are a real and escalating threat in our islands and involve a number of processes including erosion, compaction, sealing, nutrient imbalance, loss of soil organic matter, acidification and salinization. The resulting damage to soil affects livelihoods, ecosystem functions, food security and human wellbeing. Promoting the sustainable management of land and soils will contribute to healthy soils and to the effort of eradicating hunger and poverty.