Farm Operations for April

WHEAT

Last irrigation to wheat sown after December 5th, should be given up to 10th of April. Avoid irrigation on windy/stormy day.

SUGARCANE

1. Control the weeds from the crop. However, for the control of dila, post-emergence application of 2, 4-D sodium salt 80% @ 800 g per acre in 200-225 litres of water is recommended. Do not sow moong/mash as inter crop, if sugarcane has been sprayed with herbicide(s).

2. Irrigate the crop at 7-12 days interval for better growth of the crop. Apply 65 kg urea to ratoon crop.

3. Apply paddy straw or rice husk or sugarcane trash @ 20-25 q/acre between the rows of sugarcane to reduce soil temperature and moisture loss.

4. The incidence of black bug in this crop can be checked by spraying 350 ml of Dursban/Lethal/Massban/Goldban 20 EC in 400 litres of water per acre with manually operated sprayer. Direct the spray material into the leaf whorl.

5. Mite feeds on lower side of leaves under fine web. The leaves turn red and later appear to be burnt. Baru (Sorghum halepensis) is the alternative host plant of mite. So, destroy the weeds, growing near the sugarcane fields.

6. Do not ratoon the crop if it is severely affected with red rot or wilt.

COTTON

1. Start sowing of recommended varieties/hybrids of cotton including Bt cotton or desi cotton during this month. Sow seeds in polythene bags to fill gaps in cotton. Give deep ploughings in paddy fields, where puddling was done continuously for longer periods as the hard layer developed due to puddling adversely affects the deep penetration of roots. Apply heavy pre-sowing irrigation with good quality water for better germination and crop stand.

2. To reduce the attack of leaf curl disease, avoid growing American cotton in citrus orchards and adjoining bhindi crop. Avoid growing bhindi, moong, castor and arhar in the cotton crop and as border rows in order to reduce the incidence of American and spotted bollworm; jassid and whitefly. But, control such insect pests on these crops grown in the vicinity of cotton fields properly in order to check their migration to the cotton crop.

3. In wilt infested fields, prefer to sow LD 949 and LD 1019 varieties of desi cotton.

4. At the time of sowing, smear the cotton seed with Gaucho 70 WS (imidacloprid) @ 5 g or Cruiser 30 FS (thiomethoxan) @ 7 g/kg seed for preventing damage by cotton jassid.

5. Sow both American cotton and desi cotton varieties in rows at 67.5 cm apart with plant to plant distance of 60 cm for American Cotton and 45 cm in case of Desi Cotton but for Bt cotton hybrids it should be 75 cm.

6. Drill 75 kg single superphosphate or 27 kg DAP per acre at the time of sowing. If cotton succeeds wheat, which received recommended dose of phosphorus, omit its application to cotton. In coarse textured soils, half dose of nitrogen (33 kg urea/acre to varieties and 45 kg urea/acre to hybrids and Bt cotton) may be applied at the time of sowing. Use PAU –LCC for need based urea application. Apply 20 kg muriate of potash in soils low in available potassium. Also apply 10 kg zinc sulphate heptahydrate or 6.5 kg zinc sulphate monohydrate to cotton in zinc deficient soils.
7. For controlling weeds, spray Treflan 48 EC/Shaktiman, Triflurex 48 EC (trifluralin) @ 1.0 l/acre as pre-plant incorporation or Stomp 30 EC (pendimethalin) @ 1.0 litre/acre as pre-emergence application in 200 litres of water. At the time of spray, there should be sufficient moisture in the soil. For controlling its it which emerges with first irrigation, Stomp @ 1.0 l/acre can also be applied after first irrigation.

**SUNFLOWER**

1. Since the weather is quite hot during this month, apply irrigations at 8-10 days interval. The crop should not be under stress at flowering, soft dough and hard dough stages.

**SUMMER PULSES**

Try to complete the sowing of sati moong and sati mash during the first week of this month.

**SUMMER GROUNDNUT**

Groundnut variety SG 99 / M 522/ SG 84 can be sown during the end of this month under irrigated conditions. Treat the kernels before sowing with 5 g Thiram (75%) or 3 g of Indofil M-45 (75%) per kg kernels.

**TURMERIC**

1. Start planting turmeric from the end of this month.
2. Planting of turmeric should be done in rows 30 cm apart by keeping plant to plant distance of 20 cm. Six to eight quintal of rhizomes are sufficient for sowing one acre.
3. Apply 10-12 tonnes of well-rotten Farm Yard Manure before planting and 60kg single super phosphate per acre at planting. Also apply consortium biofertilizer @ 4kg/acre at planting. Apply 16 kg muriate of potash in soils low in available potassium.
4. Spray Stomp 30 EC (pendimethalin) 1300 ml/acre or Sencor 70 WP (metribuzin) 400g/acre or Atrataf 50 WP (atrazine) 600g/acre within 2-3 days after planting turmeric and spread uniformly 36 q/acre paddy straw over the entire field for weed control.

**FODDERS**

1. For early kharif fodders, sowing of bajra, maize, cowpea etc. may be carried out after harvesting rabi crops. Cowpea is a very quick growing leguminous fodder which can be sown as a mixture with maize or bajra.
2. Take last cutting of berseem which is to be kept for seed during this month. Berseem crop for seed production should be frequently irrigated. Kashni and other weeds should be rogued out.
3. Stop irrigation to lucerne after full blossom to arrest vegetative growth for better seed production.
4. Grow perennial fodders on some area. For this purpose, guinea grass and napier bajra can be sown in April.

**STORE GRAIN INSECT PESTS**

Store new grains in clean godowns or receptacles. Plug all cracks, crevices and holes in the godown thoroughly. Disinfect old gunny bags by dipping in emulsion of 6 ml Sumicidin 20 EC or 5 ml Cymbush 25 EC in 10 litres of water for 10 minutes and dry these in shade before filling with grains or use new gunny bags.

**RECLAIMING SALINE AND ALKALI SOILS**

For reclamation of kallar soils, follow the steps given below:
1. Get the salt-affected soil tested from PAU or nearest soil testing laboratory. For this, take four samples up to 1 metre depth from 0-15 cm, 15-30 cm, 30-60 cm and below 60 cm.
2. Prepare strong bunds around the field.
3. After levelling and ploughing the field, apply heavy irrigation with good quality tubewell water or canal water so that excess salts leach down.
4. When the field comes into field capacity (watter), if recommended, apply gypsum according to soil test report.
VEGETABLES

Tomato
Irrigate the tomato crop once a week to encourage maximum fruit setting and development of fruits. Varieties viz. Punjab Ratta, Punjab Chhuhara, PNR-7 and Punjab Upma as well as hybrid TH-1 start ripening during this month. Harvest the red turning and red ripe fruits regularly to catch distant and local market, respectively. While harvesting the fruits, every precaution should be taken to minimize injury and disturbance to the natural canopy of the plants.

Brinjal, Capsicum, Chilli and Cucurbits
These vegetable crops sown under low –tunnel or poly net house conditions start giving fruits. Harvest fruits twice a week in the afternoon except bottle gourd where harvesting should be done in the morning. All the crops are pollinated by insects and human movement at flower opening and pollination time disturbs pollinators and cause serious set back to fruit-setting and yield. Irrigate these crops once a week.

Onion
Take care of kharif onion nursery sown in March and irrigate regularly after 5-7 days intervals.

Seed Production
Harvest seed crops of pea, carrot, radish and turnip. In order to avoid shattering of seeds of carrot, turnip, pea and radish in the field, start harvesting even when a few topmost pods per branch are yellowish green. Shift immediately to the thrashing floor. After complete drying, thrash, grade and pack the seeds. In carrot harvest seeds from primary and secondary umbels only.

Chilli
Transplant seedlings of chilli in the afternoon keeping ridges at 75 cm and plants at 45-60 cm distance and apply light irrigation immediately. Apply 20 kg muriate of potash, 175 kg single superphosphate and 35 kg urea per acre. After a week, replant into the gaps and irrigate immediately.

Garlic
Stop irrigation in the first week but apply light irrigation prior to harvesting to facilitate the operation and uproot in the last week. Cure in the field for 5 to 7 days. Tie the produce in bundles of a kg each, shift in a cool and ventilated place. Sort out bulbs with dried cloves during storage.

VEGETABLE PESTS

1. Fruit borer attack in tomato crop can be checked by spraying 30 ml of Fame 480 SL or 60ml Coragen 18.5 or 200ml Indoxacarb 14.5 SC in 100 litres of water per acre. Observe waiting period of 3 days after the spray of Fame and one day after the spray of coragen.
2. To protect the tomato crop from early blight spray the crop with Indofil M-45 @ 600 g/acre in 200 litres of water.
HORTICULTURAL OPERATIONS

1. During this month there is a marked change in weather. The temperature rises rapidly and humidity gets low. The growers are advised to adopt the measures to save their valuable fruit trees particularly newly planted from drought and sun injury. Apply light and frequent irrigations during this month to young plants.

2. The heavy bearing cultivars of peaches like Shan-E-Punjab and of plum like Kala Amritsari and Sutlej Purple normally need fruit thinning in early days of the month to minimize the danger of limb-breakage and to improve the marketable size and quality of the fruits. Apply irrigation at 3-4 days interval to peach varieties Partap, Shan-i-Punjab and Florida Prince as the fruits are developing during this period.

3. Apply second dose of inorganic fertilizers to the fruit trees of citrus, pear, litchi, plum, grapes etc.

4. The stock sprouts emerging from the newly planted young fruit plants below the bud union should be removed/pinched off regularly.

5. In young orchards Sathi Moong can be sown upto first week.

6. To check zinc deficiency in citrus, spray the affected trees with 0.47 zinc sulphate (4.7g/litre of water) solution, without addition of lime, to spring flush.

7. In order to get only winter seasons guava crop, spray urea @ 10% or 600mg/litre NAA during April-May when maximum flowers have opened. Pruning of terminal portion of shoots (20-30 cm) in last week of April can also be done to avoid rainy season crop. Also withhold irrigation during this period.

8. Spray 200 ml Crocodile/Confidor 17.8 SL or 160 g Actara 25 WG per acre in 500 litres of water on citrus crop to control citrus psylla and aphids.
ORNAMENTALS

Annuals
1. Prepare the beds for summer annuals by mixing well Rotten FYM seedlings of Cosmos, Gaillardia, Gomphrena, Kochia, Zinnia etc. are ready these may be transplanted. Transplanting work should preferably be carried out in the evening followed by light irrigation.
2. Seeds collected from the winter flowering annuals may be stored after proper drying for the next season in air tight containers.

Permanent plants
Irrigate these plants regularly. Do not allow the weeds to grow around them. The Cannas can be selected for further propagation.

Chrysanthemum
In case of large-flowered chrysanthemum encourage growth in beds by regular watering. For small flowered chrysanthemum, branching may be encouraged by pinching. For small flowered varieties may also exhibit second flush.

Roses
Flowering of the rose will almost be over in this month. Keep on removing the faded flowers and suckers from the root stock. Remove the dry flowers from the plants of desi gulab to enhance more flowering.

Lawns
For having lush green lawns, their timely irrigation and frequent mowing is very important. Irrigation of lawns through sprinklers is the best way for getting excellent results.

Pot plants
Foliage plants in pots must have resumed growth activity by this time. The sensitive plants should be moved away from the direct sun to semi shade conditions.

Bulbous plants
The Gladioli bulbs should be taken out from the soil, cleaned and dried in shade. These should be dried under shade for 2-3 weeks and are then packed and stored in cold storage at 4°C. The summer flowering bulbs of caladiums, Football Lilly and Tuberose may be planted early this month, if not planted in the last month.

Marigold: Summer marigold Punjab Gainda No.1 can be transplanted in the field during this month, if the seedlings already. Just give light irrigation after transplanting.
AGROFORESTRY

**Poplar**
1. As the temperature has started rising, thus irrigate the poplar plantations at 7-10 days interval instead of fortnightly.
2. Turmeric and sugarcane can be sown in poplar having less than three years of age. In the plantations of more than three years age, fodder crops should be raised.
3. The attack of Poplar leaf defoliator and leaf webber starts in this month. Control the insects by collecting and destroying infested leaves.

**Eucalyptus**
Keep on irrigating the *Eucalyptus* plantations at 15 days intervals during April.
BEE KEEPING
Bee strength of honey bee colonies during April is about at peak. Keep vigil of swarming in the colonies and manage to prevent and check swarming. Colonies should be provided enough space in the form of raised empty combs or frames with wax foundations and super chambers to cope-up with brood rearing and honey storage. The early part of the month is still suitable for queen bee rearing. If drone brood rearing is continued, the stock multiplication can be undertaken either by dividing the colonies or through mass rearing the queen bees. The progressive beekeepers should prefer the latter method for its well known advantages. Older queen bees may also be replaced, if not replaced as yet during the season, with the new ones raised preferably from the selected good stock following mass queen bee rearing technique. Dust sulphur powder on the top bars of bee combs @ 1.0 g per comb against brood mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae*). Alternatively, fumigation with formic acid (85%) @ 5 ml daily for two weeks may be applied which, however, should be avoided during nectar flow. The latter treatment will also take care of *Varroa* mite. In the case of infestation by *Varroa*, destruction of sealed drone brood comb part, *Varroa* trapping on drone brood and then its destruction, dusting of icing sugar in between bee combs and use of sticky papers with *Varroa* bottom board, can also be integrated. Keep vigil of the brood diseases and on suspicion, immediately consult expert and suggested control measures should be undertaken; non-chemical methods should be preferred. Use of antibiotics should be avoided. Proper spacing among the colonies and extraction of honey only from the supers separated from brood chamber with queen excluder help in preventing spread of *Varroa* and brood diseases among the colonies in an apiary. If *Eucalyptus* is in bloom around the apiary and colonies have surplus sealed honey, it should be extracted. All necessary precautions, for preventing robbing in the apiary, must be observed during and after honey extraction. Afterwards, commercial beekeepers may migrate their apiaries to sunflower growing areas. Considering the ensuing summer season, colonies should be managed to be shifted under shade.
MUSHROOM FARMING

1. Make arrangement for the procurement of wheat straw to be used for button mushroom cultivation starting in September.

2. Book seed for paddy straw mushroom and milky mushroom in the first half of April for its use in growing these mushrooms.

3. Start cultivation of paddy straw mushroom from mid April onwards. For this purpose, use 1-1½ kg paddy straw bundles after wetting to lay the paddy straw bed as per recommended technology.

4. Spray water on the beds twice daily. Mushrooms start appearing by 10-12th day and continues for three weeks.

5. Milky mushroom cultivation using boiled wheat straw (2 kg/bag) as per recommend technology to be started in this month. Bags will be ready for casing after 17-20 days.
DAIRY FARMING

1. Summer season is approaching, therefore efforts should be made to protect the animals from summer heat and stress.
2. As feed intake is reduced due to effect of high temperature. Hence, protein level in the concentrate mixture need to be increased which can be done by increasing oilseed cakes by 5-7 per cent.
3. Watch the animals for heat symptoms and get the animal inseminated between 12 to 18 hours after the onset of heat.
4. Take adequate steps for calf management and feed colostrum within 1-2 hours of the birth without waiting for expulsion of the placenta.
5. To prevent tick infestation, spray the sheds/barn and animal regularly with Butox liquid @ 2 ml per litre of water and repeat after 10 days.
6. Keep the shed and animal clean.
7. Make sure that all the animals are vaccinated against FMD, if still not, then get them vaccinated immediately, keep their record and repeat after six months.
8. Do not feed excess wheat/ cereals to dairy animals. This can be fatal.

POULTRY FARMING

1. It is the best time to replace the stock. Cull the unprofitable birds to provide sufficient space to young chicks. Brooding in these days can be carried out easily.
2. Reduce the thickness of litter and change the wet liter.
3. Provide cool and fresh water to birds. Provide sufficient number of waterers to avoid excess movement of birds.
4. Vaccination schedule must be followed strictly.
5. Vaccinate the chicks of 6-8 weeks of age with Ranikhet disease vaccine and fowl pox vaccine at 8-10 weeks of age.
6. Start deworming the pullets at 3 months of age and then regularly at one month interval.
7. White wash the poultry shed from outside especially roof. This will help to reflect the sun rays.
8. Provide artificial lights during early morning so that birds can consume feed in cool hours.
9. In order to compensate decrease in feed intake, level of all the nutrients need to be increased.
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