



## **Dr. Mukhtar Singh**

(b. January 5, 1915)

Dr. Mukhtar Singh was born in West Punjab (now in Pakistan) on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1915. He did his graduation in 1934 followed by the Master's degree in Plant Physiology from the Punjab University in 1942. He got his Ph.D. degree in Agronomy from Edinburgh, U.K. in 1948. Dr. Mukhtar Singh began his career as Research Assistant in the Department of Agriculture, Punjab in 1935 and continued there till 1945. During 1945-48 he was at Edinburgh, UK to obtain his Ph.D. in agronomy. On his return to India he joined as Agronomist at the Central Tobacco Research Institute, Rajahmundry (Andhra Pradesh). In 1950, he moved to the Central Potato Research Institute, Patna as its first Agronomist and worked for nearly seven years. Thereafter, he joined Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi. He was promoted to the post of Dy. Agriculture Commissioner (Agronomy) and worked in this position for three years. In 1965, he became the Director, Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute, Jhansi and during 1968-69 held additional charge of the post of the Director, Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur. Dr. Mukhtar Singh took over as Director, Central Potato Research Institute in 1969 and retired at the same post in October, 1975. Dr. Mukhtar Singh was Fellow of a number of professional societies in India and abroad. He was Chairman of the Soil Science Agronomy Panel, ICAR during 1970-72, Chairman of the Indian Society of Plant Physiology in 1972 and Founder President, Indian Potato Association in 1974-1975. He was leader of the study team on Potato and Tuber Crops and was a member of the Sub-groups on water use, agro-climatic regions, fodder crops under National Commission on Agriculture. After his retirement he was appointed by ICAR as Scientist Emeritus (Agronomy) in which capacity he remained engaged in guiding a team of research workers/students in the Agronomy Department of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. As Research Assistant at the Department of Agriculture, Punjab during 1935-45, Dr. Mukhtar Singh conducted agronomical and physiological research in cotton for Punjab and Sind region. He worked on the agronomy of potato crop at Edinburgh (1945-48) and of tobacco at Rajahmundry (1948- 50). At IARI, New Delhi, Dr. Singh worked on agronomy with special reference to irrigation of several crops. He also taught post-graduate classes for nearly five years. During his stay at ICAR-CPRI, he made outstanding contribution on potato agronomy, soil and water management, fertilizer use and weed control. He did commandable work on the interrelation between seed size, spacing and fertilizers, water management, the effect of growth regulators on potato, dormancy breaking of freshly harvested tubers, post-harvest treatment and storage management. He started the programme on the direct, cumulative and residual effect of fertilizers in different crop rotations, both in the hills and the plains, as well as in inter-cropping and multiple cropping patterns with potatoes. He invented the technique of smoke-screen method which helped the growers to protect their crops against frost; a crust-breaker for special use on ridges; and a seed-treatment chamber for breaking the dormancy of freshly harvested tubers with triple (vapour) treatment of thiourea, ethylene chlorohydrine and GA<sub>3</sub>. His research on the country storage design at Patna has relevance even today in areas where facilities of refrigerated storage are not available. Dr. Singh guided over 15 students for their M.Sc. and Ph.D. degree.