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PARB's approved projects promise doable outcomes

PAKISSAN REPORT

LAHORE, May 14, 2011: The 25th Board meeting of Punjab Agricultural Research Board (PARB) has approved funding of Rs. 136 Million for 10 research projects in crops and livestock sector.



The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Minister for Agriculture Punjab Malik Ahmed Ali Aulakh, attended by Secretary Agriculture Capt. Arif Nadeem, MPA Shah Jahan Bhatti, Chief Executive PARB Dr. Mubarik Ali, representatives from Finance, Planning & Development, Livestock and Forestry & Fisheries departments.

In welcome remarks Malik Ahmed Ali Aulakh said that "PARB's role is very important in present scenario to compete with global technological advancement and modern sciences". He said although many research institutes were already working but functioning of PARB was made sure to work for the development, promotion and conduct of agricultural research in Punjab to bring agricultural technologies for the prosperities of farmer's. "Every penny should be utilized carefully because due to scarce resources we have to be more focused on specific areas of research" he added.

The approved research projects along with details are as follows:

1: "Enhancing performance of buffalo through improved feeding management at different physiological stages up to first lactation" (5 years project costing 20.634 million out of which 1.580 million will be shared by ALBURAQ Company)" Malnutrition is one of the major problem in improving the production performance of animals. The demand for high quality food such as dairy products is rising and putting pressures on milk prices. The project is aimed at employing improved feeding management strategies at different physiological stages to increase life time productivity of buffalos. Dr. Mubrik Ali while talking about the private sector contribution said that "PARB wants to strengthen public private partnership in research and initially private sector was not interested for collaboration. Now they are contributing 10-15% or even more in most of the research projects".

2: "Enhancement of cost effective mutton production through genetically enhanced prolificacy management"(4 Years projects costing Rs. 12.988 million).Small ruminants contribute significantly to the income of rural farmers in Pakistan. In order to increase the production of meat, modern technology can be helpful through establishment of high producing animals/flocks of Lohi sheep. The project will develop flock with multiple kidding that will be maintained at the center and these animals will be supplied to the farmers.

3: "Development, Evaluation and Promotion of herbal anticoccidal(s) for the control of coccidiosis in poultry" (3 years project costing Rs.10.15 Million). Coccidiosis is major health hazard in poultry industry of Pakistan. Estimated losses due to avian coccidiosis have been reported to be Rs. 14826 million. Although chemical control is available but it can cause residual toxicity issues related to human health. Available reports revealed that a variety of natural substances have been investigated to control this disease. This project will evaluate and develop cost effective and environment friendly control of avian coccidiosis through natural products. This economic friendly treatment will enhance meat and eggs production in Pakistan and save money being spend on import of vaccines.

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4: "Improvement of lentil germplasm for high yield and disease resistance" (5 years project costing Rs.15.119 million). Lentil is the second major rabi pulse crop after chickpea in Pakistan that contains 25% protein. The area under production is decreasing (since 1986 the area and production has reduced to 71.42% and 72.91% in Punjab and 56.78% and 54.28% In Pakistan). The reasons are due to non availability of true seeds, diseases and weeds. The project will develop high yielding and disease resistant lentil germplasm. Effective weedicide may also be develop to control weeds at proper time to save yield losses.

5: "Preparation and field evaluation of thermostable V4 Newcastle disease vaccine" (3 years projects costing Rs. 20.460 million out of which 6.641 million will be shared by the private sector).Newcastle is one of the major disease of poultry in Pakistan. An imported vaccine against ND is being imported to control the disease but meets only 1-3% requirement in Pakistan. Secondly, these vaccines are heat labile, needs refrigeration and cold chain storage. Thermostable vaccine has a promising approach to control ND in Pakistan where cold chain facilities cannot function properly due to excessive load shedding.

6: "Development of transgenic cotton with multiple genes resistant to cotton leaf curl virus" (5 years project costing Rs. 23.233 Million) CLCV is infecting different crops species in Pakistan and this particular virus has plagued our economy since years. PARB is already doing two projects on CLCV but the major activity which makes this project distinct from others is the cloning of multiple gene cassettes containing three virus resistant genes.

7: "Development Evaluation and promotion of distillery yeast sludge (DYS) based poultry feed and prebiotic agent for productivity enhancement of poultry meat and eggs (2 years project costing 16.270 million).Poultry industry of Pakistan is facing three major problems, high cost feed (canola and soybean as protein source), Heat stress in control houses (cannot function due to load shedding) and use of antibiotics that effect human health. This project will develop cost effective poultry feed and enhance meat and eggs production.

8: "Economics of Livestock Production and its marketing in Punjab" (3 years project costing Rs. 2.95 million). Currently no authentic data on production, consumption, marketing practices, constraints faced by farmers and their marketing is available for Livestock sector in Punjab. Knowledge based policies can play an important role in the development of any sector. Besides this, policy makers may also need information on the pattern of changing demand for different meat cuts, branding of meat and other meat quality aspects. This project will focus on documenting the production and marketing practices of cattle including calves, buffalo, and sheep by the subsistence livestock farmers in comparison with commercial livestock farmers starting from farm level up to marketing of live animals, production and marketing cost. The collected data will be analyzed to reach at valid conclusions and policy guidelines will be develop to improve livestock marketing.

9: "Development of meat type Japanese Quail with higher body weight (Coturnix, coturnix Japonica) acclimatized to indigenous managemental conditions through 6 generations of Selective breeding programme"(4 years project costing Rs. 14.444 million). Quail framing was introduced in Pakistan during early seventies with the introduction of breeding stock of Japanese Quail on commercial lines with good genetic potential, having improved growth rate, FCR, fleshing ability resistance against diseases and vitality as compared to local Quail called betair". Since that time the same commercial quails are being reproduced with continuous inbreeding which has deteriorated the genetic potential of the imported quail. The quail farmers all over Pakistan are facing these problems in the production and marketing of quails. This project is focused to improve commercial quail through the increase in weight of the local quail in each generation starting from 150g as a benchmark from its original weight targeting to 250g at 4 week of age till 6th generation. This will be available to the local quail farmers which would be suitable to harsh environmental conditions and capable to produce more and better quality meat.

10: "Development of Vaccine for the control of buffalo and cattle calf Diarrhoea" (3 years project costing Rs. 14.130 Million). Among all diseases, diarrhea is the most dangerous disease for calf health. Infectious diarrhoea is caused by viruses, bacteria and parasites. Control of this disease can save the life of young calves which will help in increased production of milk and meat. This project will develop a multivalent vaccine to prevent calf diarrhoea.

Courtesy PAKISSAN TEAM

