

PARB places research project before its board

RECORDER REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Agricultural Research Board (PARB) has placed a research project before its board for approval aimed at developing silage-making technology and to promote the use of conventional as well as non-conventional fodders in silage formed for year round availability.

University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) has designed the project called 'development, evaluation, promotion of silage technology for productivity enhancement of large ruminant animals.'

Silage is an important animal feed, especially after the expansion of commercial farming. Due to nutritional deficiencies in animals, milk and meat production has been dwindling since years and had a very bad effect on our economy. Sky rocketing prices of concentrate feed has forced the livestock farmers to depend more on fodders crops, but their availability during certain months is very lean. The farmers also harvest these at premature stages; adversely affect the productivity of animals.

"Conventional silage is maize based, the project will develop 12 silage formulations from different types of fodder crops, including three hybrid grasses (sorghum, sadabahar, jumbo grass), maize fodder, corn stovers, oats, Barseem, wheat straw and citrus pulp. These silages will be evaluated in terms of animal's intake, digestibility and nutritional balance in order to screen out the best silage formulation", said Dr. Rafique-Ur Rehman member Administration and Finance (PARB) speaking at a consultative meeting arranged by the Board to assess the problems related to silage making, processing, animal feeding, research update and regarding future strategies.

Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Dean Animal Nutrition UAF pointed out that milk production is declining because the animals remained unnourished and malnutrition at

the same time. "Two percent land allocated for fodder is decreasing every 10 years" he added. He explained that irregular supply of fodder resulted in low productivity and silage is the best way of conserving fodder as well as it is the inexpensive source of feed. He further said that year round fodder availability through silage making is our mission.

Dr. Makhdoom A. Jabbar (UAF) said that non-availability of fodder, lack of awareness, lack of proper machinery, technical guidance, difficulty in transportation and its marketing are the key issues which should be solved on urgent basis. He said need is to fix parameters according to our climatic conditions. While talking about moisture content in fodder he said "it should be fixed between 65-70 percent and a basic research is needed in this regard". He also stressed to optimize conditions in silage making for small and large scale farmers. He said PARB is doing a commendable job by involving multi institutes in research and private sector contribution will be helpful for the promotion and commercialisation of silage making.

Umar Husain from Nestle said his Company has developed many Silages, expectation from PARB is to purchase machinery and keep it at district level for the use of farmers on rent basis. In its reply Dr. Ahmed Saleem member Planning and Programming PARB said that PARB has a window "Import of Technologies" and the proposed idea can be funded in shape of research project.

Talking to the participants of the meeting Mumtaz Khan Manais (A livestock farmer) said "it is a horrible fact that our animals are 40% fodder and 100% water deficit". He said we are rearing animals on cropping land while most of the developed countries are rearing on by-products. He further briefed that nutritionally enriched silage can increase milk and meat productivity and it is the cheap way of animal feed.