



Pir Mehr Ali Shah
Arid Agriculture University
Rawalpindi

NEWSLETTER

Jan - Mar 2017



Inauguration Ceremony of "Pir Mehr Ali Shah Chair"



Governor Punjab Inaugurating Indigenous Hydroponic Unit at Governor House, Lahore



A walk held to celebrate World Water & Forest Day at University Main Campus



Rainwater Harvesting Pond at Main Campus



NEWS LETTER

Jan - Mar, 2017

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Governor Punjab Inaugurated “Pir Mehr Ali Shah Chair”



Punjab Governor Malik Muhammad Rafique Rajwana urged the youth to curb terrorism and sectarianism by developing Islamic thoughts and promoting the teachings of Sufis like Pir Mehr Ali Shah (RA).

Governor Punjab said at the inauguration ceremony of “Pir Mehr Ali Shah Chair” at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), on February 1, 2017.

Pir Syed Ghulam Moin-ul-Haq Gillani Sajjada Nasheen Golra Sharif, PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, faculty members and large number of students were also present at the ceremony.

Governor Punjab said that there is a dire need to understand and promote, through research and higher education, teaching & philosophy as well as the message of peace and harmony, integrity and human friendship, given by Pir Mehr Ali Shah (RA).

He said that the establishment of Pir Mehr Ali Shah Chair will be a milestone in the history of

university and appreciated the efforts of University administration particularly Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad for the establishment of the chair. He suggested to establish a research center for promoting research on teachings of Pir Mehr Ali Shah so that youth can get benefit from it. It will also





become a better strategy regarding the challenges that muslims are facing in knowledge and research. The great cultural traditions of science and research have always been formed by the rise of Muslims. , he added.

He said that the Pakistan's future is in the hands of students and negative mind-set of the youth can be changed by the spiritual teachings of the Pir Mehr Ali Shah.

Pir Syed Ghulam Moin-ul-Haq Gillani, Sajjada Nasheen Golra Sharif said that this chair will be helpful for the students to promote the teaching and spiritual wisdom among the youth on the different aspects of Sufism, given by all sufis over different times.

PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, in his address said that civilized nations establish such a Chair in their

educational institutions and research centers, to acknowledge the achievements of Great scholar, preacher and thinker. He added that establishment of Pir Mehr Ali Shah Chair



would certainly expand the research in social sector and also turns the dream of community development into reality. Moreover, a National Sufi Conference will be organized under Pir Mehr Ali Shah Chair and soon a specific day will be decided to extend the teachings of Pir Sahib, he added.



Governor Punjab Inaugurated Indigenous Hydroponics Unit Designed by PMAS-AAUR at Governor House Lahore

Governor Punjab, Malik Muhammad Rafique Rajwana said that the use of modern technology in agriculture would strengthen economy and improve lives of farmers in the country.

He said this at the inaugural ceremony of Indigenous Hydroponics Unit designed by Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) held at Governor House Punjab, Lahore, on February 16, 2017.

Punjab Agriculture Minister Muhammad Naeem Akhtar Bhabba, Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, Vice Chancellor LUMS Dr. Sohail Naqvi, Vice Chancellor Muhammad Nawaz Shareef Agriculture University Multan Dr. Asif Ali, Special Assistant to CM Punjab Rai Haider, farmers and faculty members were also present at the ceremony.

Governor Punjab said that government is

promoting the use of modern technology in agriculture farming so that agro-based industry could flourish. He said that it is inevitable to develop agriculture sector on modern lines in order to meet the rising needs of food in the world, adding the research on hydroponics technology is a blessing. He said this amazing technology can be used in the desert, mountain and barren areas as well.

Governor said that Hydroponics is 21st Century technology in agriculture sector and the research. This technology will be promoted by the Provincial Agriculture Department in collaboration with the PMAS-AAUR to address off season vegetables gaps and price hikes.

He appreciated the efforts of management, faculty and especially Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of PMAS-AAUR, who developed and indiginized hydroponics technology at local levels with limited





resources as earlier this mode of the technology was very expensive for farmers.

Punjab Agriculture Minister, Muhammad Naeem Akhtar Bhabba said that massive agriculture production can be achieved within limited time & resources by utilizing this modern technology. He said that Punjab Government is focusing on the economic as well as agricultural aspects. Hydroponics System is the need of time and its amazing aspects and results will surely lead agriculture sector towards fruitful direction, he added. He urged that educational institutes and other organizations must work together to play their role for the awareness of technology at the root levels, so that we would get more

benefits.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Naiz Ahmad briefed the participants about educational, research & development activities within the varsity and indigenous Hydroponics technology. He said that hydroponics is the agriculture of 21st century, in which cultivation is done by feed and water under a particular process by controlling climate changes into favorable conditions. This technology not only saves water but also an environment friendly, one can get agriculture production without pollution. He said that this process of cultivation is a milestone in agriculture sector and farmers can increase their income by adopting this method.



Awareness Seminar on Khadim-e-Aala Kissan Package



Punjab Agriculture Minister, Naeem Akhtar Bhabha said "Khadim-e-Ala Kissan Package" will obviously lead Agriculture Department towards development. This is an exemplary package in the history of Pakistan ever presented for agriculture development.

Agriculture Minister addressed to the farmers of Rawalpindi Division at awareness seminar on "Khadim-e-Ala Kissan Package" at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) on March 21, 2017.

MPA Zaib Un Nisa Awan, MPA Lubna Rehan Peerzada, Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmed Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR, Ch. M. Yousaf Chehel Director Agriculture Extension Rawalpindi Div, Dr. M. Arif Khan Deputy Director Agriculture Extension Rawalpindi Div, Officials of Agriculture Department and a large number of representatives of farmers were present.

Agriculture Minister further said that 100 Billion Rupees have been allocated as loan

without interest under Kissan Package, targeting the issues of small farmers ever in the history of Pakistan. A loan of Rs. 25000/- per acre for Rabi crop and Rs. 40000/- per acre for Kharif crop will be available. The procedure of getting loan is much easier; one can register himself at Regional Agriculture Centre.

He said that contribution of Potohar region is significant in Gross Agriculture Production of the country. He informed that Chief Minister, Mian Shehbaz Sharif has already launched Olive Cultivation Project amounting Rs. 279 Millions to meet with country's eatable oil needs. Under this project free olive trees are being distributed among the farmers. Punjab





Govt. is installing Drip Irrigation System up to subsidy of 60-70 percent, which would result in uplifting production up to 20-30 percent, he added.

Vice Chancellor, PMAS-AAUR, Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmed said that Lack of coordination among research, education, extension and farmers is the major hurdle in agriculture development. He appreciated Chief Minister's Kahdim-e-Punjab Kissan Package and the efforts of Punjab Agriculture Minister for agriculture development. He said that the University services are available to facilitate the farmers. He further said PMAS-AAUR is

putting all its efforts for the betterment and economic progress of agriculture.

Director Agriculture Extension, Ch. M. Yousaf Chehel, Deputy Director Agriculture Extension, Dr. M. Arif Khan and Director Water Management, Dr. M. Iqbal also addressed the ceremony.

MPA Zaib Un Nisa Awan and MPA Lubna Rehan Pirzada applauded & congratulated Mian Shehbaz Sharif, Kahdim-e-Aala for such a marvelous Kissan Package and urged the participants to play their role for the development of Pakistan.

Blood Donation Camp

A blood donation camp for thalassaemia patients was held at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) on January 4, 2015. The blood donation camp was held in collaboration with the thalassaemia centre of PBM, which drew a huge response from the students especially girls who turned up to donate blood for the patients suffering from thalassaemia. More than 100 students and faculty members donated blood at the camp. At the blood camp, Pakistan Baitul Mal (PBM) Managing Director Barrister Abid Waheed Sheikh was the chief guest while Senator Najma Hameed, MPAs Tehseen Fawad, Zaibunnisa, Sobia Satti, and Lubna Rehan Pirzada, PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, deans, directors, faculty members and large number of students were also present. Barrister Abid Waheed Sheikh, said that the practice of voluntary blood donation is very low in the country as compared to the developed countries. He said there is a dire need to create awareness among the masses regarding thalassaemia and urged the students to continue actively participating in welfare activities especially those targeting the poor section of the society. Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad called on all the students to donate blood and highlighted the importance of voluntary blood donation in protecting precious human lives. He also appreciated the donation of blood by female students.





National Tax Justice Youth Film Festival

A National Tax Justice Youth Film Festival was held at PMAS-AAUR on March 21, 2017 in which university students from Punjab and Sindh. They highlighted gender insensitive tax laws and their impact on women's economic, social and political life through film.

The festival focused on raising awareness of fiscal justice in the country, 32 entries were submitted by students of 20 public and private universities under the theme 'Gender and Tax Nexus'.



The event chief guest was Ambassador Netherlands Jeannette Seppen, and speakers included University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, Oxfam Country Director Mohammad Qazilbash, musician Jawad Ahmed and activist Farzana Bari.

Netherlands' Ambassador Jeannette Seppen said that she was impressed to see so many talented young students to be engaged in subject of taxes. Nobody likes to pay taxes, although taxes are a key source of income for any democratic government to finance sustainable development and economic growth.

PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said that country's tax system is based on progressive tax model, higher the income; the higher would be the tax. He said that Islam is the religion based on equalities, women should also take initiatives for empowerment



and economic progress of nation alongwith their studies.

Farzana Bari, the former head of Gender Studies at Quaid-e-Azam University, said that women in Pakistan are confronted with complex challenges. She said that both urban as well as rural women lack access to economic and political opportunities.

During his welcome remarks Oxfam Country Director Mohammed Qazilbash said that only a pro-poor tax law along with a fair tax system would lead the country towards betterment.

At the end, the chief guest Netherlands' Ambassador along with Vice Chancellor, PMAS-AAUR distributed awards, shields and certificates among the winners and participants of the film festival.

Prominent politicians, social activists, journalists, artists, film makers, academics and government officials attended the festival.

The event was organised by PMAS-AAUR in collaboration with Indus Consortium, Oxfam Pakistan and RISE for Equality.



PMAS-AAUR Observed National Green Day

Pir Mehr Ali Shah-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) observed National Green Day, on February 9, 2017 and conducted plantation drive on the campus under the Prime Minister's Green Pakistan Program.

The Green Pakistan Program was conducted following the directions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan for reinstating forestry in Pakistan and encountering the harmful effects of climate change.



PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad inaugurated the green campaign by planting a tree. He was accompanied by university officials, faculty members and students.

Vice Chancellor, in his address, appreciated the tree plantation drive and said that there is dire need to raise environmental awareness among the society. He emphasized the need for every individual to take action to protect the natural assets and resources of our beautiful country. "Promoting plantation, greenery and the natural environment is essential for a vibrant and healthy society," he added. He also lauded the efforts of Estate Care officials for making the university campuses beautiful and environment-friendly.

The Vice Chancellor, students and staff of the university also arranged a Green Day Walk around the campus.

PMAS-AAUR Achieved "W" Category

The Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University (PMAS-AAUR) again achieved Excellence in Quality Assurance as announced by Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Commission got the mandate to enhance the quality of education of all Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) through Internal and External Quality Assurance Mechanism. In this regard, Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Mechanism is implemented in all DAIs that is being assessed on annual basis by QAA HEC through Scorecard System.

The progress of implementation of IQA Mechanism for period from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 of PMAS-AAUR was assessed on already defined parameters and obtained 89.89% score. PMAS-AAUR, QEC ranked in topmost "W" category.

It was appreciated by the HEC that under the dynamic leadership of Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of PMAS-AAUR the progress of IQA Mechanism at university is accelerating in a well organized manner. It was also appreciated that hard work of Prof. Dr. Riaz Ahmad, as head of QEC, Directorate of Quality Assurance along with his team will keep their efforts continue to uplift the standard of education at the university.

Training Workshop on Hydroponics Agriculture



A 15-day (February 02-16, 2017) training workshop on hydroponics agriculture (soilless farming) was held at the Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, with an aim to float the idea of hydroponics agriculture among the farmers so that they would make experiments in their native areas and train others.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad was chief guest at the inaugural session while deans, directors, faculty members and farmers were also present. The concluding ceremony was held at Governor House, Lahore, on February 16 where Governor Punjab Malik Muhammad Rafique Rajwana distributed certificates among the participants.

As many as 25 farmers from different parts of the province, including Multan, Faisalabad, Chakwal, Pak Patten, Attock and Rawalpindi, completed training on plant seeds without soil.

Governor Punjab while addressing the participants emphasized that the farmers should not only adopt this technology but

also create awareness among other to guide them properly regarding the hydroponics technology to encounter food shortage in future. He said there is a lot of potential in agriculture sector and bringing it along modern lines would ensure food security. He said that the hydroponics/soilless system would be a milestone in increasing the capability of agro-products.

The Governor appreciated the efforts and developments made by the University for socio-economic uplift of the farming community with special focus on rain-fed agriculture in the country.

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said hydroponics agriculture is an alternative mode of small farming for 95% farming community of Pakistan with great potential of high yields



with prime quality of fruit and vegetables in different regions of the country. He said crop production in soil is difficult because it requires a large space, labor and a large volume of water. In some places such as metropolitan areas, there is insufficient soil for crop production, he added.

Hydroponics also known as soilless agriculture, is a system of growing plants in water. It reduce problems that we experience while growing crops in the soil. It is a technology of growing plants in nutrient solutions with the use of any medium such as rock wool, coconut fiber etc., to provide mechanical support."

The Vice Chancellor urged the faculty members to improve research capabilities and expressed his commitment to transferring this technology to farmers so they may benefit from it. He said farmers should be trained to use new technologies to increase production rather than relying on traditional instruments. He appreciated that farmers are taking lot of interest in providing the hydroponics technology in Pakistan.

Efforts are underway by University to improve/convert existing tunnels into hydroponics system, he added. This was first training of eight for 200 farmers to train farmers on the hydroponics farming.



Keeping in view this entire scenario, Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) is establishing twelve Indigenous Hydroponics Units at various locations in Punjab under Punjab Government Project titled **"Testing Indigenous Hydroponics Greenhouse for Vegetable Growing"**. The project cost worth Rs. 77 million has 24 months duration. The Indigenous Hydroponics Units are being established at various locations of Punjab.



National Dialogue on “Soil Health Status of Pakistan: Potential Threats and Remedial Measures”



A national dialogue, titled 'Soil Health Status of Pakistan: Potential Threats and Remedial Measures' was held at the Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi on December 29, 2016.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Rai Niaz Ahmad was the Chief Guest at the dialogue. Scientists from various organizations, including Dr. Abdul Majid, the country manager for the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), university faculty members and students attended the event.

The speakers said that soil management practices must be reviewed to improve food production to aware farmers about the fertility of soil in the farms. They highlighted various issues related to country's soil, as well as solutions and the sustainable use of soils as a precious resource.

They emphasized on awareness-raising among farmers and decision makers about the importance of soil for human health, and

called for agro-based private sector industries to work on soil management.

Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said the sustainability of limited soil reserves needs to be promoted, and soil scientists should play their role in meeting the future challenges to food security in Pakistan. He also shared some of the latest developments in sustainable soil management for healthy food, adding that agricultural production would be double if soil efficiency may improved.

Dr. Ahmad also emphasized the need to educate the farming community about modern farming methods at a grassroots level. He said consistent efforts are required to improve natural resources particularly soil. He also expressed the hope that dialogue participants would devise key recommendations for policymakers that would help devise strategies to address soil-related problems.

PMAS-AAUR Organized International Training Program & Workshop

Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) organized two days (February 2-3, 2017) International Training program on "Ground Water Management using GIS & Remote Sensing" and International Workshop on "Literature Review, Development of Co-inquiry Teams and PRA Activities" at Pak-Korea Capacity Building Centre of the University.

The training program and workshop were jointly organized by ACIAR, UAAR, CSU Australia, PCRWR to facilitate the partners of an upcoming ACIAR project titled "Improving Groundwater Management to Enhance Agriculture and Farming Livelihoods in Pakistan". Across the Pakistan & Australia, forty participants participated in the training program and workshop.

Prof. Dr. Max Finlayson (Director, Institute for Land Policy, CSU, and Australia) was the chief guest at the inaugural sessions of the training program/workshop. While Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR and Chairman PCRWR Dr. Muhammad Ashraf graced the concluding sessions as Chief guest and Guest of honor.



Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, addressing the participants expressed that national and international organizations would come up with the solutions for ground water sustainability which will be helpful to improve the socio-economic livelihood of the farming community. He assured full support from PMAS-AAUR to solve the water management issues of the country and said that there is dire need to create awareness of improved ground water management strategies among masses to improve the water governance at micro level.

Dr. Jay Punthkay (CSU, Australia), Dr. Ashfaq Sheikh (PCRWR), Dr. Mobashir Riaz Khan (PMAS-AAUR), Dr. Hadiqa Masood (Mehran



Uni., Tando Jam), Dr. Shafqat Rasool (NED, Karachi), Engr. Usman Khalid (ICARDA) and Dr. Maqsood Ahmad (BUI-TMS, Quetta) delivered lectures in Training program on "Ground Water Management using GIS & Remote Sensing". While Dr. Richard Culas (CSU, Australia), Dr. Mitchell Michael (CSU,

Australia), Dr. Catherine (CSU, Australia), Dr. Irfan Ahmad Baig (PMAS-AAUR), Dr. Syed Khair (BUI-TMS, Quetta) and Dr. Max Finlayson (CSU, Australia) delivered lectures and expert opinions on "Literature Review, Development of Co-inquiry Teams and PRA Activities" Workshop.



PMAS-AAUR and ROHICON Signed MoU

Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) and ROHICON Academy for Research and Professional Excellence, Islamabad signed MoU on January 18, 2017, to jointly carry out various activities in order to achieve overall national objectives related to Training, Capacity Building and Research in various areas of Development and Agriculture. Under the MoU, both parties will utilize University Capacity Building Center for Providing Job/Work Place Skills & Career Services to clients on intermittent basis. Both organizations also agreed to conduct Trainings on Management, Leadership, Communication, Project/Program Management, Community Development and other Specific Trainings for students, university staff and general public at large. Under the MoU, both parties will provide Services to Conduct Surveys, Studies, third party monitoring, Project/Program Evaluation & Other Analytical Work for public and private sectors. Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR and Miss Afshan representative of ROHICON Academy for Research and Professional Excellence, Islamabad signed MoU on behalf of their respective organizations. It may be recalled that ROHICON is working to promote capacity building of youth especially university students and professionals in the field of development and conducts research/consulting services in the areas related to development sector of Pakistan. ROHICON will offer training courses for university students in social mobilization, community development, Project Management, Basic Job/Work Place Skills, Leadership, Communication, Finance/HR and Sector Specific Trainings.



International workshop on Goat Breeding and Marketing in Genomic Era

An International workshop on Goat Breeding and Marketing in Genomic Era was held at PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi on March 6-7, 2017.

The key objectives of the workshop were to highlight the issues related to goat breeding and marketing, biodiversity, conservation, and development of local goat breeds, current problems and bottleneck and ways and means to overcome these challenges.



The University's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad addressed the opening ceremony and congratulated Dr. Muhammad Moaeen-ud-Din and his team for organizing the event. He emphasized the other faculty members to work hard like ABG group for the uplift of the research in university. He welcome Prof. Dr. James M. Reecy of Iowa



State University, USA to PMAS-AAUR and expected an extended collaboration between two institutes. Experts of high national repute in Animal Breeding and Genetics joined the event along with all other stakeholders from private sector.

The event was funded by Pak USAID research project titled "Collaborative Research for Genetic Conservation and Improvement of Pakistani Goats" in collaboration with Iowa State University, USA. The project (worth Rs. 60 Million) of high national importance being executed by the Laboratory of Animal Breeding and Genetics, Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences under the supervision of Dr. Muhammad Moaeen-ud-Din, Associate Professor/Principal Investigator.



International Training Workshop on Genomic Selection



An International Training Workshop on Genomic Selection with a focus on calculation of genomic breeding value of local livestock breeds in Pakistan was held at PMAS-AAUR on March 8-9, 2017.

This is the first ever training on genomic selection. Prof. Dr. James M. Reecy (Iowa State University, USA) along with Dr. Muhammad Moaen-ud-Din was the resource persons. Training workshop was funded by Pak USAID research project titled "Collaborative Research for Genetic Conservation and Improvement of Pakistani Goats."

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, Vice Chancellor, PMAS-AAUR, at the concluding session, was the chief guest. He said there is dire need to focus on scientific growth for national development. He said that genetics is the core discipline of animal sciences and requires long-term investment in research and development to make sustainable development in the field of livestock. Vice Chancellor lauded the efforts of the research team who is actively working to solve national issues of livestock production related to genetics and breeding. Moreover, a possibility of signing MoU between Iowa State University and PMAS-AAUR was also discussed.

Dr. Muhammad Moaen-ud-Din said that now we have transferred genomic technology to the country and we are ready to extend our services to industry as well as public sector implement genomic selection for various classes of livestock.

It may be recalled that research group in Animal Breeding and Genetics succeeded in winning huge funding (Rs. 70 Million) for four research projects of extreme national significance. Research team includes Dr. Muhammad Moaen-ud-Din, Group Leader/Associate Professor, Dr. Ghulam Bilal, Five Research Associates (4 DVM and 2 M. Phil), and five supporting staff. The team is working under the umbrella of the Department of Livestock Production and Management at the Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, PMAS-AAUR. National collaborators include Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sajjad Khan (Tenured Professor and Dean Faculty of Animal Husbandry UAF) and Prof. Dr. Sohail Ahmed (Professor of Genetics) at The University of Agriculture, Peshawar.



International Seminar on Promotion of Floriculture in Pakistan

A two-day (March 6-7, 2017) international seminar on Promotion of Floriculture in Pakistan was held at PMAS-AAUR, with an aim to promote the flower cultivation at commercial and export level in Pakistan.

The seminar was arranged by the Department of Horticulture in collaboration with the Pakistan Society of Horticultural Science. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad was the chief guest at the inaugural session while two foreign speakers Dr. John M Dole from USA and Dr. Van Kester from Netherland also presented their good experiences to audience.

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmed, addressing the seminar, advised the participants to grow flowers that can meet the international quality requirements. He said that there is a great potential of floriculture in Potohar region and it is a fast growing sector of Pakistan. He added that Pakistan is blessed by favorable agro climatic conditions, cheap labor and variety of soils. He said that it has great potential to develop a strong floriculture sector. He further said that there is also great need and scope of value addition in floriculture products through processing, packaging and supply chain management. This would not only increase the farm income,

but would also help to reduce poverty, he added.

Dr John described the importance of foliage plant, cut flowers and ornamental plants. He indicated the narrow range of floriculture products in Pakistan and suggested to introduce new plant species in Pakistan. He also provided knowledge about cut flower



production all-round the year. He described the quality parameters of different cut flower required in international market. He highlighted the present scenario of floriculture in Pakistan. He pointed out the issues and their solutions to promote the floriculture business in Pakistan.

Dr. Van informed the participants about the cut flower industry in Netherlands and how they cultivate and export the cut flower to all over the world. Dr. Nadeem Akhter Abbasi, Dean Faculty of Crop and Food Sciences delivered the welcome address to participants and appreciated the participation of foreign experts.



Seminar on Integrated Weed Management a Way Forward to Weed Eradication



A seminar on 'Integrated Weed Management a way forward to Weed Eradication' was held at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), on March 7, 2017 in order to raise awareness among farmers about the benefits of weeds eradication.

The University's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad was the chief guest and the seminar was attended by faculty, students, Punjab Agriculture Department officials and farmers from various areas.



Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said farmers must be educated and guided about the harmful effects of weeds and the adverse effects of herbicides on soil and water. He suggested that the agriculture department from each province should focus on weed removal in the extension and training programmes.

He also said integrated weed management is needed to control the weed population and overcome the losses in crop production. Dr. Ahmad directed university officials to raise awareness about the benefits of weed eradication among farmers.

The Chairman of the Agronomy Department Prof. Dr. Fayyazul Hassan, Dr. Mohammad Ansar and Dr. Mohammad Abdul Ahad from PMAS-AAUR, Agriculture Department Deputy Director Dr. Mohammad Arif and the Deputy Director of the Rawalpindi Fruit and

Vegetable Project Sajjad Haider also addressed the audience.

Speakers said that vegetable crops face indigenous losses of around 80 to 83pc due to weeds, loss in food crop is 30 to 35pc. They emphasized the need for strategic planning to redesign cropping patterns to control weeds and said an integrated weed management plan must be devised for each farm and modern farming techniques should be utilized to get rid of weeds. The seminar was organized by the university's Department of Agronomy

They further stated that farmers would have to pay special attention to eradicate weeds in their fields and the agriculture department's extension wing is guiding farmers on better crop management while the private sector is also working. Dr. Ahad said indigenous losses to vegetable crops from weeds are around 80 to 83pc, and 30 to 35pc for fruit crops. Dr. Arif said weed control at the right time by using the right methods is crucial for a better yield.

A weed eradication campaign was also launched on the direction of the Punjab Agriculture Department. Vice Chancellor, faculty and students inaugurated the campaign by removing weeds from the sports ground, garden and research areas. The Vice Chancellor said the university would support awareness among farmers about weed

removal, which is a major cause of low crop production in our country.



PMAS-AAUR Organized Consultative Meeting for Prioritizing Initiatives/Proposals for ADB 2017-18



Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) and Planning and Development (P&D) Department, Government of the Punjab organized a consultative meeting for prioritizing initiatives/proposals for Annual Development Program (ADB) 2017-18, on February 13, 2017.

The meeting was chaired by Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Rai Niaz Ahmad, while Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, Member Production Sector Wing (PSW) of P&D department, Dr Ashraf, Agriculture Chief P&D, Dr Abdul Saboor, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences PMAS-AAUR, representatives of different departments of Punjab Government including extension, agri engineering, water management, agri. marketing, financial institutes, ABAD, BARI, ICARDA, SAWCRI, PARB, PERI, and NGOs were also present.

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, in his opening remarks appreciated the initiatives of the Planning and Development Department, Government of the Punjab for setting priority areas of agriculture research and

development (R&D) particularly for the agriculture of Barani region. He added that University would offer all out support and professional platform for pursuing research being defined by planning and development Department. Dr. Niaz briefed participants about the success stories of the university in rain water harvesting, hydroponics, pond formation, and entrepreneurial activities of students.



Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, Member PSW of P&D Department, said that they are interested to look into the issues associated with input, output and marketing of agriculture sector. He said, "Government is interested in following the Rule of 20-80 in which by making an investment of Rs 20 we would be able to reap the benefit worth of Rs 80." He also focused on optimal utilization of agricultural resources.

Dr. Ashraf, Agriculture Chief, P&D Department discussed the main purpose of government initiatives in the framework of new economic growth. He said, We are looking for priority areas of research and development along with issues, solutions and way forward. He was happy to say that this is the first time that technocrats and academicians are being given such an honor to involve in consultation activities. He hoped that this exercise would help the government in setting priorities.

Dr Abdul Saboor, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences in his presentation identified the priority areas of research and development for barani region. He defined that arid

agriculture should included desert agriculture, mountain agriculture and reverie agriculture.

In a meeting, Vice Chancellor also appreciated the idea of Dr. Mushtaq Gill to start a Centre of Excellence in the university in which besides having a good database, branded research related to arid region would be conducted. A new campus needs to be started in riverian area of Punjab for broadening the research focus of arid region.

A number of agricultural experts, deans and directors of the university, farmers and development practitioners gave their valuable input on agriculture, livestock, fishery, and forestry.



Girls' Sports Gala

Directorate of Sports organized a colorful girls sports gala on January 4, 2017 with an aim to provide female students an opportunity to explore their talent in a practical way.

Students from various departments showed their enthusiasm by participating in different sports activities. Senator Najma Hameed was the chief guest while MNA Tahira Aurangzeb was guest of Honor. MPAs Tehseen Fawad, ZaibunNisa, Sobia Satti, and Lubna Rehan Pirzada, PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Dr Rai Niaz Ahmad, deans/directors, faculty members and students were also present.

Senator Najma Hameed and MNA Tahira Aurangzeb, while addressing the gathering, said that women are the half of country's population and through healthy sports activities they can prepare themselves for the tough future challenges.

Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said that such extracurricular activities are essential for the personality development of students. He said the objective behind holding the sports gala was to engage the students in healthy activities.

The Management Sciences team won the badminton championship by beating the Agriculture Faculty team. In the handkerchief snatching competition, Faculty of Veterinary Department team got first position by defeating the Biochemistry Department team. Tug of war was won by the Economics Department team by defeating Management Sciences team.

At the end, prizes and shields were distributed among the students who got top positions in different competitions.



HEC Indigenous on-campus Training Workshop on Project Management



A three-day (January 2-5, 2017) Higher Education Commission (HEC) funded indigenous on-campus training (IOT) workshop on Project Management was held at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), with an aim to train and capacity building of non teaching staff to promote good governance at University campus.

At the inaugural ceremony, PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad was the chief guest while Deans, Directors and participants of the workshop were also present.

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said that the university is persuing excellence in teaching and research to strengthen the agricultural economy of the country by producing and providing quality human resource. He said that the focus of university research has been shifted to identify and solve the indigenous problems and to introduce cutting edge technology in agricultural sector of the

country. He lauded the HEC training programs for enhancing the professional skills of the administrative staff of the universities. He uttered that such trainings are absolutely essential for the individual's professional growth and appreciated the efforts of the Directorate of Planning and Development for conducting such valuable training programs. He also advised the non teaching staff to start one window operation. He was hopeful that participants would refine their skills and work with more zeal and zest to serve the University and the country.



Mr. Shahid Ali Khan, Convener of the workshop, in his welcome address briefed about the objectives of the training workshop. He informed that workshop will provide an opportunity to the employees to improve the workplace efficiency. He added that it would be an interactive sessions of the participants with the professional experts who will share their valuable knowledge of their fields with the participants.



Agri. Innovation Expo. & Food Gala 2017



University Institute of Management Sciences (UIMS) and Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC) of PMAS-AAUR organized Agri. Innovation Expo. & Food Gala 2017, on January 10, 2017, with an aim to highlight innovative, creative and business the agriculture products developed by students and to provide them entrepreneurship opportunities in order to cope with the challenge of unemployment.

PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad was the chief guest while Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI),

President, Raja Amer Iqbal was the guest of honor. Mr. Muhammad Asghar, Regional Business Coordinator of Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Rawalpindi was also present there and the expo was attended by prominent academicians, researchers, faculty members, students, representatives from national and multinational companies, who lauded the efforts of the expo management team in organizing such a successful event.

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR said that it is need of the hour to strengthen industry-academia linkage to endorse business activities and PMAS-AAUR is playing its due role in this regard. He said that management science students must take the lead in commercializing the agricultural products. Our development is dependent on the extent to which our students can take agricultural produce, make it value added and market it in the international market. He encouraged the students and teachers to





keep on making efforts for starting businesses which would provide employment to the poor people in Pakistan. He said that this expo will provide entrepreneurship opportunities to the students so that they would become employer instead of seeking employment.

RCCI President, Raja Amer Iqbal said that agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan economy and innovative ideas are essential to make the sustainable development as a step towards meeting the demands of modern era. He assured full support from RCCI to provide opportunity to new entrepreneurs to show case and commercialize their goods. He lauded the efforts of PMAS-AAUR for bringing new ideas into agricultural sector and assured

full support from RCCI to fund such projects which would helpful to bring about innovation and employment.

At the end, chief guest PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor along with President RCCI distributed prizes among the winner students of different innovative ideas.

The Expo also provided an opportunity to assess the potential of Pakistan's agricultural market and to bring together all stakeholders from the public, private, academia, social sectors on one platform to explore new technologies/innovations in the field of food & agriculture sector.



World Water & Forest Day Celebrated at Varsity



To commemorate World Water and Forest Day, Pir Mehar Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) in collaboration with Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) Office in the Ministry of Climate Change organized a seminar on March 21, 2017 at main campus.

Federal Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change, Syed Abu Ahmad Akif was the chief guest while former Wapda Chairman Dr Shamsul-Mulk, Vice Chancellor of the PMAS-AAUR Professor Dr Rai Niaz Ahmad, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Gill from SACAN, Forests Inspector General Syed Mehmood Nasir, SDPI's Executive Director Dr Abid Qayum Suleri, Ex Secretary Water and Power Ashfaq Ahmad, PMAS-AAUR Dean Faculty of Agricultural Engineering Dr Yaseen Bhatti and Dean Faculty of Forestry Dr Maqsood Anwar were also among the speakers.

Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, the secretary for Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC), said that Pakistan is among the few countries in the world which has passed legislation to respond

the challenges posed by climate change. He added that in this regard, two new bodies would be constituted at the federal level shortly, including the Climate Change Council and the Climate Change Authority. Mr. Akif further said that the government has increased the budget from Rs. 27 million to Rs. 2 billion under Green Pakistan initiative and under this initiative 100 million trees would be planted across the country with the help of all provincial governments. Akif emphasized that conserving water and forests is a duty of every individual. We must find ways how to get benefit from the sustainable usage of water, he said.

Former Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Eng. Shamsul Malik said that, as a nation, we need to ask why we are draining the bulk of our water into the sea without getting benefits from it? Unfortunately, he said, we are using our natural assets such as water and forests by putting future generation to the challenges. He was of the view "Pakistan's rulers should take up concrete projects for the country. Students and civil society will have to play a crucial role in creating a larger consensus, as

larger water reservoirs will benefit every Pakistani," he added.

PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Dr Rai Niaz Ahmad presented an overview of the water and forest landscape in Pakistan. He said that by enhancing forests, the country would also respond to its water scarcity in the country. He informed the gathering that the university has become a role model for federal and provincial governments' institutions in the field of rain water harvesting system. He said that water is key element for socio-economic development of country. He also emphasized on the conservation of water from household to farm level.

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Gill said water is a key to socio-economic development of a country and emphasized the need for conserving it. He said in 1947 Pakistan's water capacity per person was 5,600 cubic which has now reduced to only 900 cubic per person and country is heading towards water stress country. He stressed to start literacy programmes focusing attention on importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of water resources.

Forests Inspector General Syed Mehmood Nasir stressed the need for introducing new technology and research for the efficient use

of natural resources. He said that technology would help benefit from forests without chopping down a single tree.

SDPI's Executive Director Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that keeping in view new challenges posed by climate change, we need to pay



attention to water conservation in a way which not only responds to water shortage but also protects vulnerable communities from disasters such as floods. He added that with the right planning, climate change can be stopped from turning into a human disaster.

In addition to a large number of the students from different departments of the university, senior academicians, faculty members and representatives from civil society organizations also attended the seminar.



BOOK FAIR

A three-day (March 29-31, 2017) Book Fair was held at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR).

The Ambassador Netherlands Jeannette Seppen was the chief guest while PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad was guest of honor.

The Ambassador of Netherlands along with PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor inaugurated the book fair and inspected sections of the exhibition and collection of books displayed, which cover all fields. While visiting different book stalls the Ambassador said that such fairs have great significance and stressed to promote the book reading habit.

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said that such healthy and positive activities are essential for curbing the trends of extremism in the society and University top priority is to provide maximum extra-curricular activities to the students. The basic purpose of the fair is not only to provide an opportunity to students and teachers to buy books of their interest at one place, but also to promote the book reading habit, he added.

A large number of students visited the book fair and bought books of their interest on Agriculture, natural, social, management sciences, information technology and other topics. A large number of books from India, European and American authors were also available for sale. The book fair was organized by the PMAS-AAUR library, more than 25 well-known national booksellers exhibited their publications and around 30,000 books were displayed in the fair.



Seminar on "Academic Integrity and Plagiarism"

A one-day seminar on "Academic Integrity and Plagiarism" was organized by the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) of Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi on March 28, 2017. Objectives of the seminar were to apprise faculty members and research scholars about various forms of academic dishonesty and plagiarism, to make them aware that plagiarism is one of the cardinal sins of academia for which there is zero tolerance as well as to highlight what happens when someone is caught plagiarizing and the swift consequences one has to face. Faculty members, research scholars, Chairpersons of various departments, Deans and Directors actively participated in the seminar. Professor Riaz Ahmad, Director QEC, and Ms Ainee Zafar acted as Resource Persons. Professor Ahmad has been nominee of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan in the Plagiarism Standing Committees of various Universities of Pakistan and played a vital role in investigating several plagiarism cases reported to the HEC. Dr. Riaz Ahmad appreciated support of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad, for promoting research culture and quality in academics at the university. Overall the seminar provided an excellent opportunity for the faculty to learn about the academic integrity and plagiarism. In the end, participants applauded the untiring efforts and dedication of the QEC staff for arranging such an enlightening quality seminar for combating plagiarism at the varsity. Prof. Riaz Ahmad said the Arid Varsity has very strict policy and a vigilant focus on the plagiarism check. He further informed that university has adopted HEC plagiarism policy in true letter and spirit. In an attempt to better policies of students who plagiarize, Arid Varsity uses software "Turnitin" provided by the HEC of Pakistan. The software works to detect plagiarism and is mainly used for post-graduate thesis, research papers and undergraduate class assignments. "The Arid University stands at #4 among all the Pakistani Universities with regard to the Turnitin usage", he added.

Training Workshop on "Self Assessment Program for New Program Teams"

A one day training workshop on "self assessment program for new program teams" was organized by QEC of PMAS- AAUR on 26th January, 2017 with the aim to train and create awareness about self assessment procedure and writing an effective self assessment report among program teams especially new program team members who joined QEC family for the very first time. Prof. Dr. Riaz Ahmed, Director QEC welcomed all team members and participants. Prof. Dr. Riaz Ahmed focused on importance of quality and role of self assessment procedure/program in improving the quality in the education and research at university level. He said that university is pursuing excellence in self assessment program day by day. However, it is dire need of the time that the students and faculty should be made aware of the official importance towards improving the education system. Mr. Shahbaz Ahmed Khan Dy. Director QEC depicted comprehensive picture of self assessment procedure and trained new program team members and participants about writing an effective self assessment report. He described salient features of various components of self assessment program. He highlighted the importance of self assessment program in maintaining and enhancing academic standards and students learning. He further added that SAP helps in the preparation of academic program for reviewing and providing feedback for quality assurance of academic program. He also explained in detail all criteria of self assessment program and its associated standards in the light of self assessment manual of the HEC.

3rd Potohar Art and Literature festival



The 3rd Potohar Art and Literature festival (March 29-31, 2017) was held at PMAS-AAUR with an objective to create healthy literary activity in the University.

The Ambassador of the Netherlands Ms. Jeannette Seppen was the chief guest on the first day of the festival. PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad was the chief guest while MPA Zaib-un-Nisa, MPA Tehseen Fawad, MPA Lubna Rehan Pirzada, MPA Sobia Satti were the guests of honor at the concluding ceremony.

Different competitions, including Qirat, Naat, Posters, Painting, Musharia, Essays, Photography, Debates, Punjabi Takra, Sufiana Kalam, Islamic Quiz, E-gaming,



Documentaries, Calligraphy, Bait Bazi, Cultural Presentation, Solo Performance, Drama and boys & girls sports were held during three days long festival.

Food Festival was also held at University campus in which 25 different stalls of Pakistani food including, drinks, music, formal & casual dresses, Jewelry and love jails were main features of the Festival. Girls were keenly interested in stalls of palmistry. Stalls of barbeque, clothes, henna and other household items were especially set up for girls.

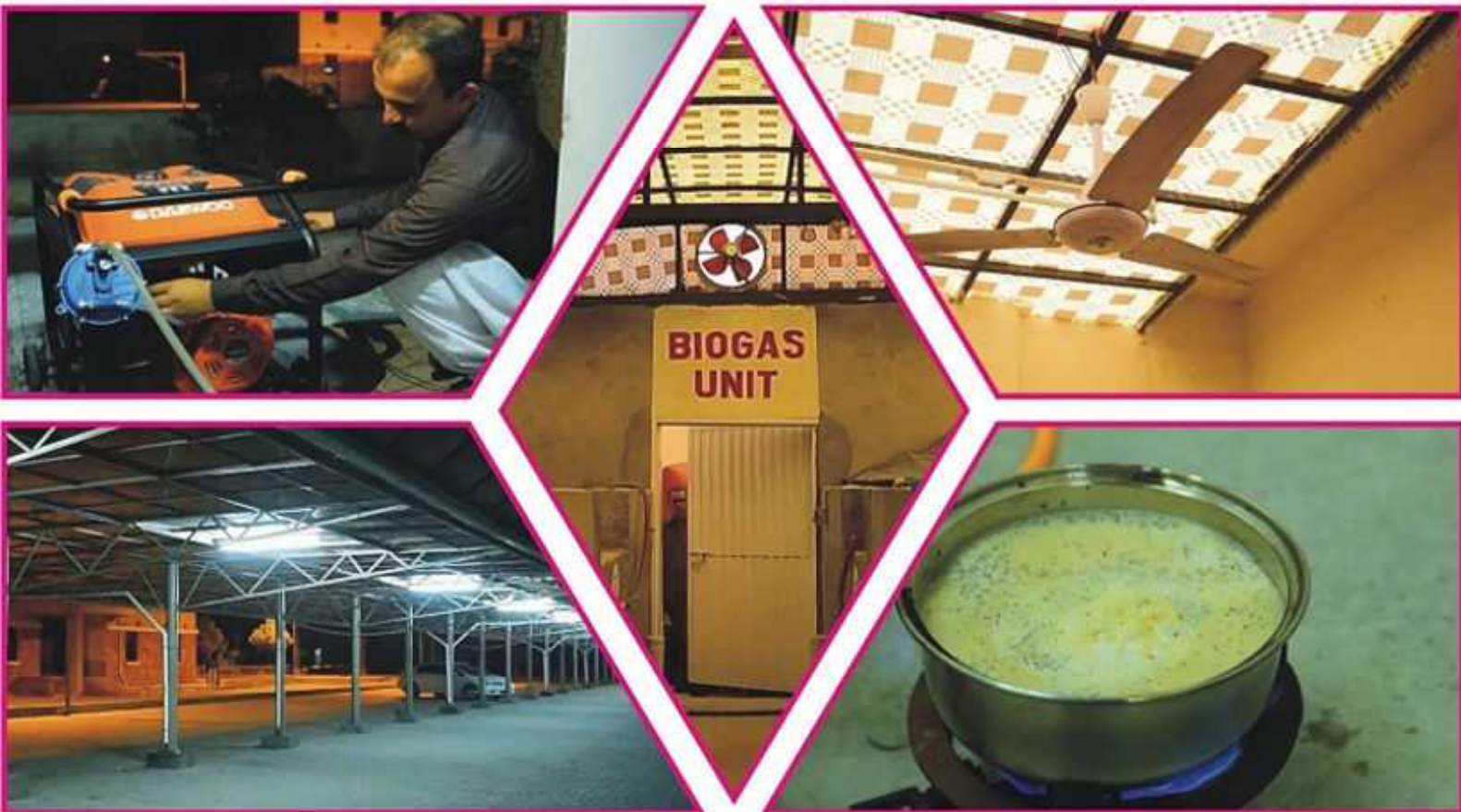
The Ambassador of the Netherlands Ms. Jeannette Seppen visited the Painting & Calligraphy competitions and applauded the students for their excellent demonstration, keen interest & well preparation.

MPA Zaib-un-Nisa, MPA Tehseen Fawad and MPA Lubna Rehan Pirzada appreciated the brilliant performance of the students and the efforts of PMAS-AAUR administration for organizing such festival to provide a unique opportunity to students to unleash their talents in extracurricular activities.

Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad said that the youth is the future of Pakistan. He highlighted the importance of such competitions for the promotion of healthy activities and said that these activities are the dire need of the day and essential for inculcating in them the sense of responsibility, discipline, obedience and punctuality. He hoped that such activities would be continued at all level in future as well.



Biomass-Bio Energy & Compost Unit at Main Campus



COMPOST TECHNOLOGY TEAM



Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad
Vice Chancellor



Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yasin



Prof. Dr. Ghulam Jilani



Muhammad Sohail Bhatti



Sher Bahadur Bajwa



21st Century Agriculture

Soilless Agriculture in Pakistan

A Beginning of Modern Era

Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) is establishing twelve Indigenous Hydroponics Units at various locations in Punjab under the project titled **"Testing Indigenous Hydroponic Greenhouse for Vegetable Growing"** funded by Agriculture Department, Punjab. The project comprises of establishing six hydroponic greenhouses at different institutions aimed at Training of Trainers (ToT) while six greenhouses at farmers' premises in various districts of Punjab aimed at **"Seeing is Believing"** for the extension of this technology.

Training of 200 farmers is being conducted under the project as its essential part. Farmers and inservice personnels from different locations and socio-economic backgrounds have been selected to train as Master Trainers of Hydroponic Agriculture. The training is inclusive of greenhouse erection, crop sowing, crop management and harvesting of fruit.

In 2014-2015 first indigenous hydroponics system was developed and tested at PMAS-AAUR. Indigenous Hydroponics Replicas were constructed with different cladding systems, different growing medias and media carriers. Now this Indigenous hydroponics system is also serving as capacity building center, to facilitate research activities in the field of hydroponics.

To make the hydroponic technology sustainable in the country Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi has established a full-fledge Institute of Hydroponic Agriculture (IHA) to cater the needs of training, R&D, indigenization of equipment and spares. The precise objectives of the institute are:

- ◆ Arranging training programs for farmers, students and in-service staff
- ◆ Increase and diversify fruits and vegetables production technology
- ◆ To produce high yield and better quality fruits and vegetables
- ◆ Preparing models for hydroponics vegetables for kitchen gardening



Rana Tanveer Hussain (Federal Minister for Science & Technology) inaugurated First Indigenous Hydroponic System of Pakistan on 23rd March, 2016



Pir Mehr Ali Shah

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