

**Directors Report  
2014 -15  
Pakistan Agricultural Coalition**

**Training of Farm Managers**

**Joint Training Program:** To operate modern progressive farms there is a need for professionals who are trained in agricultural sciences as well as in business management. To build such a program that trains students in both the fields, PAC joined hands with University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Sukkur. According to the Higher Education Commission, UAF tops the list of agricultural universities in the country and IBA Sukkur ranks fourth among business schools.

**Support of the Industry:** In early 2014 PAC managed to bring about collaboration between UAF and IBA Sukkur to develop a 4-year BBA Agribusiness programs that provides technical skills to students as well as trains them in business acumen. Meetings were held in Karachi as well as Lahore in which the Vice-Chancellors of the two universities led their technical teams and shared the curriculum with the industry. Both universities also agreed to include the private sector on the selection committee for the program. The companies which are participating include HBL, Fatima Fertilizers, Fauji Fertilizers, Engro Fertilizers, ICI Pakistan, Syngenta, Pakistan Tobacco Company, Mirpurkhas Sugar Mills, Pak Sugar-Mills Association and Al Moiz Sugar Mills. IBA Sukkur's first advertisement seeking applications for the four year program appeared on 14 July, 2014 in the national dailies. The first two batches were enrolled with 32 students in 2014 and 48 students in 2015.

**National Effort:** This program will also promote inter-provincial harmony, national unity and is the first of its kind program where students from any part of Pakistan get a chance to study business management in Sukkur, Sindh and agricultural sciences in Faisalabad, Punjab.

**Vocational School – Training of farm operators**

**Training Center to train farm operators for Dairy and Vegetable:** PAC's interaction with farmers, industry and market revealed that there is a dire need of farm operators who are well trained in modern and efficient agricultural practices. Only such operators can produce high-quality agricultural products which can be traded in the global markets. It is for this purpose that PAC aims to establish a replicable franchise model of a training center in farm operations for dairy, vegetables and high-efficiency irrigation.

In early 2014, PAC had secured government support on a ten-acre piece of land provided by TEVTA in Chakpanj Faiz, Multan, where a training center was to be established for theoretical instruction as well as practical training. When this idea was pitched to the stakeholders in the dairy sector they raised two main concerns:

1. The training farm for dairy should be near Lahore as the most of the dairy activities were near Lahore area;
2. The Project Director for the vocational school should be an international expert.

To address these concerns, PAC searched for locations close to Lahore to build the vocational school and had a look at some lands offered by the government and a few private farms. Unfortunately, the locations being offered by the government until now were not conducive to PAC's objectives. The private farms were also considered as a high-risk investment as the available infrastructure on private lands rendered these options non-viable.

PAC was then invited by the French Government in December 2014 to visit IRC Montpellier to further build the vocational school model. With the consultation of esteemed international experts there and learning from the experience of existing schools, it was decided that an apprenticeship model be adopted for such a training program.

**Apprenticeship model:** In the apprenticeship model theoretical knowledge will be imparted at a training center in Lahore on a rented premises and practical training will be carried out on the corporate farms of PAC's sponsors near Lahore. This will also benefit the students as they will spend time gaining practical experience on actual farms which will help the graduates of this program transition smoothly into work.

**On-farm training in modules under the supervision of trainers:** The training will be divided into several modules, for instance, the training for dairy operations will consist of training in nutrition, disease surveillance, milking, artificial insemination, etc. The students will first be taught the theory with the aid of demonstrations on simulators and for practical experience the students will stay a month on average on the farm for each module to gain hands-on experience. A trainer/technician will accompany the students on these farms to instruct and supervise them. The training program for dairy and vegetables will be headed by separate Project Directors who will overlook the curriculum design of their respective training programs as well as the selection of trainers and staff for the training center.

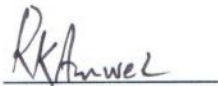
**International Support:** PAC has secured training of the core team at IRC, Montpellier on the French Government's expenditure. Similarly, presentations to the Dutch ambassador have created an interest and the Dutch Embassy, apart from being supportive of the project, would like to assist by providing staff/visiting faculty under the PUM/Dutch government assistance program.

### **Trading platform**

Pakistan's current wholesale markets inadequately serve those who are interested in high-quality produce grown to specifications. The quality of the product is not preserved as the traditional markets lack the appropriate infrastructure and expertise. Non-transparent pricing is the norm because of the

concentration of market power among certain intermediaries. These markets do not reward quality which does not provide the farmer with an incentive to invest in modern and efficient agricultural practices.

**Market Connectivity through a modern Trading Platform:** Based on the above assessment, PAC decided to bring together different contributors to the agricultural value-chain build a trading platform where high-quality standardized agricultural products are traded. The first step in this effort has been the successful piloting of a quality testing and collection center for red chilli in fall 2014 at Kunri, Pakistan's 'capital of red chilli', near Mirpurkhas in Sindh. This pilot was conducted by National Foods which purchased red chilli from many sellers.



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