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CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT 2017





2nd Pakistan Seed Congress By Dr. Irfan Afzal

The second Pakistan Seed Congress was held recently in Faisalabad, the country's third most populous city, and proved to be a very successful event, enabling a wide spectrum of seed industry stakeholders to strengthen competitiveness, sustainability and private-public collaboration.

The Congress was organised on 21-22 November 2016 at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF), under the auspices of the Pakistan Seed Promotion Alliance (PSPA) as a joint initiative by UAF, the Federal Seed Certification & Registration Department, the Seed Association of Pakistan (SAP), and Crop Life Pakistan. The United States Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Agriculture and Food Security (USPCAS-AFS) supported the event and facilitated the participation of technical experts from abroad.

Building on the momentum and enthusiasm of the first Congress held in December 2015 at the same venue, there were some 300 participants in this latest event, which included a seed expo, plenary meetings, technical sessions and workshops. Delegates and technical experts came from several countries, including China, Europe, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey and the USA.

Presiding over the inauguration ceremony was Mr. Rana Sana

Ullah, the Provincial Law Minister, together with Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmed Khan, Vice Chancellor of UAF, who welcomed representatives from key international development partners, as well as representatives from local farmer organisations and many seed companies. Other key participating stakeholders deserving mention include Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, Vice Chancellor of MUNSA; Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Khan, President of the Pakistan Seed Promotion Alliance; Mr. Ch. Asif Ali, Chairman of the Seed Association of Pakistan; Mr. Muhammad Asim of Crop Life Pakistan; and Prof. Dr. Hafeez Ahmed Sadaqat, UAF.

The Seed Expo featured 40 exhibitors from national and multinational seed companies, and other allied businesses that provide services to the seed industry, who took this opportunity to showcase their products, technologies and innovations to practising agriculturalists.

The technical sessions were led by local and international keynote speakers under the theme of "Seed Security for Sustainable Agriculture". They covered a wide range of topics including seed legislation, policy, regulation, quality seed production, seed analysis and storage, biotechnology, seed treatments, trade and marketing trends, and forecasting the future of Pakistan's expanding seed industry.

International experts included Dr. Kent Bradford, a distinguished professor and director of the Seed Biotechnology Center, UC Davis, USA; Mr. Johan Van Asbrouck, President, International Seed Academy Thailand; Mr. Timothy Blank of the California Crop Improvement Association; Dr. Suleyman Karahan, General Directorate of Agricultural Research Ankara, Turkey; Dr. Chen Mao from Monsanto Singapore; and Ms. Zhu Xiaobo, Managing Director of the Wuhan Qingfa-Hesheng seed company in China.

Valuable inputs for strengthening Pakistan's seed sector were provided by Mr. Francisco Gamarro, Deputy FAO Representative, and Dr. Stephen P. Davies, IFPRI, as well as Dr. Jim Hill, Emeritus Professor of Plant Sciences, UC Davis, all offering sound advice for the benefit of academia and seed industry practitioners alike.

At the farmers' session, Dr. Muhammad Anjum Ali, DG Agricultural Extension, Mr. Faisal Shah and Mr. Muhammad Saleem Raza shared their experiences and provided insights into the farming community and their expectations from the seed industry. On the policy side, Dr. Ghazanfer Ali Khan, Additional Secretary Planning, Agriculture Department, explained the context of the new Punjab Seed Act, which is currently in preparation.

Achievement Appreciation

At the Seed Expo, 40 exhibitors were judged in two categories. In the international seed companies' category, Monsanto Pakistan took first, while the second and third positions were awarded to Wuhan Qingfa China and Bayer Pakistan, respectively. In the national seed companies category, Jullundur Seed Corporation, Sher Ali and Sons, and Chaudhry Khair Din & Sons were awarded first, second and third positions, respectively.

A new tradition was established with the presentation of the "Lifetime Achievement Awards" to recipients for their efforts in providing leadership and contributing significantly to the betterment of the Pakistan seed sector. The inaugural recipients who were honored with this award were Prof. Dr. Iqrar A Khan and Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Khan.

Prof. Iqrar A Khan was recognised for his stewardship in strengthening public-private partnerships, introducing a new degree programme in seed science and establishing the Seed Centre at UAF. This centre will conduct research on topics of concern to the Pakistan Seed Industry. Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Khan was honored for his untiring contribution in the approval of the Seed (Amendment) Act that was passed in 2015 and the Plant Breeder's Rights Act that was approved by the national assembly in December 2016.



Capacity Building in Seed Technology

To conclude the event, a training workshop was held on "Dry Chain Technology for Reducing Post Harvest Losses of Seeds and Grains", which attracted about 60 participants. The workshop was organised by Dr. Irfan Afzal of UAF, with financial support from USPCAS, and was based on a project to improve livelihoods in the maize farming sector, which provided technical training to farmers, national seed company personnel and policy makers through dry chain experiments in different provinces of Pakistan.

The workshop focused on agricultural drying and seed storage systems for humid climates, and particularly the "dry chain" technique, which involves various drying methods implemented soon after harvest, quickly followed by hermetic (airtight) packaging to maintain dryness in the value chain until the seed is used.

Dr. Kent Bradford and Mr. Johan Van Asbrouck shared their experiences on recent developments in the technologies for handling and storing seeds while Dr. Afzal discussed his project findings with the participants.

The Second Pakistan Congress would not have been possible without sponsorship from USAID, FAO, Yuksal Seeds, Wuhan Qingfa China, Monsanto Pakistan, CKD, Bayer Pakistan and Tarnab Seeds.



Cash Crop Production: Pakistan



SOURCE: PAKISTAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS