

Aik Saath program update #1

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Aik Saath



ایک ساتھ  
'Together'

## Program Update

Edition #4 | March 2019

Welcome to this Aik Saath newsletter. There are updates on each of the ACIAR projects in Pakistan, with a strong flavour of collaboration throughout. We also flag some important events coming up soon as well as the Annual Meeting in July.



ACIAR meets agribusiness at the Hort Expo in Lahore in February – linking farmers to markets

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## About Aik Saath

Aik Saath is an Urdu phrase meaning Together.

It is also the everyday name for ACIAR's program of Research for Development (R4D) in Pakistan.

Aik Saath stands for:

- The joint Pakistani & Australian government commitment to the program
- Multiple agricultural products, themes and research disciplines
- Numerous technical, commercial and official partners in Australia and Pakistan
- All members of smallholder families and communities, including women and youth

Supported by the ACIAR Country Office in Pakistan and the coordinator, Aik Saath aims to foster collaborations to maximise the impact from research by ACIAR and its many partners in Pakistan.

## ACIAR R4D Program in Pakistan

ACIAR currently supports ten projects in Pakistan addressing a diverse range of issues



Water



Horticulture



Pulses



Grains



Dairy & Beef



Small Ruminants

[Click here](#) for the full list of projects and follow the links to Fact Sheets for each project in the updates section below.

## [Ongoing learning about Gender Inclusion](#)

ACIAR Gender Inclusiveness Strategy for Pakistan was formally launched by Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls last year.

One of its priorities is to coordinate and support an ongoing process of "learning to mainstream gender" across the Aik Saath program.

As part of this, we will be running a participatory session - "Don't diss my discipline - synergising technos and "people" people". This will draw on the expertise of international gender specialists attending the Seeds of Change conference in Canberra 2-4 April.



[Read More](#)

## **World Water Day 2019**

Following on from the success of the World Water Day event in Lahore in 2018 an event is being held in Karachi on 27 and 28 March 2019. For this year the United Nations badged World Water Day as "Leaving No One Behind (Human Rights and Refugees)". In line with this the title for this year's Aik Saath event is:

**"Leaving No One Behind; Small Farmers in Pakistan Leading the Way".**

[Read more](#)

## **Annual Meeting 2019 to be in Karachi, 7-9th July**

Aik Saath's first Annual Meeting to be held in Sindh will be a great opportunity to showcase the program to Provincial authorities and learn about some of the regional programs that provide partnership opportunities. The ACIAR Pakistan Country Office has sent the first announcement to project teams and will be seeking input to the agenda from project leaders. The broad themes will be

## Aik Saath Project Updates (Click TITLES to access Fact Sheets)

### DAIRY\_BEEF



The Dairy\_Beef project is exploring avenues of collaboration that are highly relevant to other Aik Saath projects.

Firstly, Objective 1 is about *Scaling out dairy production information through partners*. This approach is about testing the hypothesis that such partnerships can be effective in scaling out the outcomes of the previous research.

A recent one-day community of practice (CoP) workshop was an opportunity for the management and extension leaders of these partners to engage with each other and with the project team.

A second avenue of collaboration for Dairy\_Beef is with the Aik Saath groundwater project. This study will assess the risks of poor groundwater quality to livestock production by supporting a PhD student at UAF.

[Read More](#)

### SMALL RUMINANTS



The small ruminant team has been transitioning from preliminary studies (undertaken through a Small Research Activity (SRA)) to a full 3-year project. In early 2019, they undertook a major incountry program including field visits and Inception & Planning Meetings, with a report now available.

## PULSE CROPS



The new Pulses Value Chain project will closely integrate with the ongoing Pulses Production project. In addition, both projects will follow up the important insights from the Pulses Policy work, completed and reported last year.

The team has focused on introducing Integrated Pest Management training programs as well as herbicides and phosphate fertiliser, rhizobial inoculation and village based seed production.

The Thal districts contribute more than 90% of the area and production of chickpea of the Punjab. In recent times, sprinkler systems have been tested under government programs for irrigation of chickpeas in this region. This has enabled the project team to assist farmers to adapt their production techniques and business plans accordingly. [Read More](#)



### **Mungbean Harvesting and Seed Production Systems for Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan**

Machine harvesting using modified cereal harvesters is much faster than traditional methods and has been used for decades in Australia. It needs to be modified to be suitable for the smallholder farms of Pakistan.

This international research project focuses on crop desiccants and the operational systems to minimise crop losses. [Read More](#)

## **NON-PULSE CROPS**



This research project is coordinated by the University of Sydney in collaboration with Ethiopia, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Two years into the project, a set of over 3,000 geographically diverse wheat lines has been screened, Nearly 70% were found to be either resistant or moderately resistant to rust. Already six trainees, including two from each country; Ethiopia, India and Nepal have started training at PBI Cobbitty in NSW. Trainees from Pakistan are expected to start their training in July 2019 to build the advanced skills necessary to protect future crops, including germplasm screening and rust race analysis. Three female scientists from Ethiopia, Nepal and Pakistan were invited to attend the project meeting and 2018 BGR Technical Workshop in Morocco. [Read More](#)

## HORTICULTURE

### [Vegetable Value Chain](#)



This project is known as Strengthening Vegetable Value Chains in Pakistan (SVVCP) for Greater Community Livelihood Benefits. The project includes teams in marketing, value adding, postharvest and production research with a strong focus on social research to ensure relevance to the smallholder families engaged at village level.

In February, at the first Annual Review & Planning meeting, several of the team leaders met with their Australian counterparts in Brisbane. Each team shared results from an impressive body of work undertaken in the first year of the project. Opportunities were also identified for a more collaborative approach between the teams in some instances. It was noted how the Participatory Action Research approach helps empower members of powerless groups and is therefore a critical component of community interventions.

This “listen, don’t tell” approach is also reflected in some of the tools developed by the lead organization, CABI, in order to Monitor progress and Evaluate impact through the M&E plan.

As well as this spirit of collaboration at village level, the review noted the ongoing collaboration with the Government of Punjab through CABI’s involvement in the Value Chain Technical Assistance Team (VCTAT), opening opportunities to link small farmers to major supermarkets. [Read More](#)

### [Horticulture Policy and Institutional Reforms](#)

This policy research complements SVVCP, and has identified major



comprehensive reforms of the legislative and regulatory systems governing the agricultural produce markets.

The suggested reforms would reduce barriers to entry in produce markets, facilitate establishment of private markets, enhance competition, and permit farmers to sell their produce to whoever they want to sell.

As with any research project, effective collaboration is vital, both for the research itself and in extending the findings to key stakeholders – in this case government policymakers. It is pleasing that two non-researcher members of the Project Advisory Board have been invited to join a Working Group on reforming agricultural policies in Pakistan. [Read More](#)

## WATER PROGRAM



The Australia Water Program in Pakistan includes three ACIAR projects. Each project is highly participatory, enabling collaborating farmer communities to drive their own research agenda. The Water Program coordinates internally as well as actively seeking collaboration with other ACIAR projects in Pakistan, with the Dairy\_Beef & Groundwater joint research being one example to date.

### [Efficient participatory irrigation](#)

This project looks at how well it works to pass responsibilities in irrigation to farmers, through Participatory Irrigation Management/ Irrigation Management Transfer (PIM/IMT).

This project is on track from completion mid to late 2019. The data to analyse institutional performance is assembled and analysis is partially complete. During the project, women enumerators were specifically trained for the administration of the gender survey. In addition, the team sponsored several exposure visits in the last 6 months. [Read More](#)

### [Improving groundwater management](#)

Dependence on groundwater has increased with over one million tubewells in use. Groundwater decline and spread of salinity is rendering fertile lands unusable. The project team is collaborating with researchers, farmers, farming communities and relevant government and non-government agencies to build capacity for improved groundwater management.

During ACIAR's recent mid-term review of the project, representatives from

them and their organisations. [Read More](#)

### [Water management skills](#)

This project aims to develop and scale out tools and approaches for increasing farmers' irrigation management skills, and hence their livelihoods, on small- and middle-sized irrigated farms. With its focus on extension, the recently published paper arising from this work: "Bridging Farmer and Researcher: Extension through the Eyes of Agents in Rural Pakistan" should be of interest to all Aik Saath projects. [Read More](#)

## Aik Saath Partnership Updates



### Linkages with DFAT's Market Development Facility (MDF)

Every pathway (value chain) from a Farmer to a Consumer has both a market context and technology aspects. This raises great opportunities for synergy between many of the Aik Saath projects and MDF. For example, MDF and the mobile comms business Telenor worked together to develop a free mobile agriculture advisory service – "Khushaal Zamindaar (Prosperous Farmer) 7272" in GB and Chitral, launched in August 2017. The use of mobile phones to enable farmers to obtain the information they need is highly relevant to Aik Saath projects and Telenor presented on this topic at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

[Read More](#) about the reach and impact of this important program

## Notes for your Diary

27-28 March	World Water Day Event: "Leaving No One Behind; Small Farmers in Pakistan Leading the Way" Karachi	Karachi
02-04 April	Seeds of Change Conference: Gender equality through agricultural research for development <a href="https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/faculties/education/research/the-centre-for-asia-">https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/faculties/education/research/the-centre-for-asia-</a>	Canberra



7-9 July	Annual Meeting - all ACIAR Pakistan projects	Karachi
15 October	PODA Annual Rural Women Conference UN International Day of Rural Women	
11-13 Nov	Trop Ag Conference - abstracts due 15 May 2019 <a href="https://tropagconference.org/call-for-abstracts/">https://tropagconference.org/call-for-abstracts/</a>	Brisbane

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