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USDA and CABI partner to train the Pakistan Fresh Produce industry

Report Categories:

Trip Report

Avocado

Citrus

Fresh Fruit

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

Post organized the training schedule for a 12 member delegation from Pakistan who were part of a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded capacity development program in South Africa, in partnership with the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International (CABI). The program objective was for the group to develop the first Phytosanitary Training Manual in Pakistan, and to strengthen the Pakistan import/export certification process to meet globally recognized SPS standards, in order to grow Pakistan trade.

Pakistan Walk the Chain Tour in South Africa

On August 3 – 14, 2015, Post organized the schedule for a 12 member delegation from Pakistan as part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded capacity development program in South Africa. The program was financed by the USDA-FAS Office of Capacity Building and Development. USDA partnered with the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International (CABI) to train the participants on industry best practices for pest management in vegetable and fruit value chains, in order to grow agricultural trade in Pakistan. CABI is an international technical agency, owned by its 40 member countries, that supports the generation, access to and use of knowledge for sustainable agriculture, environmental management and human development. In 2014, agricultural exports from the United States to Pakistan totaled \$306.9 million led by cotton (\$86.8 million), consumer oriented products (\$71.2 million), planting seeds (\$41.5 million), wood products (\$36.4 million), and vegetable oils (\$11.3 million). Agricultural exports from Pakistan to the United States totaled \$118.7 million, led by exports of rice (\$37.1 million), consumer oriented products (\$28.5 million), sugar/sweeteners (\$23.6 million), and seafood products (\$5.9 million).

The training was held in Pretoria, Nelspruit and Cape Town, and the programs objective was for the group to develop the first Phytosanitary Training Manual in Pakistan, and participants will use the manual to train farmers and the extension services on how to follow SPS practices on the farm. The program will also be used to strengthen the Pakistan import/export certification process to meet globally recognized SPS standards. Participants were drawn from a diverse array of professionals in the industry, including the private and public sectors and academia, and as well included men and women. The list of participants is shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: List of Participants

Name	Organization	Job Title
Allah Ditta Abid	Pakistan Department of Plant Protection (PDPP)	Deputy Director
Sahibzada Mohammad Imran Shami	PDPP	Operational Manager
Uzma Sitara	Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC)	Senior Scientific Officer
Awais Rasool	PARC	Senior Scientific Officer
Abdul Malik	Pakistan Fresh and Vegetable Association (PFVA) - Union Fruit	Director
Khalid Eijaz Qureshi	PFVA - Roshan Enterprise	CEO
Muhammad Jamroz Khan	PFVA - Al-Rafique Enterprises	Head of Procurement
Sajid Aleem Khan	University of Agric. Faisalabad	Professor/Post Harvest Protection
Muhammad Akbar Zardari	PDPP	Director Plant Protection
Aslam Pakhali	PFVA - FA International	Proprietor
Babar Ehsan	CABI	Regional Director
Muhammad Sohail Mazhar	CABI	Program Development Officer
Brian Bartle	USDA - FAS	International Program Specialist
Lottie Erikson	USDA - APHIS	Export Coordinator-IPPC Liaison
Wellington Sikuka	USDA - FAS	Agricultural Specialist

Summary of the key training activities

The program's success was made possible through the collaboration of the following South African stakeholders:

- South African Citrus Growers Association
- Sub-Tropical Growers Association
- Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
- Agriculture Research Council - Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Crops (ARC-ITSC)
- Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB)
- H.L. Hall & Sons Farm
- Mr Hugo Schreuder – Endecon Ubuntu Ltd
- Crocodile Valley Citrus Company
- Citrus Research International (CRI)
- Cape Town Fresh Produce Terminal (FPT)
- HEPRO Irradiation Facility
- Stellenbosch University.
- Produce Marketing Association (PMA)

The DAFF Directorates of Plant Protection; Inspection Services; and International Relations presented on the Fruit fly surveillance in South Africa and Action Plan; the Phytosanitary Certification Process; and the roles and structures of the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and the Directorate of Inspection Services. The Pakistan Department of Plant Protection (PDPP) also presented on the structure of the PDPP. The delegates noted that the DAFF systems had similarities and differences with the Pakistan systems, and indicated that Pakistan would consider adopting the DAFF system of registering individual farming units and also having a more coordinated approach to dealing with fruit fly control. DAFF and the delegates also discussed the need for a trade agreement between South Africa and Pakistan.

Figure 1: Delegates at the DAFF Offices in Pretoria



The ARC-ITSC in Nelspruit gave excellent presentations on the role of the ARC-ITSC in the Subtropical fruit Industry; Harvesting practices and post-harvest handling of mango fruit; Control of mango pests and diseases; Standard ripening practices and the Plant improvement program for mango. The delegates were impressed by the quality of research being undertaken by ARC-ITSC, and indicated that they would consider lobbying the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council to adopt industry led research programs, as opposed to the current government led research mandates. The potential for research collaborations between Pakistan and the ARC-ITSC was also discussed. Crop improvement, varietal exchange, and technology transfer were suggested as the areas of mutual interest for future collaboration.

The delegates were impressed by the structure, role and performance of the Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) in Nelspruit. Pakistan export certification is undertaken by various private organizations and agents, which is different to the single export certification body adopted by South Africa. The group appreciated the professionalism, consistency, lower costs and international reputation that the PPECB commands globally, and expressed hope that Pakistan should consider adopting a similar structure.

While in Nelspruit, the delegation also visited the H.L. Hall & Sons Farm avocado orchards and pack-houses, as well as the Crocodile Valley Citrus Company orchards and pack-houses. Key lessons from these field visits was the focus on product quality; adhering to international standards such as GAP, as well as the efforts, methods and consistency required to meet the strict phytosanitary requirements. The delegates also witnessed practical fruit fly traps in the fields.

Figure 2: Orchard tour at H.L. Hall & Sons Farm



Figure 3: Orchard tour at Crocodile Valley Citrus Company



Dr Aruna Manrakhan from the Citrus Research International presented to the group on Fruit flies on citrus - *Bactrocera invadens* detections and eradication. While Pakistan has different climatic conditions compared to South Africa, the group noted that the principles and best practices being practiced in South Africa could be adopted in Pakistan.

In Cape Town, the group visited the Fresh Produce Terminal (FPT) at the Cape Town Port. The group witnessed the USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) pre-clearance program inspection process and the cold treatment schedule that all the citrus exports from South Africa to the United States are subjected to. South African citrus exports to the United States entered their 15th year with the start of the 2014 season and have grown from 50 tons in 1999 to around 41,000 tons. Fresh Produce Terminal Port officials and APHIS presented the processes for a country to apply and qualify for a similar pre-clearance program. The delegation also visited the HEPRO Irradiation Facility, which is the only irradiation facility servicing the fruit sector in South Africa.

The group also attended the Produce Marketing Association (PMA) from August 12 to 13, which presented an excellent opportunity for networking with key industry stakeholders. The PMA conference presentations can be downloaded from the following link;

<http://www.pma.com/events/pastevents/2015/fresh-connections-southern-africa> .

Meeting with the USDA Deputy Secretary – Krista Harden

On Thursday, August, 13, 2015, Deputy Secretary Harden met with the Pakistan delegation, and the delegates expressed hope that the country would grow their domestic crops for marketing and export, and a training manual that helps farmers understand the phytosanitary processes required for export. The delegates extended a request to USDA for assistance and future collaborations in research, particularly the development of seedless citrus varieties and other seed hybrids. The Deputy Secretary thanked participants in the program, and encouraged the group to make use of the various USDA capacity

development programs available, and expressed that USDA was looking forward to further collaboration with Pakistan.

Figure 4: Cape Town Fresh Produce Terminal (FPT) tour



Figure 5: Meeting with the USDA Deputy Secretary, Krista Harden



Conclusion

This training confirms USDA`s commitment and role in capacity development, especially to assist countries in developing science based regulations and policies which are important in growing trade.