



SAARC AGRINEWS



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Bangladesh



Bhutan



India



Maldives



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

July – September 2021 Issue

Regional Expert consultation meeting on harmonizing the guidelines and policies for enhancing regional trade of livestock and its products in SAARC region

The SAARC regional expert consultation meeting on “Harmonizing the guidelines and policies for enhancing regional trade of livestock and its products in SAARC region” was held on 27th and 28th July, 2021 on virtual platform. The meeting was organized by the SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka. The Program was conceptualized, coordinated and executed by Dr. Ashis Kumar Samanta, Senior Program Specialist - Livestock, SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka. The primary objectives of the expert consultation meeting include: (i) To analyze the current challenges and opportunities for trade of livestock and livestock products among SAARC Member States; and (ii) To harmonize the standards and guidelines for trading of livestock or its products. Albeit, nomination was received from seven Member States, the meeting was attended by the focal experts of five SAARC Member States, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in addition to international experts from International Food Policy Research Institute - South Asia.

Issue Highlights

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Editor

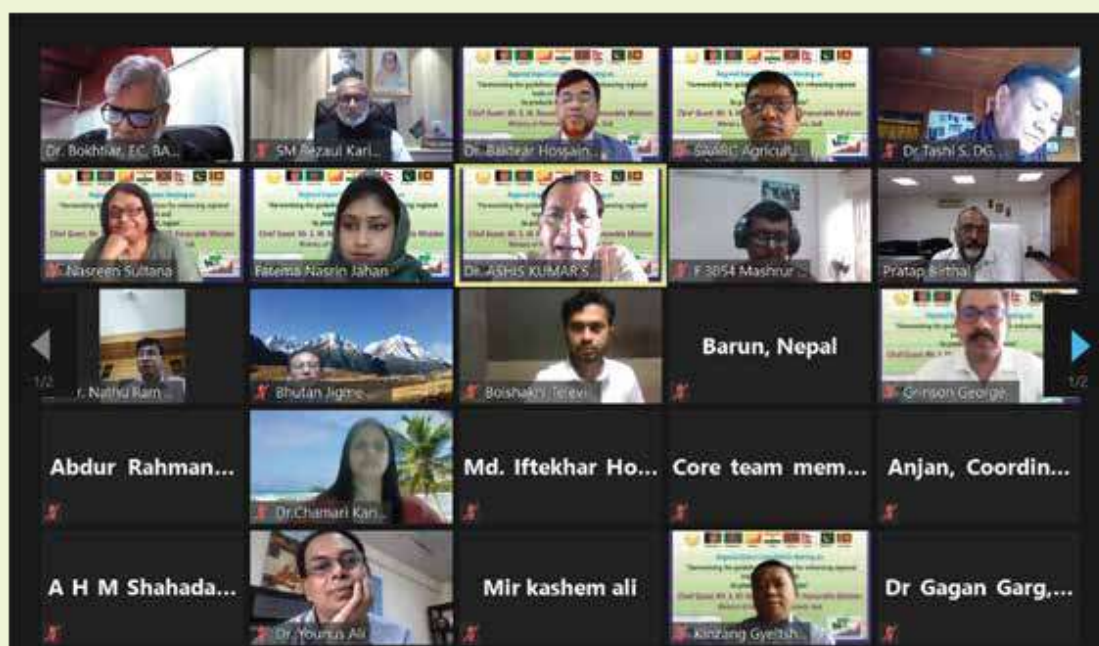
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Dr. Ashis Kumar Samanta, Program coordinator welcomed the participants and briefed about the objectives of the expert consultation meeting. This was followed by the address of Dr. Tashi Samdup, the Director General, Bhutan Agriculture & Food Regulatory Authority, Ministry of Agriculture & Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan and “Special Guest” of inaugural ceremony. He underscored the importance of livestock towards safe food production and livelihood support and urged the focal experts for decisive strategies to boost the regional trades of livestock or its products. Dr. S.M. Bokhtiar, the Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council and Special Guest of inaugural session opined that the livestock is the key contributor in the growth engine of rural economy of South Asian region and is strategically important to the region’s food and nutritional security and economic prosperity. He added that the changing lifestyle coupled with enhanced per capita income will lead to higher consumption of animal origin foods: milk, meat or eggs or their products. In this regard, some of the Member States are surplus and some are deficit. Still, regional trade for livestock or its products stands at lower level. He urged the focal experts to relook over the policies and guidelines in order to boosting the regional trades.



Dr. Tashi Samdup
Special Guest



Dr. S. M. Bokhtiar
Special Guest



Mr. S. M. Rezaul Karim
Chief Guest



Dr. Baktear Hossain
Chairman

Mr. S. M. Rezaul Karim, Member of Parliament, the honorable Minister, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and conveyed his greetings to SAARC Agriculture Centre for undertaking multi-pronged activities on different sectors including the livestock. He expressed his satisfaction because the SAARC Agriculture Centre is vigorously implementing the need-based program like training and consultation meeting in virtually and interactively to achieve the common goal of the region in order to improve the living standard of farmers through dissemination of agricultural technologies. Finally, the chairman of the inaugural session, Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, the Director of SAARC Agriculture Centre, informed the house that SAARC Agriculture Centre will leave no stone unturned for addressing the challenges of South Asian agriculture, including livestock sector. He informed the participants that livestock has a rich history in South Asia, among all SAARC Member States. The SAC perceives livestock programs as one of the flagship activities of the Centre as it supports livelihood of millions of regional people belonging to small and marginal category, indigenous group, women: the most underprivileged class of the society. He wished for successful discussion and analysis on the subject during the technical session

During the two days expert consultation meeting, national focal experts shared their country status on “Harmonizing the guidelines and polices for enhancing regional trade of livestock and its products in SAARC region” encompassing current status of livestock population, availability of livestock products such as milk, meat, egg or other value added products, roadmap to reduce the gap between demand and supply, standards followed for import or export, policy requirement to facilitate the regional trades etc. The first technical session was chaired by Dr. Nathuram Sarker, former Director General, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute. During the first technical session, country status paper of Bangladesh, Bhutan and India were presented by the respective focal point experts. In depth discussion was made following all three presentations. In the second technical session, focal experts from Nepal and Sri Lanka presented the country status paper. Following presentation, question answer session began and the respective focal experts clarified the queries of the participants. International expert, Dr. Anjani Kumar, International Food Policy Research Institute – South Asia, New Delhi delivered the lecture on “Challenges and opportunities for boosting trade of livestock and its products in South Asia”. The third technical session was chaired by Dr. Md. Aminul Islam, Professor & Head, Department of Dairy & Poultry Science, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman Agricultural University, Gazipur, Bangladesh. This was followed by the formulation of strategies and recommendations on the subject.

SAARC countries seek regional cooperation to reduce impact of climate crisis in fisheries and aquaculture

In a major development in reducing the impact of climate crisis in aquaculture and fisheries in the region, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries have sought for regional cooperation to implement strategies in battling the climate-induced fallouts in the sector. During the consultative meeting on “Cross-learning for Thematic Regional/ Sub-regional Challenges in Aquaculture and Fisheries” during 03rd and 04th August, 2021, held by the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) in virtual mode fishery scientists representing India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bhutan has felt the urgent need for implementing strategies such as introduction of climate-friendly technologies in fisheries and aquaculture as well as measures for sustainable utilisation of the resources. The meeting came up with this suggestion after the experts identified climate crisis a major concern in aquaculture and fisheries sector of South Asian countries. The experts voiced concern over dwindling marine catch and aquaculture production, environmental disruption in aquatic ecosystem and its rippling effect on livelihood of the stakeholders owing to climate change and associated developments.

They suggested that technologies of seaweed farming and integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA), including cage fish farming could be adopted to reduce the impacts of the crisis to a certain extent. “The sector could use ‘green fishing vessels’ with built-in design features for energy saving and fuel saving technologies to reduce carbon emission”, they said.

Increase in frequency and intensity of cyclones, storms and extreme weather conditions causes drastic decrease in marine fishing days, habitat destruction, depletion of commercially important resources and other ecosystem changes in marine and inland aquatic system which ultimately affect the livelihood of those depending on the sector, according to the fishery experts from the SAARC countries. They pointed out that increasing trend of floods, long-lasting droughts and salinity changes are posing severe threat to inland aquaculture.

Platform for cross-learning

“The member countries have demanded for regional cooperation among the nations and a platform for cross-learning and knowledge sharing to check the fallouts in the best possible way in the time of climate change”, said Dr Md. Baktear Hossain, Director of the SAC. In marine fisheries, need for capacity building for exploitation of deep sea resources was raised by India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, scarcity of quality seeds and shortage of other input materials were the major gaps faced by the member countries in inland aquaculture, he said. “Based on the discussions in the meeting, the SAC has come up with a set of recommendations to address such issues. Technical collaboration for knowledge sharing and capacity building among the SAARC countries and setting up of regional network for seed bank and germplasm transfer are some of the suggestions”, he added.

Scientific gaps

Dr Grinson George, Senior Programme Specialist with the SAC said: “There are scientific gaps inhibiting the implementation of rules and regulations for sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture. Some possible solutions can be looked upon in satellite remote sensing, numerical modelling, stake holder perception, prioritization of spatial sensitiveness to ecosystems and many more with right interference from the stakeholders”.

Socio-economic security

Referring to the existing disparity in socio-economic standards of the stakeholders, the SAARC body recommended for promoting discussions and cross-learning on strengthening ‘social-safety-nets’ with emphasis on ensuring socio-economic security of the stakeholders, and policies, laws and regulations harmonize between environment conservation and livelihood development. Establishment of referral laboratories for aquatic animal health management, a centre of excellence in aquaculture and fisheries in the region and e-repository for information sharing were also listed in the recommendations.

Marine pollution, increased fuel prices, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, increasing length of value chain, resource crunch and lack of adequate infrastructure are some of the other major issues raised in the meeting by representatives of member countries.

Bangladesh stresses on ecosystem approach

In the meeting, Bangladesh stressed the need for implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

The country also emphasized initiating regional cooperation to explore potentials of tuna fisheries and deep sea fishing. Presenting the country status report about the sector, the expert (name and designation who presented the paper) said establishing a regional fish gene bank is essential to develop genetic resources of potential fish species. “Development of farming technology of both freshwater and brackishwater finfish, shrimp and other aquatic organisms is required prime attention. Business-friendly value chain, especially in commercial fish farming, is another area to be focused on”, he said. He also said that collaborative efforts are required among the member countries on research, hilsa fisheries management and farming demonstration of potential species.

Dr Grinson George said that the finalized recommendations of the meeting after a revised round of review from the member states will be circulated among member countries for consideration and implementation.



Inaugural session on the expert consultation meeting “Cross-learning for Thematic Regional/ Sub-regional Challenges in Aquaculture and Fisheries”.

Visit to Maldives by SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) team

A two-member team headed by Director of SAC Dr Baktear Hossain along with Dr Younus Ali, Project Coordinator visited Maldives on 27 September 2021. Series of meetings were held to explore new collaborative opportunities as well as to review the project progress in collaboration with Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture of Maldives. Honorable Minister Dr. Hussain Rasheed Hassan, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture along with Permanent Secretary Dr. Aminath Shafia (currently the Governing Board Member of SAC), Mr. Ibrahim Shabau, Director General, Agriculture and Directors of the Ministry took part in the deliberations and discussions with SAC team. Director of SAC apprised to the gathering about the on-going successful SAARC Agriculture PhD program that encourages South Asian students to aspire for higher studies in South Asia and also updated on the progress related to SAC’s Livelihood Enhancement Project for SAARC countries.

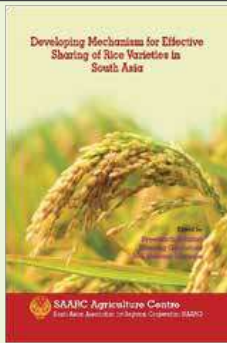



Participation at the Nutrition Camp in Bangladesh by the SAC Professionals

A three-member team of SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) led by Dr Baktear Hossain along with Dr Ashis Kumar Samanta and Dr Younus Ali visited the Follow up Nutrition Camp related to scaling up Multisectoral approaches for Nutrition Smart Villages implemented by Ananda with the financial support from Welthungerhelfi, Dighinala, Khagrachori. SAC team exchanged views and discussed with the beneficiaries of the project. Welthungerhelfi Country manger Mr.Mamunur Rashid organized the interactive visit. SAC also thanked Mr. Ratan K Dey of Ananda and his colleagues who were part of the visit.



Publications:

| Title | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|---|
| <p>Developing Mechanism for Effective Sharing of Rice Varieties in South Asia Sreekanth Attaluri</p> | <p>August 2021</p> | <p>The book shares the information on the status of exchange of varieties/seeds within and outside of each country and to what extent it contributes to improvement of rural economy in South Asia, policies and institutional arrangement that are put in place in the region for development and promotion of improved varieties through an agreed frame work. This publication also covers the issues and challenges in implementation of Seeds without Border protocol and technology dissemination, review and develop policies, requirement of adequate institutions, strengthen sustainable management approach, value additions, marketing and trade, promotion of enterprises, research and extension support service and capacity development at various stages of crop production.</p> |  |

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| <p>Improving Rural Livelihoods Through Sustainable Management of Non-wood Forest Products in South Asia Kinzang Gyeltshen</p> | <p>July 2021</p> | <p>Non-wood Wood Forest Products (NWFPs) have emerged as one of the most important renewable resources for rural population who depend directly on them for their livelihoods. Sustainable management of NWFPs species is crucial to ensure its future supply to rural households and for improving rural livelihoods. Unsustainable harvesting techniques and over-exploitation of NWFPs due to increasing market demand is threatening its sustainability and the livelihoods of rural communities in South Asia. This policy brief examines the problems of managing NWFPs sustainably and suggests policy recommendations for sustainable management of NWFPs and improving rural livelihoods.</p> |  |
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