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Sri Lanka

July - September 2020

Interim progress review of SAARC PhD scholars

A webinar was held on 5th August, 2020 at 11.00 AM to assess the progress of SAARC Agriculture PhD scholars under the chairmanship of Dr. Mian Sayeed Hassan, Director, SAC. The Executive Chairman of BARC, Dr. S.M. Bokhtiar, participated in the meeting as Chief Guest. The meeting was attended by PhD scholars, doctoral supervisors, SACs Senior Program Specialists and Senior Program Officer. After the welcome address by Dr. Hassan, the scholars were advised to focus on maximizing the qualitative research outputs in order to publish the results in reputed journals during the completion of the PhD program. Dr. Bokhtiar addressed the scholars to focus their research on the emerging challenges of South Asian agriculture. He explained the genesis of SAARC Agriculture PhD program and wished the scholars to act as ambassadors of SAARC Agriculture Centre following their return to their parent institutions and after successful completion of their doctoral study. Currently, three scholars are pursuing doctoral degree under the SAARC Agriculture PhD Scholarship Program: Ms. Rafeza Begum of Bangladesh had undertaken study in soil science at Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, Bangladesh. Ms. Sara Sahibzada of Afghanistan is studying in Agricultural Economics at Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and Mr. Ankur Poudel of Nepal is studying in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology at ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, India. Ms. Rafeza Begum presented her progress of work and shared the research outputs in detail and updated two draft research papers. Ms. Sara Sahibzada outlined her doctoral research in detail and presented the progress of work and the status of publications. Mr Ankur Poudel presented his activities during last one year. He successfully completed all compulsory courses required for the study. It was discussed to extend the time for accomplishing the result-oriented tasks for few more months beyond the stipulated period of completion of program, due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in various countries.



Issue Highlights

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The quarterly report from July- September 2020 is displayed from page no. 1 to 4

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Project progress review visit to RDA, Bogra by two member SAC team

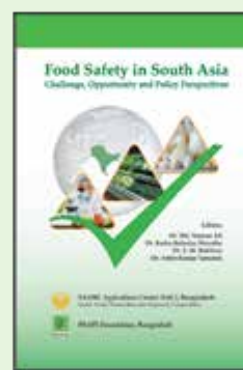
A field visit was organised comprising of two member SAARC Agriculture Centre team from 19-20 September 2020. Director of SAC reviewed the progress of the project funded by SAARC Development Fund and interacted with the project team members stationed at RDA, Bogra. Senior Technical officer of SAC joined the visit and learnt on the progress made by the project implementing agency. Particularity the processing of Jack Fruit and other processed foods were examined and found that the products were made through the machinery supplied by the project. The activities and action plan under the SDF funded project were reviewed by Director, SAC and Senior technical officer of SAC.



Publications:

Food Safety in South Asia Challenge, Opportunity and Policy Perspectives

This book focuses on the current situation of food safety; challenges and opportunities; policies, rules and regulations compliance with the international agreements and commitments; and policy recommendations to improve the food safety at the country level and at the regional level. This book suggests some major policy interventions that include: i) Efficient monitoring and surveillance of food borne disease and food contamination; ii) Establish data management systems; iii) Establish common food safety standards and guidelines in the SAARC region; iv) Accredited laboratory system; v) Enhance the awareness and advocacy programs; and vi) Capacity building of the concerned stakeholders. This book is useful for the farming communities, researchers, academicians, public and private food companies, development professionals, policymakers, governments, international organizations, development partners, and civil societies to gain the synergetic efforts for improving food safety and better life in South Asia region.



Integrated Plant Nutrient Management - Key to Food Security and Environmental Sustainability in South Asia

Integrated Plant Nutrient Management (IPNM) concept could not be adopted and popularized widely in South Asia even though the concept emerged in the early 1990s. Excessive use of chemical fertilizers without practicing IPNM over the years has resulted in degradation of soil, decline in crop production, pollution of surface and groundwater, which in turn is undermining food security and environmental sustainability. Promoting and adopting IPNM across South Asia can help address these problems and ensure food security for its growing population. This policy brief examines the genuine problems farmers have been facing in practicing IPNM and suggests policy recommendations for adopting IPNM extensively.



Containment of livestock origin antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in South Asia

Currently, antimicrobial resistance possesses a major threat to the entire world. It happens everywhere and can impact anyone of any country of the world, including SAARC region. In livestock, the AMR could increase the infectious disease outbreaks, slowing down livestock productivity and disrupting international trade in coming years. The antimicrobials are used in all SAARC Member States both in human and in animals for prevention and treatment of diseases. Additionally, antimicrobials are used in animals as growth promoters. The gross misuse and overuse of antimicrobials in livestock is one of the primary reasons for alarming AMR situation in South Asian countries.



Guidelines for ensuring sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in South Asia

Fisheries and aquaculture are surging sectors in the South Asian region. There are regional challenges such as trans-boundary issues, germplasm transfer, weather shocks etc. and opportunities exist in the form of transformation in aquaculture as envisaged during the expert consultation meetings of SAARC related to fisheries. This policy brief is summing up the various recommendations developed as part of these meetings during the last three years. Unique to the nature of small-scale fisheries and upcoming aquaculture, the various future issues which are related to climate change is also discussed.



Agribusiness Competitiveness of Smallholder Agriculture for Structural Transformation in South Asia

Agribusiness competitiveness is the enduring and intertwining issue to transform subsistence agriculture into modern and competitive with structural transformation. This policy brief on agribusiness competitiveness has been developed to analyze and unleash the constraints, challenges and opportunities of agribusiness and suggest some major policy interventions to improve the competitive agribusiness of the smallholder agriculture for structural transformation in the South Asian region using secondary information and literature review. Agribusiness competitiveness can be improved by creating enabling policy environment; technical skill and entrepreneurship development; easing access to inputs including improved seeds and financial resources; adoption of innovative technologies; mechanization; efficient & inclusive value chain development; product-market linkage; and competitiveness of the agribusiness products in terms of price, quality, quantity, and stability



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