



SUBJECT: YOUNG AGRICULTURE EXPERTS AND SCIENTISTS - CONSTITUTION OF COORDINATION COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

The meeting was convened on 22nd July 2025 under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) to deliberate on the directives of the Prime Minister regarding the *National Agriculture Innovation and Growth Action Plan*. The meeting took place in the Committee Room of the Ministry, with senior officials and relevant stakeholders in attendance. The list of participants is annexed.

The Minister formally welcomed all participants and highlighted the importance of collective efforts in executing the various pillars of the Action Plan. The discussion began with the pillar on Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Reforms. Mr. Ahmed Umair explained that the objective is to review existing agriculture-related laws and adopt global best practices. He mentioned that the OECD regulatory matrix had been proposed as a benchmarking tool to guide this process. The Minister endorsed this approach and highlighted the utility of the Ministry's digital portal for implementing a transparent, faceless certification system, particularly for sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures managed by the Department of Plant Protection.

Moving to the Access to Finance pillar, Mr. Ahmed identified two critical challenges: the limited availability of customized lending/leasing products and the absence of effective agriculture insurance programmes. He recommended enhanced coordination with the Ministry of Climate Change and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Minister emphasized that the key objective is to provide simplified credit access to smallholder farmers, referencing a proposal to use the National Identity Card as acceptable collateral for obtaining loans. Dr. Haroon Sarwar informed the forum that the ECC had approved a three-year scheme, effective from 1st July 2025, under which production loans—up to Rs. 3 million—would be provided to farmers across the crop, dairy, and fisheries sectors.

Mr. Ahmed further stressed the importance of providing credit to the processed food sub-sector. In response, the Minister suggested establishing a dedicated wing under the Ministry of Industries or MNFS&R to address the sector's specific needs. Additionally, a recommendation was made to transform the Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL) into an APEX Agriculture Banking Institution. Mr. Ahmed pointed out that ZTBL must be restructured before considering privatization due to its current inefficiencies. The Minister concurred, emphasizing the strategic value of keeping the institution under public control to prevent it from functioning purely as a commercial bank. Mr. Ahmed proposed engaging external partners such as SBP, FAO, and Karandaaz to support the bank's restructuring and transformation.

Mr. Bilal Haider informed the forum about the hiring of consultants for small farm business development, livestock insurance, and export enhancement. He also voiced concern over the high interest rates on agricultural loans from commercial banks, noting that rates range from KIBOR + 7% to 11%, significantly higher than those for auto or housing loans. Mr. Ahmed attributed this to the inherent risks in agriculture lending.

Under the Technology and Digitization pillar, Mr. Ahmed suggested involving the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) to expand rural internet connectivity. The Minister confirmed that MoITT had already committed to utilizing the Universal Service Fund (USF) to improve digital infrastructure in underserved rural areas. Mr. Ahmed also recommended establishing a "Pakistan Agri Stack"—a comprehensive digital platform to support agriculture innovation—similar to frameworks implemented in other countries, including India.

In the Infrastructure and Mechanization pillar, Mr. Ahmed raised the issue of inadequate grain storage facilities. The Minister acknowledged the concern and shared that, following the deregulation of PASSCO, a new entity is under process of establishment to manage open-market wheat procurement through competitive bidding, allowing the government to acquire wheat on demand. It was agreed that this development should be included in the revised presentation of the Action Plan.

The discussion then turned to the Farm Productivity and Capacity Building pillar. Mr. Ahmed stressed the need for output-based Research and Development (R&D), and informed the participants that NAVTTC is onboard to develop modern training curricula for farmers. The Minister proposed leveraging the expertise of Pakistani agriculture graduates recently trained in China. Dr. Ayesha from FAO endorsed the idea and recommended a preliminary meeting with the graduates to assess their areas of specialization. The Minister directed that a follow-up session be arranged to determine how these graduates could best be engaged in field-level farmer training, with the goal of enhancing overall agricultural productivity.

It was decided in the meeting that MNFSR and PM Coordinator on Agriculture will visit provincial headquarters for consultative meetings on National Agriculture Innovation and Growth Action Plan. This will create ownership and will help to align federal and provincial development plans and agriculture policies.

The meeting concluded with the Minister thanking all attendees for their active participation and valuable insights. He emphasized the importance of cross-sectoral coordination and timely execution of all recommended actions under the National Agriculture Innovation and Growth Action Plan.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

In Person

Sr. #	Name	Designation	Organization
1.	Rana Tanveer Hussain	Minister	M/o NFS&R
2.	Mr. Amir Mohyudin	Secretary/AS-II	M/o NFS&R
3.	Mr. Alam Zeb Khan	Additional Secretary-I	M/o NFS&R
4.	Dr. Haroon Sarwar Awan	Economic Consultant	M/o NFS&R
5.	Mr. Ahmed Umair	CEO	Vital Agri Nutrients

6.	Dr. S. Murtaza Hassan Andrabi	AHC	Livestock wing, M/o NFS&R
7.	Mr. Bilal Haider	Joint Secretary Admin	M/o NFS&R
8.	Dr. Ayesha Razzaq		FAO

Azhar Ali
(PS to Secretary)

Alam Zeb Khan
(Additional Secretary-I
(Admin))

Syed Bilal Haider
(Joint Secretary (Admn))

Dr. Syed Murtaza
Andrabi
(A.H.C)

Ahmed Umair
(CEO)

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