

PDDC to Support Community Farm

Pakistan Dairy Development Company is set to establish its first community farm. PDDC's Community Farm Programme is one of the initiatives which the Planning Commission and ECNEC agreed to support through the Public Sector Development Programme towards the end of 2007.

PDDC has been approached by a benefactor originally from Village Sarja Marja, Barki, Lahore Cantt., who determined that he wanted to assist the people of his village to improve their economic potential. This person has decided to assist his community to establish a community farm, and very kindly has agreed to donate 2 acres of land for the farm.

Participation in this development has been sought from Askari Commercial Bank, one of PDDC's partner banks, and the bank has agreed to support the community and its members by funding the farm development through the PDDC programme. In addition, Askari will finance the purchase of dairy animals through its own programme. Mr. Muhammad Farooq Abid Tung, the Divisional Head of Askari's Agriculture Credit Division, in a meeting with the benefactor and Mr. Geoff Walker, Chief Executive of Pakistan Dairy Development Company, expressed confidence in the dairy sector and the desire to work with PDDC in the new community farm development.

The community has decided that each member will pay Rs. 100 per animal per month into a fund for community development. In addition to financing the farm development and animal purchases, Askari Commercial Bank has very generously decided to match this community saving rupee for rupee.

PDDC's Community Farm Programme, which has funding to assist the development of 100 community farms over a five year period, includes significant management assistance to introduce more productive management practices to the dairy sector, in addition to some financial support. Communities will, however, be required to take responsibility for efficient operation of the farm and to introduce the recommended new management systems in order to qualify for financial support.

The society to be established for the farm at Sarja Marja, Lahore Cantt., will include 44 members, who in addition to bringing their own animals to the farm, will be purchasing 2 to 3 dairy animals each via Askari Commercial Bank finance. The community will be leasing additional land for fodder production, and PDDC will assist the efficient operation of feed production on this land.

PDDC is presently in contact with various social mobilisation agencies across Pakistan, with a view to identifying communities who would be interested in joining the community farm programme.

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