

DAY 7 - Karachi, Pakistan

Mr. Waheed Khan, Commercial Officer, Canadian High Commission in Islamabad, gave a briefing as to what to expect, and who we would meet over the next day and a half. He moved to Islamabad in March and his position in Karachi at the Canadian Commercial Office is now filled by Mr. Azhar Kirmani.

1. Our first visit was to the new Secretary of Agriculture for Sindh Province, Mr. Salik Nazir Ahmad. A deficit situation occurs for pulse crop production, particularly chickpea (most important), both desi splits and kabulis. Research on plant breeding is underway. Interest was expressed in soybean production. Consumption per capita was estimated at 6.3 kg (all pulses). Pulses are grown on marginal land, production is static. Low priority is given to pulses because growers receive better returns from cotton, wheat and other export crops. Seed multiplication system is poor, with no system for pulses. Hybrid varieties are under development by Pioneer and Cargill for some grains and oilseeds.

Salinity is an increasing problem and efforts are being made to develop drainage projects. Concern centres on the influence of chloride on existing salinity problems. The use of potash is banned at present because it is believed to contribute to the salinity problem. PPI of Canada is running demos for KCl (muriate of potash in local acronym) with various crops, the trials will attempt to prove that the use of potash is safe. This is a two-year project run by the federal Pakistan Research Corporation.

Marketing is coordinated by individual growers. The government establishes a minimum price for crops. Chickpea support price is about \$200 U.S. per MT - other pulses may be higher. Lentil is considered the "malikha" or queen of pulses. Green pea consumption refers to vegetables. Consumption varies according to price. Pulses are considered to be the poor man's food in a country where meat consumption is preferred.

2. The next meeting was with Mr. Kaloodi, a large importer of pulses and other commodities.

Pakistan imports some 100,000 tonnes of chickpeas. (Produced a contract signed with an Australian company for 500 tonnes at \$240 US/tonne. Kaloodi is a major importer who supplies to the army, the Utility Store (government run grocery store) and local market.

Major lentil imports are from Burma/Myanmar. Tyson chickpea from Australia. Quality is not good from Turkey (variable size, mix sizes), deemed to be an unreliable supplier.