

New Era in Cooperation: SAC Arranges ICRISAT Pigeon pea Germplasm for BARI

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Recently the SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka initiated new area of cooperation among the member countries by handing over of five germplasm of pigeonpea from International Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropic (ICRISAT) to Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI). Pigeonpea is a multipurpose crop used for producing food, feed, fodder and fuel wood purposes.

On 9th July 2009, during an informal ceremony, Dr. S K Pal, Deputy Director (Agriculture) of SAARC Agriculture Centre handed over the five short-duration germplasm of pigeonpea to Dr. K.C. Roy, Director General, BARI, Gazipur, Dhaka. These prospected pigeon pea varieties will be initially cultivated in different Regional Agricultural Research Centres under BARI, Gazipur, Bangladesh. The successful variety will be selected for cultivation in Chittagong hill tracts area where the local tribal people follow zhoom cultivation method for producing agricultural commodities. It is expected that cultivation of these short-duration pigeonpea will not only protect the fertile upper layer of the soil from erosion, but also improve the soil fertility and increase the pulse production in Bangladesh.

In response to the request of Dr. Hemal Fonseca, Senior Programme Specialist of SAARC Agriculture Centre, ICRISAT gave those five germplasm of pigeonpea for conducting scientific experiments to find out their suitability and economic viability for producing them in Bangladesh.

In his address Dr. S K. Pal, said SAARC countries could have superior cooperation among the member countries for the betterment of the people of the region by exchange of germplasm of the improved crop varieties. In his address Dr. K.C. Roy said that these pigeonpea varieties could contribute towards achieving food security by producing vegetable protein in marginal Hilly areas. Dr. Hemal Fonseca spoke on the occasion regarding advantages of these short-duration pigeonpea germplasm, which matures only in 90 days, whereas some of the local varieties take even more than 200 days for harvesting.

The senior officials of SAARC Agriculture Centre and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) were present on the occasion.

It may be mentioned here that SAARC Agricultural Centre (SAC) is the first regional institution established under SAARC. The Centre started functioning in Dhaka in BARC premises since 1989..

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