

Food Briefs National

- ❖ An appraisal of the agriculture sector raises hope that if stakeholders learn to co-exist peacefully it has more to offer in the near future. Output of rice and sugar cane has remained above expected levels and maize production may also remain close to target. This means that crops will, by and large, post sufficient growth during the current fiscal year. Even if smaller crops fail, it will not make a huge impact in this proposition.
- ❖ In order to give a boost to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the food sector a sustainable growth of the food processing industry and its alignment with value-addition chain of global food markets are required.
- ❖ Under an initiative taken earlier this month, the Livestock and Dairy Development Department of Punjab has started collecting organic camel milk from Cholistan and selling it in Lahore and adjoining areas.
- ❖ The Ministry of National Food Security and Research considers approving a Rs3bn plan to promote research and boost productivity of four major pulses i.e. gram (chickpea), mash, moong and masoor. The federal government seems to be waking up to rising imports of pulses, which surged by more than 60 % to Rs100 billion during the previous fiscal year.
- ❖ Recently a delegation from Iran expressed interest in developing strong trade relations with Pakistan in agriculture products. A team of entrepreneurs from West Azerbaijan, led by Urmia Chamber of Commerce and Industry Head of Agriculture Commission Behnam Tajodinni, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).
- ❖ The World Bank has extended the closing date of the Sindh Agricultural Growth Project (SAGP) to December 2020 from June 2019, after acknowledging the project's overall progress in its midterm review carried out in November. The review, conducted by the bank's mission, has upgraded the project's status to "moderately satisfactory" from "moderately unsatisfactory".
- ❖ Some of the most promising projects for 2018 and onwards are dealing with the development of north-south transport routes in Central Asia. Countries like India, Iran and Pakistan are already heavily involved.
- ❖ Due to excellent weather circumstances, export volumes have increased by 15% and the current season for Pakistani kinnow mandarins is in full swing. However, sizes are relatively small, which prompts many Pakistani exporters to send their produce to Russia.
- ❖ Punjab plans to introduce farm drones that will kill pests and weeds by spraying pre-identified fields with pesticides. Soon you will be seeing them initially in Punjab and hopefully in Sindh and elsewhere in Pakistan as well after some time. ◆

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- ❖ In February of last year, the Chinese market was opened for Chilean nectarines. The opening of the Asian giant meant an important change for local exporters in terms of distribution, due to that destination's great purchase potential. At that time it was difficult to anticipate how serious the impact would be in the 2017-2018 season. However, exporters are already noticing the consequences.
- ❖ Consumers have become more demanding of quality standards and the way the food they eat is produced, so they prefer to buy products that have organic seals. This is why more and more Honduran farmers are cultivating organic products, a market that is growing internationally.
- ❖ The Hungarian-German agricultural trade turnover is likely to have risen again in 2017, according to data from the Ministry of Agriculture (FM). Exports grew at a faster rate than imports.
- ❖ Final estimates for 2016-17 showed that production of horticultural crops like vegetables and fruits were 300.6 million tonnes, a year-on-year rise of over 5%. Production of these crops is likely to touch a record 305.4 million tonnes in 2017-18, about 1.6% higher than the previous year and 8% higher than the previous five years' average. This is according to the preliminary estimates of the Agriculture Ministry.
- ❖ A screen that combines a simple shading function with the capability of monitoring greenhouse temperatures, which is essential, especially in warmer months. These are just some of the characteristics of the Lumigrey® reflecting screens, introduced by Agritech as an alternative to traditional shading nets.
- ❖ Nominated for an innovation award at last year's Fruit Logistica 2017 in Berlin, and featured in the spotlight for Fruit Logistica 2018, SoFruPak is positive about the future of their cardboard packaging solutions.
- ❖ Niwa, a company that sells mini-greenhouses, will represent Almeria in the 11th edition of the 21st Entrepreneur Awards promoted by CaixaBank with the collaboration of the Ministry of Economy and the Knowledge of the Government of Andalusia. The name of the winning company will be announced in February.
- ❖ In recent months, after an oil spill, various protective measures for additional water treatment, water control, recording, water regulation and an oil filter have been installed and tested. During the approximately one-year long pumping tests, the long-term effects on thermal water are investigated under realistic conditions by varying the pumping rates.
- ❖ In what has generally been an off year for South African litchi producers, one farm considers themselves fortunate for a number of reasons. Not only did their litchi harvest exceed the already large crop of last year, but they had a relatively empty market in Europe for the start of their season with Madagascar coming in late and volumes from Mauritius and Réunion all but non-existent this year. ◆