

## Food Briefs National

- ❖ Japanese Ambassador Kuninori said in a meeting with Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhr Imam that Japanese firms are willing to invest in Pakistan's agriculture sector. Pakistan exports of fruits and vegetables to Japan in limited quantity despite increasing demand especially for mangoes.
- ❖ Pakistan and China recently signed two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and four letters of exchange for enhanced bilateral cooperation in the areas of science and technology, agriculture, and combating the coronavirus (COVID-19).
- ❖ Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the government is taking effective steps to deal with coronavirus challenge and sought recommendations from the Special Committee on Agricultural Products to provide special relief to the agriculture sector.
- ❖ Punjab Food Minister Abdul Aleem Khan has directed the food department to increase the number of wheat procurement points across the province to meet the growing need. As there are overall 382 procurement points were functional across the province.
- ❖ According to industry officials more than 830,619 metric tons of wheat has been procured so far under the government's procurement campaign for the current fiscal year of 2019/20 as against the set target of 8.25 million tons to fulfill the domestic and export requirements.
- ❖ Punjab Food Minister Samiullah Chaudhry has said that the provincial food department has taken various steps to ensure the availability of flour at a fixed rate. He said that a 33 percent increase is noted in flour supply and the supply of 20kg flour bag daily had been increased from 776,000kg to 1,035,000kg.
- ❖ The fruit and vegetable dealers have expressed concerns over the closure of the Torkham border and demanded of the government to allow the stranded containers of perishable goods to enter Afghanistan to protect the business community from huge financial losses.
- ❖ A petition had been moved to Supreme Court (SC) on seeking a ban on the export of fruit and vegetables from the country in wake of COVID-19. The petition stated that the fruit and vegetables were being sold against exorbitant prices due to the lockdown and export of these items to the other countries.
- ❖ Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Zafar Mirza has said a comprehensive food security plan will be formulated to avoid food shortages in the coming weeks and months.

## Food Briefs International

- ❖ Rice production for the 2020-21 marketing year is expected to rise to 36.3 million tonnes in Bangladesh as further cultivation of hybrid and high yield variety plantings increase. The country is expected to import 200,000 tonnes of rice in the 2020-21 marketing year to ease food security tensions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ China has announced it will allow the importation of fresh blueberries grown in the US as part of an agreement expected to help the country meet its commitments outlined in phase one of the US-China trade deal signed in January.
- ❖ Fresh produce companies are facing up to a very different set of challenges as the outbreak continues. Europe's fresh produce trade is coming to terms with the sudden, dramatic, and, at times, confusing impact of the recent coronavirus outbreak.
- ❖ The food industry in Germany is struggling with a labor shortage as a result of the restrictions caused by the coronavirus epidemic. For some companies, the situation is already "very tense." Slaughterhouses and dairies in Germany are especially affected by staff shortages because commuters from the Czech Republic and Poland are currently unavailable.
- ❖ India is heading toward a fourth record wheat harvest and near-record rice production for 2020-21, according to a report from the Foreign Agricultural Service of the US Department of Agriculture. Wheat production is forecast at 105 million tonnes while rice is estimated at 117 million tonnes.
- ❖ Malaysia's Sabah state has ordered the closure of palm oil plantations in three districts after a coronavirus outbreak originating from a religious gathering in Kuala Lumpur, which is also linked to nearly a thousand cases of the virus.
- ❖ Onion producers in New Zealand celebrate the re-opening of the market following months of negotiations. Indonesia has officially re-opened its doors to New Zealand-grown onions, in a move that many New Zealand onion producers are rightly celebrating.
- ❖ The Trade Ministry says Indonesia has enough food supplies to last until August, amid public fear of shortages in the wake of the global Covid-19 outbreak. Trade Minister Agus Suparmanto said there are enough supplies of staple food such as rice and corn for the next five months, which include the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan from April to May when demand will peak.
- ❖ The United Nations food agency recently said that the world food prices saw a sharp steep in March, due to a drop in demand amid the coronavirus pandemic and a plunge in global oil prices.
- ❖ US Northwest Cherry Growers (NWCG) has announced its first estimate for the upcoming 2020 cherry season, pegging the harvest to reach 205,032 tonnes. If projections prove accurate, it will be the smallest NW cherry volume in five seasons. ◆