

FOREWARD

In our agro-based economy, the horticultural sub-sector deserves special attention. A vast natural diversity in the soil and climate of Pakistan is suitable for the cultivation of diverse fruits and vegetables. Promotion of cultivation of fruits will not only help greatly enhance the availability for local consumption but would also generate sizeable exportable surplus. Export of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables can substantially add to our foreign exchange earnings.

I have full confidence in the abilities of our scientific community and the ingenuity of private sector leadership who, I am sure is already working towards the realization of this goal.

The conduct of an international Conference and publication of the proceedings represent a step forward in the right direction. While making the much needed scientific information available for use, this manuscript will also help create a forum for future discussion. Looking at the papers presented, I am impressed by the range and quality of the material. Almost all essential aspects of research and development have been covered. I hope that the recommendations of eminent scholars and industrial leaders would go a long way in establishing this emerging sector on a sound footing.

Great geo-political changes have taken place across our borders. With normalcy returning in Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics, new horizon would open up. Bright prospectus and possibilities do exist to introduce tropical and sub-tropical commodities and their products in these countries. The government, growers and the processors should avail these opportunities and plan to derive benefits from these developments. Many countries are already striving hard to gain foothold in these areas. Pakistan due to having varied climate can ship commodities which cannot be grown in most countries in apparent competition. Tropical and sub-tropical fruits and vegetables would find ready markets. Important outlets also exist in Far East.

The conference was participated by all the stake holders in fruits, vegetables and florists production, processing and export. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to discuss all issues, thread bare and to benefit from the experience and knowledge of each other.

The proceedings based on the deliberations of the conference being published would be useful addition to the existing knowledge on fruits in the country. Finally, I would like to congratulate the organizers of the symposium, the editors and the publisher of the proceedings for a job very well accomplished.

I offer my sincere gratitude to Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), 4B Fertilizer, Pak Arab Fertilizers (Pvt) Ltd., Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Board (PHDEB), Alrahim (Pvt) Ltd., Pakistan Science Foundation, Engro Chemical Pakistan Ltd., Lahore Compost (Pvt) Ltd. and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA) for generously supporting the organization of the conference. Thanks are due to Engro Chemical Pakistan Limited and Institute of Horticultural Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad for their interest and support.

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I very greatly appreciate and offer thanks to Mr. Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan, Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Live stock, Government of Pakistan for participating to conclude the conference.

I look forward still greater collaboration and co-operation in future eventualities.

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Convener
Scientific Program Committee