GRAIN QUALITY TESTING LABORATORIES (GQTLs)

GQTLs: the only ISO 17025 accredited laboratories in Pakistan

Scientists working in GQTL **Lab.**

Contributors:

Challenges

- International trade of agricultural commodities is governed by strict laboratory certifications conforming to international standards.
- Absence of such facilities at home compelled the traders to get certifications of their products from abroad, which were expensive and time consuming, adversely affecting the delivery times.
- Un-certified consignments were often rejected or fetched poor price in the international market.
- In 2002, rejection of consignment of 2 million tons of surplus wheat inflicted a loss amounting billions of rupees to the country.
- Pakistan produces surplus wheat, rice, and a wide range of fruits. Their export can fetch premium prices if international trade standards are strictly met.
- Challenge was to develop indigenous grain and fruit testing facilities conforming to the international trade standards.

Interventions

- In 2002, under a PSDP project, PARC initiated the establishment of two state-of-the-arts Grain Quality Testing Laboratories (GQTL) at Islamabad and Karachi.
- In a record time of two years, the laboratories were made fully functional after hectic research and development work on standardization of various testing procedures.
- In 2007, GQTL earned international recognition and credibility through ISO17025 accreditation from Norwegian Accreditation Council.

Outcomes

- Today, PARC (GQTLs) provides qualitative (chemical, physical & microbial) testing of agricultural produce offering >80 tests under one roof.
- It helped lifting the ban imposed by Egypt, Russia and Mexico on Pakistan's wheat & rice.
- Since 2005, PARC has provided Quality Assurance of wheat traded in or out of Pakistan e.g. rejection of Australian Wheat consignment.
- PARC is currently providing services of fumigation and testing of >5000 grain samples per year from public and private sector.
- PARC also provides testing/certification services on pesticide residues and heavy metals to facilitate fruit & vegetable exporters.

Way Forward

Extending scope for analyzing agricultural products other than grains, fruits and vegetables, particularly with respect to sanitary and phyto-sanitary parameters.