

FOUNDED BY QUAID-I-AZAM MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH



## *Pakistan, Belarus set to sign agricultural cooperation accords*

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belarus are set to sign three accords related to agricultural cooperation during the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Belarus.

In this regard, a four-member Belarusian delegation held detailed discussions with the scientists of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and visited the research establishments at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) here on Tuesday.

Details of various agreements, focusing on the promotion of bio-technology, crop productivity, livestock and agricultural machinery, were worked out during the visit.

In a striking contrast, Belarus has 16,000 agricultural scientists for its population of 10 million, whereas in Pakistan there are only 600 scientists involved in agricultural research for a population of 200m. Speaking to the Belarusian delegation, PARC Chairman Dr Iftikhar Ahmad emphasised the need for greater cooperation in agriculture between the two countries.

“This cooperation would also help Pakistan to take full advantage of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and establish agricultural sciences parks on the thoroughfare of the corridor,” he said.

In his detailed presentation, Belarus Academician Secretary, Department of Biological Sciences of National Academy of Sciences, Mikhail Nikiforov said that his country has developed several crop technologies that could be utilised for the improvement of Pakistan’s agriculture sector.

“Cooperation in science and technology would benefit both the countries,” he said. He proposed exchange visits of scientists and specialists for mutual benefit.

He termed the NARC as a state-of-the-art scientific facility which has been contributing towards research and agriculture development in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General of Scientific Practical Centre for Agriculture Mechanisation, Siarhei Yakouchik said that his country has developed as many as 200 agriculture machines which were produced by the Belarusian scientists during the past seven years. “Belarus is utilising 80 per cent homemade agriculture machinery,” he said, adding that they were ready to share technology with Pakistan.

Deputy DG NASB Scientific Practical Centre on Animal Breeding, Piatrushka Ihar made a detailed presentation on efficient animal breeding via innovation.