

Welcome Address

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Amjad
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Honourable Chief Guest, worthy Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan (SI), Deans, Directors, delegates, students, ladies and gentlemen:

Agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan's economy in which Horticulture plays a significant role by contributing in production of diverse fruits, vegetables, flowers, medicinal and landscape plants throughout the year for domestic and export markets. Except for some short supplies during peak winter or summer seasons, we see abundance of fruits and vegetables in the country which has been made possible due to the untiring efforts of our industrious growers, and other supply chain stakeholders, very well-supported by R&D and extension and academic staff working in different areas of the country. Our growing horticulture industry also provides manifold employment opportunities in rural as well as urban areas.

While our fruits and vegetables production has been around 14.5 million tonnes per annum from an area of 1.39 million hectares, per unit yield has mostly been stagnant in most of the crops. Also, we need to respond to growing challenges like food security in the wake of climate change and increasing cost of production and reduction of natural resources. Further, we need to invest into technologies leading to reduction in postharvest losses and promotion of value addition. To help improve performance of overall horticulture in the country, efforts have always been made both at private and public-sector levels in different ways. University of agriculture, Faisalabad is the premier agricultural organization leading several national initiatives and this 2nd Intentional Conference on Horticultural Sciences (ICH2016) is part of those efforts.

On behalf of the Institute of Horticultural Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, I warmly welcome you all at this auspicious gathering of eminent scientists, academicians, extension staff, and various industry stakeholders. This conference will certainly provide an opportunity to the academia, researchers, farmers and other industry stakeholders to share their ideas and develop new strategies to tackle various supply chain issues.

I am pleased to report that this 2nd International Conference on Horticultural Sciences (ICH2016) is being attended by nation-wide institutions and research organizations, along with international delegates. In addition to our distinguished guest from abroad and industry stakeholders, researchers and students from University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Karachi University, Bahauddin Zakariya University and Muhammad Nawaz Shareef University of Agriculture, Multan, University of the Punjab, Lahore, University of Sargodha, University of Peshawar, University of Swabi, University of Haripur, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, University of Poonch, Rawalakot, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Islamia University, Bahawalpur, Ayub Agriculture Research Institute, Faisalabad, National Institute for Agriculture and Biology, Faisalabad, Pakistan Agricultural Research Centre and National Agricultural Research Centre, Islamabad, PARC Regional Office, Karachi, Directorate General of Research, Quetta, Sindh Agriculture Department,

KPK Agriculture Department and Punjab Agriculture Department has also participated in the conference.

Our international delegates from Australia, China, India, South Korea and USA will share their research findings and new ideas at the platform. Also, there will be some online presentations from international speakers who could not participate due to unavoidable circumstances. The sponsors for this event include Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, Endowment Fund Secretariat, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Australian Aid, Rehman Corporation, Faisalabad and Pakistan Society for Horticultural Science.

There will be large number of oral and poster presentations in technical sessions during first two days. Overall, 96 oral and 122 poster presentations have been scheduled. Apart from professional and industry stakeholders, this is indeed a great opportunity for our students as well, who can take advantage by actively participating and getting maximum out of this opportunity as such opportunities are very rare. The student chapter of Pakistan Society for Horticultural Science (UAF) is already at the forefront in providing necessary support for organizing this event.

Once again, on behalf of the Institute of Horticultural Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, I welcome you at this 2nd International Conference on Horticultural Sciences and wish you a very productive conference and comfortable stay at Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Thank you.