

A HORTICULTURE EXTENSION SERVICE LAUNCHED IN PRIVATE SECTOR

Mr. M.H. Panhwar has issued statement that due to Globalisation challenges and various enquiries from many growers of Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan seeking solution to their problems connected with rural and urban horticulture, he is launching these services under M.H.P Trust. The Trust was established in 2002, when his four sons under a deal in the Court of Law at Hyderabad agreed to give up their right of inheritance of property of M.H. Panhwar in favour of M.H.P Trust, which will get his Hyderabad Bungalow at 157-C, Unit No.2, Latifabad, 103 acres of fully developed fruit orchard and more than 50,000 books on various subjects, collected by him in past 50 years. The sons also agreed to make financial contribution in suitable manner to run the Trust, which will work in any field connected with Singhology, agriculture, water, education environments, health and engineering and render service to humanity in general and Pakistan and Sindh in particular. Establishment of this service is necessitated by WTO enforcement from January 2005 and it is anticipated that many revolutionary changes are going to happen in which to survive; growers of Pakistan have to play a new kind of role or perish. The Trust will provide the guide lines.

M.H. Panhwar as Chairman of this Trust stated that he had successfully introduced temperate zone crops like; peaches, plums, apples and pomegranates and subtropical like; lychee and grapes and tropical like Simaruba glauca and longan in Hyderabad Sindh area. They have also introduced 17 new varieties of mango, which mature from April 15 to September 30, a period of 5 ½ months and all these weigh more than 350 grams and are exportable and acceptable in Europe, Japan and northern America after certain treatments required by importing countries. He also said that his farm is fully organic since past fifteen years, but organic fruit growing is most difficult task, though with training it can be highly remunerative.

He said that yields of most crops we grow are three times that of even progressive farmers. He said our secret is collection of latest publication on horticultural crops, as soon as they are out, production of manuals on each crop and updating them every year by incorporating latest information, use of university educated managers instead of Kamdars and establishing office for data compilation, scientific studies and field execution. They have five managers on 100 acre farm and are issuing monthly programme for each crop to be executed by the book, rather than use of guess work.

Their yields are at par with those of developed countries and three times those of local growers. The M.H.P Trust has decided to establish private and free Horticulture Extension Service for growers of Pakistan. He said, "We are not in competition with the government and we simply supplement their efforts."

In stage-I, the Trust will provide the following Horticulture Extension Services right away in the first stage and will expand in subsequent stages:

- a) Advice to any grower or person in trade, by telephone, post, e-mail or personal visit.
- b) Advice by monthly news letter, which will cover all questions and answers of the month and give advice on cultural practices for next two months.
- c) A website is being established and all questions of growers and answers by Trust will be put on it.
- d) Farm notes on each crop will be issued regularly.
- e) All kind of advice on organic methods in growing crops and a volume is under preparation and will be published for guidance of farmers.
- f) Promoting on urban agriculture by introducing economic crops like fruits and vegetables and imparting technology.
- g) Training programmes for growers and persons in trade.
- h) Conducting periodic meeting of growers to update their knowledge.
- i) Training of farm managers, supervisors and foreman in crops as well as on post-harvest and export packing.
- j) Reclamation of saline land in rice areas.
- k) Rejuvenation of old tree orchards (mango, lychee, citrus, guava, chicku, cherimoya, papaya, ber etc.)

In stage II staff will be employed to visit the growers, and advice and action will come from the office of Trust. A quarterly journal will also be issued in addition to monthly News Letter. In this stage whole agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries will be covered.

The advisory service will cover fruits, olericulture, ornamentals, floriculture, essential oils herbaceous plants and urban agriculture. In 1950 urban agriculture from house hold vegetable crops on an area of only 700 square feet in each house hold in suburbs of USA was worth \$ 3.0 billions. Encouragement on this has increased income multifold now. In urban Pakistan emphasis is on landscaping and flowers and invariably house-holds employ uneducated, untrained Malis (nurserymen), who lack knowledge and there is economic drain of land, fertilisers and exploitation of owners. The M.H.P Trust can easily help in urban agriculture by conducting meetings and guiding house-holds. Many training manuals are ready and are being converted for use on multimedia.

There are no charges and service will be free to all growers and people in trade. Personal contacts can be made on following:

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