

CORPORATE FARMING

By
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(Farmers, retired bureaucrats join hands to give Sindh's lands to international corporation depriving local farmers of the land. Mr. M.H. Panhwar's view on the subject)

A group of progressive farmers and retired bureaucrats drawn from all the province on Monday decided to go into corporate farming to supplement the government's efforts of enhancing per acre yield of various crops.

Shaukat Khan, the convenor of the meeting, with agro-services background, said the meeting was convened to ponder over the ways and means to join the efforts of providing impetus to corporate farming.

One of the participants Mr. Bhutto, offered 1,200 acre land in Sindh for first experiment of corporate farming while other participants said, the land should be taken from the government on lease for better results.

I decided that as a first step negotiations would be initiated with the NWFP government on leasing out ten farm lands through advertisements and later on similar projects would be undertaken in Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan in the next step.

The participants discussed at length to run the business on public private partnership venture basis and concluded to float a company with name of Pak Agro Services company Limited (PASC).

A participant feared that government's apathy towards farmers may lead to production crisis of various crops. For instance, he pointed out, the wheat growers, due to indifferent attitude of the government last year, have abandoned most vital fertiliser this time to save money. The step, he claimed, would all wheat production target against the hopes of the government.

Another participant pointed out that there was a need of improving marketing and export of agro produce as almost all the major crops, rice, wheat, cotton, etc., had been surplus and there was little chance of their export.

Ghaffar Mohammad, a former bureaucrat from NWFP, said that running the agro services was not going to be commercially viable at least for the time being and the progressive farmers instead of totally concentrating on getting immediate benefits should work in the national interest to give the agriculture sector its due.

He favoured setting up of a NGO which could seek financial and technical help from the USAID, World Bank and Asian Development Bank and other DFIs in corporate farming field.

Shaukat Khan, the convenor of the meeting, was of the view that the agro services as planned by him could become highly remunerative with the passage of time and the need was to form a company to achieve the objective.

Besides agriculturists, the meeting was also attended by the representatives of SMEDA, SME Bank and other DFIs.