

Letter from the Executive Director, Agribusiness

Biolife started its journey in the last month with the mission to illustrate the agriculture scenario of Bangladesh, latest innovations as well as the various activities of ACI Agribusinesses. We are overwhelmingly pleased with the kind of positive responses we have got from our readers. We believe that our effort of disseminating knowledge across the country is being successful to some extent.

A large portion of Bangladesh's gross domestic products (GDP) comes from the agriculture sector and millions of people are financially dependent on this sector. Therefore it is extremely important that we highlight the crucial issues of agriculture so that together we can find out solutions that can eliminate these problems.

Due to the excessively high increase in the yield of several crops, the prices of such crops have decreased drastically. Although, the low price of rice and vegetables are beneficial for consumers but it is proving to be awfully bad for farmers as they are not getting satisfying returns on their investment in the production of these crops. Farmers are incurring losses thus are losing the motivation to produce these crops. Therefore, to motivate farmers, the cost of production of these crops should be decreased so that farmers can make profit while the consumers get these products at fairly low prices. In order to reduce the cost of production, we need to do more widespread researches and introduce new technologies. For this, the government should directly share opinions with public and the private companies, agriculture extensions and NGOs and jointly

identify the problems and their possible solutions.

Any new technology should be properly communicated amongst everyone associated with agriculture, especially farmers. Unfortunately, most farmers do not receive basic academic education and therefore, usually, they do not have the ability to decipher any complex messages. Therefore, large scale communications with comprehensive demonstrations of every detail of the features and usage of the products are needed.

Our poultry farmers are also suffering tremendously due to the decrease in the production of chicks because of the lethal Bird Flu epidemics. Therefore, there is a radical decrease in the meat and egg production for which their prices have shot up. Most consumers with mid to lower range income are shunning away from these excessively expensive protein sources. Science has advanced greatly in the world of vaccine and globally few safe AVI vaccines have been innovated. If the government acts promptly and test these products locally at a quicker pace so that these vaccines are made available to farmers in the near future. We hope that the fastest action of all the levels will make these vaccines available to farmers and this will boost up the poultry production and thus will reduce the loss of farmers.

Lastly, we would like to welcome our readers to share your comments on Biolife so that we can improve the quality and appearance accordingly. It would be our pleasure to include your views and news about the current development in the field of agriculture.



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ACI Seed's Initiative to Develop a State of the Art Advanced Biotech



ACI has decided to build its own state of the art biotech lab facilities at ACI Centre in order to execute researches for the development in the agriculture sector of Bangladesh. On June 30th 2012, regarding this, the Executive Director of Agribusinesses, Dr. F H Ansarey along with the Civil Engineer and the Architect of ACI Limited visited the laboratories of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) and the Bangladesh Rice Research

Institute (BRRI). BARI and BRRI are the leaders of agriculture research in the country. These research institutes have successfully created a number of new crop varieties and therefore with their support ACI will be able to build a well designed and equipped laboratory. In the visit, Dr. Ansarey met the Director General of BRRI, Director General and Director Research of BARI, Chief Scientific Officer in the Plant Genetic Resource-

Center, Head of Biotechnology, Head of Breeding Division and other important individuals in these institutes. Both BARI and BRRI are enormously pleased with this initiation of ACI and have agreed to provide their resources. Collaborative research programs are being planned and they are being implemented in the near future.

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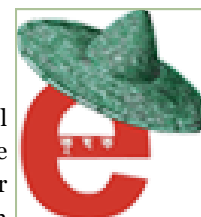
Oditi Shirleena Mostafa

E-krishok.com: An Innovative Communication Medium for Farmers

Communicating with farmers is a huge challenge not only because all of them are not properly educated but also because farmers are widely spread throughout the country even in the remote areas. For reaching out these farmers different kinds of communication techniques are used and one of these is e-Krishok. Established in 2009, e-Krishok is a promotional campaign, which is a partnership program of Grameenphone, ACI Lim-

ited, Katalyst and BIID. It provides information and advisory services to farmers at 316 different Grameen Phone Community Information Center across the 63 districts of the country. Through this, farmers get the benefit of quick and accurate information that would solve their problem. This is done through online process where farmers can also get direct consultation with an agriculturist through e-mails. Farmers do not need to work with

the technical interface since in each center there is an operator who browses through e-Krishok website and find solutions for them. This online method is a great help for farmers because they can get information about what crop to plant, what techniques and medications to use and where to market as well as about the latest innovations and technologies.



Sri Lankan High Commissioner Visits ACI R & D Station & ACI Seed Launches Hybrid Cotton Seed, Shuvro

Honorable High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Sarath K. Weragoda paid a visit to the ACI R & D station at Bogra from June 30 to July 1, 2012 for finding out the export possibilities of ACI R & D breed crop varieties and research collaboration between ACI Seed and Sri Lanka. During this visit, Mrs. Iorsha Cooray, Second Secretary, Sri Lankan High Commission, Eng. M. A. Matin, Director General, Rural Development Academy, Md. Shafiqul Akter, PhD, Business Manager, Seed and Dr. Md. Akter

Hossain, Programme Manager, R & D were also present and they briefed His Excellency Mr. Weragoda regarding the performance of the breed varieties. He saw the field performance of the varieties and expressed his keen interest in working with ACI Seed in both public and private sectors through collaborative variety breeding programs.

ACI Seed has also launched a new variety of hybrid cotton, Shuvro, in the month of June. This variety produces cotton that is comparatively

more expensive than those found in the market. Therefore, farmers can be benefitted from producing this variety. The best time for planting this seed is from mid July to mid August.



Honorable High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, his Second Secretary and Business Manager, at R & D Station

ACI Fertilizer Initiates Broad Based Trial of NEB Fertilizer



Mr. Lukes with the Business Manager and the ACI Fertilizer team at ACI Centre



NEB Trial at BRRI

ACI Fertilizer has joined hands with Agmor Incorporated, an American company, to launch NEB fertilizer in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, approximately 2.8 million MT of urea are being used. NEB can save 50% of the urea usage which would lead to a reduction of 25 to 30% in the total cost of urea. This

means that the cost of production for farmers will decrease to a large extent. The new product trial was held at BRRI in the month of June. The seed bed preparation was completed on June 26, 2012. The principal of the product, Mr. Kyle Lukes, President of Agmor Incorporated, came from United States of

America to monitor the seed bed preparation. If the product gives satisfactory result then ACI Fertilizer will have to apply for registration before marketing the product to farmers therefore, if the government acts promptly then the product will soon be in the market.

ACI Motors on the Verge of Launching ACI Engine Oil and ACI Gear Oil

ACI Motors has decided to extend its product line by including ACI Engine Oil and ACI Gear Oil. ACI Engine Oil and ACI Gear Oil are specifically made for agriculture related motors and vehicles unlike other engine and gear oils found in Bangladesh.

For lending toll, a team of ACI Motors along with the Executive Director of Agri-

businesses went to Chittagong to visit to two plants, Pacific Oil and Lub-rref Bangladesh Limited. Between the two plants, ACI Motors has chosen to work with Lub-rref Bangladesh Limited since it is fully equipped; the test method capacity is huge and also the plant has large spare capacity. ACI Motors has already ordered sticker designs to two different

brand communication companies and also has started the process of can manufacturing. ACI Motors expects to launch the new products by the middle of July and believes that these products will have a positive impact not only on the business but also on farmer's crop production process.



Executive Director of Agribusinesses along with ACI Motors team in Chittagong plant

ACI Animal Health Launches the Safest Plankton Producer

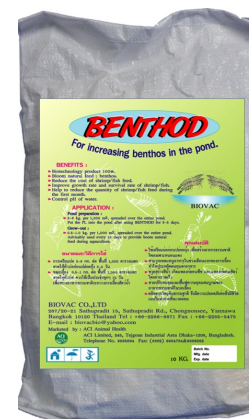
In the month of June, ACI Animal Health launched Bangladesh's first biologically developed product Benthod, a powder that is a safer and environmentally friendlier solution for the production of planktons. Planktons are organisms that are a crucial nutrient of fishes; usually, urea and other inorganic chemicals are used in producing planktons but these chemicals have severe harmful residual effect that can lead

to dangerous *zoonotic* diseases. In the market, there is a huge crisis for urea as it is hugely used in the production of rice. Benthod is an organic Fertilizer composed of essential vitamins & minerals. Even if it is accidentally applied in a huge amount, there would not be any harmful repercussion. Furthermore, it costs around 300 to 400 BDT per acre while the urea and other chemical compounds together cost

around 700 to 800 BDT. Therefore, it is not only safe but also results in lower cost of production for farmers.



Planktons



Benthod Packet

ACI Cropex Goes for Vegetable and Fruits Marketing

ACI Cropex has taken the initiative of hygiene local vegetable and fruits marketing throughout the country, especially in the Dhaka City. Earlier, the business has worked with traditional vegetables and fruits sellers in local wet market. Now, ACI Cropex will sell bulk vegeta-

bles to the wholesale market which will be directly collected from farmers. For the availability of products, Cropex is going tie up with some of the international and national organization of sustainable contract farming like UK Aid through Business Information Facilities.



Shwapno Expands its Horizon by Launching Private labelled brands

Considering the increasing customer demand for quality products at best prices, ACI Logistic's Shwapno launched its own line up of private label branded commodities Shwapno Premium and Standard Mini-ket Rice in May 2012. The products have been well received in the market due to its quality assurance and competitive pricing. Currently, on an average,

more than two thousand customers are buying 600 sacks of 50kg Shwapno Premium and Standard Mini-ket Rice. The launch of packaged rice was followed by a line up of Shwapno labelled red lentil, red chilli powder and turmeric. Through this initiative, Shwapno is trying to reach out to a greater customer base in the long run and make the name

Shwapno a renowned household brand.



Premiaflex Plastics Limited Achieves Sedex Membership

Premiaflex Plastics Limited is well known amongst its business customers for its good quality products and superior customer service. The business is working with some of the globally renowned brands like Unilever and Nestle and since the last month, it has started working with GlaxoSmithKline. Now the brand of Premiaflex will be internationally recognized

because through Unilever, Premiaflex Plastics Limited has become a member of Sedex, an international non-profit organization that provides solution for managing ethical and responsible practices in the supply chain. The business believes that this achievement will enhance their brand image globally and not only the local companies but also the multinational companies

will have higher faith in the business.



IFPRI Visits ACI Limited



The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), an international agricultural research center that works in promoting the adoption of innovations in agricultural technology so that food needs are met in the developing world, visited ACI Center on June 25. IFPRI is working with the Bangladeshi government on agriculture policy formation. On this purpose, a team from their organization that included Mr. David J.

Spielman, Senior Research Fellow, Ms. Fatima Zaidi, Senior Research Assistant, Ms. Vartika Singh, Senior Research Assistant and Mr. Nicholas Magnan, Postdoctoral Fellow and two other important representatives of IFPRI met Mr. M Anis Ud Dowla Chairman and Dr. Arif Dowla Managing Director of ACI Limited. During this meeting, Dr. F H Ansarey, Executive Director of Agribusinesses, Dr. Lutfur Rahman, Adviser of Ag-

ribusinesses, Md. Shafiqul Aktar, PhD, Business Manager of ACI Seed and Mr. M. Saifullah Head of Information Analyst were also present. In the meeting, IFPRI took inputs on the private sector's policies, strategies and collaborative approaches with the country's government.

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Prosperity through Food Security

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