

SENATE OF PAKISTAN



REPORT # 01, 2025

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY & RESEARCH

ANNUAL REPORT

(June, 2024 – May, 2025)

PRESENTED BY

SENATOR SYED MASROOR AHSAN

Chairman

Standing Committee on National Food Security & Research

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is a matter of great honor for me to present this report to the esteemed House of the Federation, highlighting the significant strides, policy actions, and collaborative efforts undertaken by the Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security & Research. These efforts are rooted in our unwavering commitment to strengthening a sector that serves as the backbone of our socio-economic development.

I express my sincere appreciation to all the honorable Members of the Committee for their consistent dedication, valuable insights, and constructive recommendations. Their proactive role has been instrumental not only in shaping the direction of our discussions but also in ensuring that our decisions are implemented with purpose and urgency.

The progress and outcomes documented in this report are a reflection of the collective resolve and cooperation of the Committee Members, whose engagement has been central to fulfilling our legislative and oversight responsibilities.

Over the course of our tenure, the Committee has closely examined the performance and ongoing initiatives of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research and its attached organizations. We have deliberated on a wide range of sectoral issues and have regularly provided policy advice aligned with national priorities and public interest.

Throughout this period, our work has been guided by the principles of transparency, accountability, and parliamentary integrity. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable support of the Committee Secretary and the unwavering dedication of my personal staff, whose efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the smooth execution of our responsibilities.



(Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan)

Chairman Committee

INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMITTEE

I, Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan, Chairman Standing Committee on National Food Security & Research, have the honor to present the report on behalf of the Committee for the period from June 2024 to May 2025. During this period, the Committee held eight (08) meetings and discussed major aspects related to National Food Security & Research sector.

2. The composition of the Committee is as under:

1. Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan	Chairman
2. Senator Aimal Wali Khan	Member
3. Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani	Member
4. Senator Danesh Kumar	Member
5. Senator Rahat Jamali	Member
6. Senator Poonjo Bheel	Member
7. Senator Sardar Al Haj Muhammad Umar Gorgajj	Member
8. Senator Ejaz Ahmad Chaudhary	Member
9. Senator Abdul Wasay	Member
10. Senator Dost Muhammad Khan	Member

AGENDA OF THE MEETINGS

3. The Agenda of the Meetings was as under:

I. **23rd July, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. in Committee Room No. 4 Parliament House, Islamabad.**

- Introduction of Hon'ble Members and Officers/Officials.
- Comprehensive briefing on the role, working and performance of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research and it's all attached departments.

II. **20th August, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. in Committee Room No. 01, Parliament House, Islamabad.**

- Consideration of Private members Bill titled "**The Pakistan Animal Science Council Bill, 2023**" moved by Senator Rana Mehmood-Ul-Hassan and Senator Kamran Murtaza in the Senate sitting held on 7th August, 2023 and the bill referred to this standing committee for consideration and report.
- The Ministry of NFS&R to brief the committee on the issue of Food insecurity and Agriculture which are being adversely affected by the climate change, urbanization, increasing population growth and decreasing of water availability. What steps is the ministry taking for sustainable food systems and promotion of economic growth in Pakistan in the light of Seminar organized by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Islamabad on 23rd July, 2024. What step is the Ministry taking in this regard?
- The Ministry of National Food Security and Research to brief the Committee on "**CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE**".
- The latest position about steps taken by the Ministry about recovery of Cotton Cess from the textile industry including pursuing the cases in courts for recovery of Cotton Cess which is the main source of cotton research.
- The Cotton Commissioner to brief the committee whether any new varieties of cotton seed have been evolved which are pest resistant and drought resistant in order to increase the production of cotton in Pakistan.
- The DG Plant Protection Department, Karachi to submit detailed report before the committee about damages caused by the locust attack in Sindh and Balochistan Provinces in the year 2020-21. Is there any indication of locust attack in future and what steps/pre-emptive measures have been taken including to make sure the availability of helicopters in sufficient numbers for aerial spray to control the locust attack?

III. **4th September, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at National Agriculture Research Center (NARC), Chak Shahzad, Islamabad.**

- Visit of National Agriculture Research Centre (NARC) Islamabad including visit of Scientific Labs and briefing about the working of Labs.
- Comprehensive briefing by the Chairman PARC in relation to Research in all fields and the impacts on productivity enhancement?
- Details of budget of last three years with its utilization and the total number of employees Scientists/non Scientists working in PARC/NARC including its allies departments on regular, contract and DPL basis with category-wise break up.

IV. 12th November, 2024 at 2:30 p.m. in Committee Room No. 4 Parliament House, Islamabad.

- The latest position about steps taken by the Ministry about recovery of Cotton Cess from the Textile Industries including pursuing the cases in Courts for recovery of Cotton Cess which is the main source of cotton research.
- Briefing by the Ministry on the role of Wheat Board including its composition.
- Comprehensive briefing by the Managing Director PASSCO on the Role, working and performance of the PASSCO.
- The PASSCO may also provide the following details to the Standing Committee:
 - i) Budget of last three years with its utilization:
 - ii) Total number of employees from Grade 1-21 working on regular/contact basis in PASSCO;
 - iii) Complete details of recruitment made in PASSCO. of all grades during the last four years. and
 - iv) Details of vacant positions.

V. 8th January, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. in Committee Room No. 4 Parliament House, Islamabad.

- Confirmation of the Minutes of last meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research held on 12th November, 2024.
- The latest position about steps taken by the Ministry about recovery of cotton Cess from the Textile Industries including pursuing the cases in Courts for recovery of Cotton Cess which is the main source of Cotton research.
- The Secretary to brief the Standing Committee on the issue of alleged mismanagement of Basmati Rice Exports to European Union and details of action taken against the Officers/Officials of DPP allegedly involved in the said negligence/mismanagement. This has caused delays of rice exports because of contamination concerns and food safety.
- Briefing by the DG Department of Plant Protection to the Standing Committee on the following points:
 - i) Export Policy regarding Pakistani Mangoes to Iran.

- ii) What is SOP determined by Plant Protection of Iran about Import of Mangoes from Pakistan and reasons for discontinuation of import of Mangoes in the year 2024.
- iii) Export Policy about Mangoes for the year 2025?

VI. 10th February, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. in the Headquarter of PASSCO, Lahore.

- Detailed briefing on latest position about recovery of cotton Cess from Textile Industries which is the main source of Cotton research especially briefing from Chairman of All Pakistan Textiles Mills Association (APTMA) on the same as decided by Committee in its last meeting held on 8th January, 2025.

VII. 3rd March. 2025 at 02:00 p.m. in Committee Room No.01, Parliament house, Islamabad.

- Submission of the Budgetary Proposals relating to Public Sector Devolvement Program (PSDP) for the financial year 2025-26 to the Senate Standing Committee as required under Rule 166 (7) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012.
- The Chairman PARC to submit details of Agricultural Machinery of Latest Technology Imported/Gifted from Chinese Government during the year 2024-25 including its distribution and utilization.
- Details to be submitted by the PASSCO regarding procurement of wheat during the year 2024 including details of embezzlement in procurement of wheat by officers/officials of PASSCO and latest position of action taken against involved personnel's so far?
- The Director General Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department to brief the Committee about working and performance of Department including progress of last three years.

VIII. 29th May, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in Committee Room No. 4 Parliament House, Islamabad.

- Details to be submitted by the PASSCO regarding procurement of wheat during the year 2024 including details of embezzlement in procurement of wheat by officers/officials and latest position of action. What target has been fixed by the PASSCO for procurement of Wheat for the Year 2025.
- The Director General Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department to brief the Committee about working and performance, particularly sale of fake Seeds in the country, resulting harming country's food security and steps taken against companies and government officials involved.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

- **Significance of the Agriculture Sector:**

The Committee observed that agriculture plays a pivotal role in Pakistan's economy, contributing approximately 6.2–6.3% to the GDP through exports. Given this significance, the sector must be prioritized, which should be duly reflected in the national budget.

- **Revival of Tube Well Subsidy Program:**

Considering the importance of the joint federal-provincial subsidy program for tube wells, under which farmers receive 66% subsidy, the Committee impressed upon reactivation of the program soon.

- **Agricultural Research and Data Reliability:**

The Committee endorsed 38 research outcomes presented by the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC). However, it was observed that the availability of reliable data remains a concern, and efforts are ongoing to validate and improve existing data sets.

- **Strengthening of the Agriculture Policy Institute (API):**

The Committee supported the proposal to transform the API into a think tank to provide informed policy input on emerging agricultural issues, particularly in the area of crop price stabilization.

- **Donkey Industry and Bilateral Cooperation:**

The Committee deliberated on the development of the donkey industry in light of a proposed MoU between Pakistan and China. The MoU would cover various aspects such as hides, bones, meat, and gelatin exports.

- **Role of the National Veterinary Laboratory:**

The Committee acknowledged the National Veterinary Laboratory's crucial function as a national reference point for transboundary and zoonotic diseases, and its coordination with 459 testing laboratories as well as international organizations (WOAH, FAO, WHO).

- **Performance of the Department of Plant Protection (DPP):**

The Committee deliberated upon the DPP's performance, including significant exports such as rice (to 150 countries), citrus (58 countries), mangoes (57 countries), and potatoes (30 countries). The Committee also appreciated the department's integration with the Pakistan Single Window (PSW), which has simplified regulatory processes through a paperless system based on National Tax Numbers.

- **Legislative Support for Animal Science Sector:**

The Committee unanimously supported the *Pakistan Animal Science Council Bill, 2023*, recognizing its importance for regulating and promoting the animal science sector.

- **Concern Over Food Insecurity & Low Yields:**

The Committee observed the increasing threat of food insecurity and declining agricultural productivity, aggravated by climate change and rapid population growth.

- **Need for Research & Awareness:**

The Committee appreciated PARC's efforts on introducing new crop varieties and emphasized the need for further research and public awareness regarding food loss, adulteration, and conservation systems.

- **Climate Smart Agriculture:**

The Committee acknowledged the importance of adapting agriculture to climate change and supported continued discussion on climate-smart practices.

- **Declining Wheat Forecast:**

The Committee expressed its concerns over the anticipated decline in wheat yield for the upcoming Rabi season, mainly due to lower market prices.

- **Cotton Cess Recovery:**

The Committee emphasized on prompt resolution of cotton cess issues. The Committee also took serious notice of nonpayment of salaries to employees of PCCC.

- **Legal Progress on Cess Recovery:**

The Committee endorsed the proposal of amending the Cotton Cess Act 1923 for stricter enforcement.

- **Utilization of Cotton Cess Funds:**

The Committee observed that funds recovered from cotton cess were not transparently accounted for. Moreover, the cess was being collected for research, yet research institutions are underfunded and underperforming.

- **Basmati Rice Export Issues:**

The Committee took serious note of EU interceptions due to MRL and aflatoxin. Moreover, the action taken against the DPP officials were duly acknowledged and appreciated.

- **DPP Compliance & Trade Role:**

The Committee reviewed DPP's mandate under international conventions and praised its role in ensuring biosafety and trade compliance.

- **Mango Export to Iran:**

The Committee noted successful exports in 2024, and also appreciated DPP's efforts to restore suspended HWT plants and further called for advance measures.

- **Research Endowment Fund:**

The Committee endorsed the proposal to establish a research/endowment fund under PARC to boost agricultural innovation and address national challenges.

- **Underutilization of Allocated Budget**

The Committee observed that only Rs. 3,49 million out of Rs. 9,928 billion released were utilized, raising concerns about implementation delays and inefficiencies in project execution under the PSDP 2024–25.

- **Backlog of Old Projects**

It was observed that many ongoing projects are delayed. The Ministry was directed to justify whether such projects should be continued or closed.

- **Climate Change Threats**

The Committee emphasized the growing threat of climate change on food security and urged the government to prioritize adaptive agricultural strategies.

PRESSING ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE

- **Under-Prioritization of Agriculture in Budgeting:**

Despite agriculture's major contribution to GDP and exports, the sector lacks appropriate reflection in the national budget, indicating a gap between national policy and ground realities.

- **Lack of Reliable Agricultural Data:**

PARC highlighted a serious gap in the availability of authentic and validated data, hampering research, planning, and policy-making.

- **Temporary Suspension of Key Subsidy Programs:**

The tube well subsidy program critical for farmers was halted during the interim setup, impacting continuity of support.

- **Delayed Procurement Policies by Provinces:**

Provincial governments have not finalized wheat procurement policies in a timely manner, risking market instability and farmer income.

- **Expected Decline in Wheat Production:**

Forecasted reduction in wheat yield due to low market prices poses a threat to national food security in the upcoming Rabi season.

- **Wheat Import Controversy and Governance Concerns:**

The Committee highlighted concerns over the wheat import scandal during the interim government, demanding accountability and transparency.

- **Cotton Cess Recovery Disputes:**

Disagreements over cess liability calculation and resistance from textile mills (APTMA) have delayed revenue collection for cotton research.

- **Legal Hurdles in Cotton Cess Enforcement:**

Although most court decisions favor PCCC, pending cases and APTMA's partial compliance delay full cess recovery and policy clarity.

- **Mismanagement in Basmati Rice Exports to EU:**

High rejection rates due to MRL and aflatoxin issues reflect gaps in pesticide regulation, storage conditions, and DPP oversight.

- **Institutional Gaps in Food Safety Framework:**

Lack of a comprehensive National Food Safety Policy has led to regulatory fragmentation and recurring export issues.

- **Tensions in Mango Export Compliance with Iran:**

Delisting of HWT plants by PPO Iran based on complaints, not technical reasons highlight diplomatic and procedural gaps affecting trade.

- **Rising Food Insecurity:**

Increasing food scarcity due to climate change, population growth, urbanization, and water shortage requires urgent attention.

- **Low Agricultural Yields Across the Country:**

Widespread low productivity in crops is impacting national food supply and economic growth, which needs immediate policy and technological intervention.

- **Food Waste & Adulteration:**

High levels of food waste and sale of adulterated items across the country are flagged as serious public health and economic issues.

- **Cotton Cess Recovery Delays:**

Delayed recovery of cotton cess—key to research funding—is a major concern, highlighting the need for improved regulatory and enforcement mechanisms.

- **Pest & Drought-Resistant Cotton Seed:**

The Committee emphasized the need for innovation in cotton seed to address drought and pest resilience — a gap still being worked on.

- **Locust Attack Preparedness:**

Lack of clear strategy or adequate aerial resources (e.g., helicopters) to counter potential future locust attacks remains a critical vulnerability.

- **Inadequate Funding for Research Institutions**

Despite collection, funds are not effectively channeled to research centers like PARC.

- **Mismatch in Bale Weights and Statistics**

Disparity in weight of local vs. imported cotton bales creates inconsistency in trade and research data.

- **Non-utilization of Development Funds**

Significant lapses in utilizing the PSDP budget threaten timely project completion and effective agricultural development.

- **Need for Immediate Seed Policy Reform**

Urgent action is required to improve seed quality, encourage local production, and achieve self-sufficiency.

- **Need for Sustainable Public-Private Partnerships**

There is a pressing need to establish a clear roadmap for involving the private sector in agriculture to ensure long-term food security.



COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Ministry should be allocated an enhanced budget to support agriculture sectors growth and development.
- It was directed that the 40 vacant posts should be filled at the earliest to ensure optimal performance.
- The Chairman PARC to provide detailed list of its Board of Governors.
- The Committee underscored the need to develop new variants of agricultural productivity to address emerging challenges and ensure sustainable food security.
- The Committee emphasized the need to develop and implement targeted strategies or plans to adapt to the impacts of climate change and mitigate its effects on agricultural products.
- The Ministry must promote research and the use of technology to enhance agricultural growth in Pakistan through CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE.
- The Ministry was directed to take concrete measures to regulate the food sector and Ensure implementation of laws related to food procurement and quality.
- The Committee emphasized the need for water conservation; promoting the sowing of drought tolerant crops and by using drip irrigation system.
- The Committee directed the Ministry to incentivize the growth of cotton crop.
- Pakistan has always been an Agrarian Economy, the Committee recommended that measures must be taken to ensure that the Agricultural Sector supports the economy.
- The Committee recommended that the Ministry to make sure the availability of helicopters in sufficient numbers for aerial spray to control the locust attack.
- The Committee underscored the need to incorporate FATA in the Non- Official Members list of the PARC BOG.
- The Ministry was asked to provide list of the selected scientists to be sent to China.

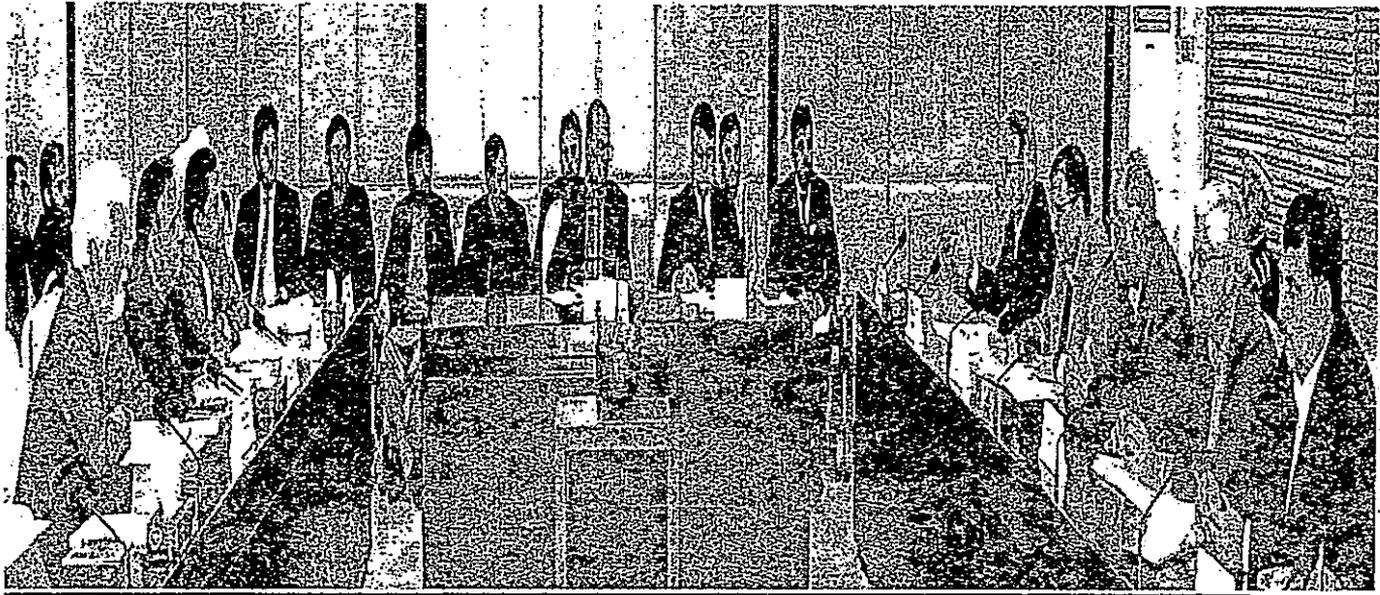
- The Ministry was asked to provide PARCS Audit Report, 2023-24.
- In Waziristan emphasis should be on wild olive production.
- There is a need to have animal quarantine department in Islamabad.
- The Ministry was asked to opt merit-based selection for the vacant posts.
- Smart form agriculture should be adopted with the help of Artificial Intelligence.
- Government needs to ensure implementation of support price to stabilize the price of wheat and other specified commodities.
- PASSCO should establish a transparent and merit based hiring mechanism to ensure accountability and prevent potential irregularities.
- The Committee underscored the need to make the organizational structure of PASSCO more effective.
- The Committee drew attention to the wheat import scandal that transpired during the interim government's tenure.
- The Ministry was directed to provide the committee with an update on the ongoing inquiries, as well as the measures being taken to hold the perpetrators accountable.
- The Committee endorsed the proposal that the Ministry should propose amendments in the Cotton Cess Act 1923, in case of non-payment or late-payment of cess.
- The Committee also decided to convene the next meeting in Lahore on a single point agenda, wherein APTMA would be asked to present their case explicitly before the Committee in the presence of all stakeholders. The Committee unanimously resolved to constitute a sub-committee on the issue of National Food Safety Policy.
- The Chair acknowledged the efforts of the DPP. He further stated in order to make the DPP more efficient, advance/effective measures need to be adopted.
- The committee endorsed the proposal regarding establishment of new research/endowment fund with a view that the initiative will play a pivotal role in advancing Pakistan's research ecosystem, driving economic growth, and addressing pressing societal challenges.
- The committee recommended that, firstly, to provide schedule of paying back arrears of imported cotton on which reconciliation also reached, amount is nearly 1 billion.

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- Secondly, to reconcile locally use cotton bales figure in a fixed time frame and provide a plan for paying arrears which are around 2 billion.
- The Committee directed the Ministry to utilize the allocated budget effectively in order to prevent any laps, ensuring that all ongoing and older projects are completed within their designated timeframes.
- The Committee suggested that Government should provide subsidy to growers of major crops in the shape of fuel, electricity, fertilizers and pesticides in order to reduce the cost of production of farmers.
- The Ministry to provide list of growers of Baluchistan, highlighted by PASSCO who were involved in the wheat procurement/ embezzlement.



SITTINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

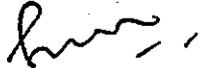


Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research Presiding over a Meeting of The Committee at Parliament House Islamabad



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(Zarghoona Shabbir)
D.S/ Secretary Committee


(Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan)
Chairman, Standing Committee on
National Food Security and Research