

***BRIEF MINUTES OF EXPERT CONSULTATION MEETING ON DEVELOPMENT OF  
GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAP) under FAO-FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMME  
IN BANGLADESH***

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## **1.0 Introduction**

An expert consultation meeting was organized by Hortex Foundation under the support of FAO-Food Safety Programme in Bangladesh to identify suitable location and crops for implementing GAP pilot project enhancing food safety and market access. The meeting also identified some product-wise test parameters as per requirements of the stakeholders for analyzing pesticides residues, heavy metals and microbial contaminations at well equipped laboratory under Institute of Public Health (IPH) supported by FAO Food Safety Programme. The expert consultation meeting disseminated update status of FAO Food Safety Programme on horticulture sub-sector in Bangladesh among the high officials of FAO, BARC, DAE, BARI, SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), representatives of superstores, corporate business houses like Square, PRAN, ACI, fresh produce exporters, Bangladesh Agro Processors Association (BAPA), experts of Hortex Foundation and Supply Chain Development Component (SCDC) of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) attended the meeting. Mr. Mitul K. Saha, Assistant General Manager (Supply and Value Chain, Marketing, R&D), Hortex Foundation served as rapporteur of the meeting.

The expert consultation meeting entitled “*Development of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) across the Horticultural Value Chain to Enhance Food Safety Compliance and Market Access*” was held on 22 January 2014 at 10.30am to 02.00pm in the Hortex conference room, 22 Manik Mia Avenue, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. Twenty two (22) diverse participants attended the meeting. The list of participants is shown in **Annex-1**. The meeting had two sessions’ i.e. introductory and open discussions.

## **2.0 Meeting sessions**

### **2.1 Introductory session**

The meeting was chaired by Mr. M. Ahsan Ullah, President, Bangladesh Flower Growers and Exporters Association & Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation. Mr. John Ryder PhD MBA, Chief Technical Advisor, Food Safety Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was present as the Guest of Honour. Dr. Md. Saleh Ahmed, Post harvest Handling and Quality Assurance Expert, SCDC of NATP, Hortex Foundation welcomed the honorable chairperson, guest of honour and the distinguished participants present the meeting.

In his welcome address, Dr. Saleh Ahmed briefly highlighted objectives of the meeting identifying suitable horticultural crop and locations for implementing the FAO Food Safety

Project activities enhancing food safety and facilitate improved market access for the stakeholders. He further added that under the support of FAO-Food Safety Programme, a well equipped laboratory with modern facilities has been established in the Institute of Public Health (IPH), Mohakhali, Dhaka where different testing facilities like heavy metals, microbial infection and pesticide residues are available. He mentioned that we need to assess the requirements of different stakeholders involved in horticultural supply chain analyzing pesticide residues, heavy metals contamination and microbial infection that affecting the food safety and also human health. He stated that under this meeting, we will make a participatory discussion for selecting crops, location and lab test facilities. He informed the audience that FAO will take necessary steps for implementing GAP in Bangladesh. Finally, Dr. Ahmed requested all the participants to participate in the open discussion session actively and provide valuable inputs and suggestions which will be helpful to design implementation of GAP.

### **2.1.1 Remarks by guest of honour**

**Dr. John Ryder** said that this project will be 18 months period with many activities. Fishery, poultry, horticulture value chain mapping will be addressed in the FAO-Food Safety Programme to identify the critical point of horticultural value chain and intervention strategy, he added. Dr. Ryder mentioned that it is very hot topic in many years to implement GAP maintaining food safety. He stated that under this project different food safety test, training of trainers of senior officials to be conducted as per stakeholders' requirements. He added that in partnership with Hortex, this project will conduct necessary trainings for the farmers, traders, exporters, entrepreneurs through ToT. He mentioned that we do not find what crops and location to be selected for this project. He requested the participants for prioritizing fruits and vegetables as case study for value chain under specific criteria of food safety problem, volume of trade, export potential, food security issue and economic importance.

### **2.2 Open discussions**

Very lively open discussion was held on the meeting. A good number of participants took part in the open discussions and expressed their valuable comments and suggestions selecting crop and locations for implementation of the project. All participants appreciated the FAO-Food Safety Programme in Bangladesh, its planned activities and committed to cooperate for any activity for its success. After threadbare discussion in the session, the meeting recommendations were adopted based on following parameters incorporated in the Table 1 & 2 for selecting crops and location respectively:

**Table 1: Priority of crop selection**

Candidate	Food safety problem	Domestic market	Export market	GAP existing	manual
<b>Tomato</b>	Pesticides, preservation	3	2	Yes	
<b>Mango</b>	Preservation, ripening	3	1	Yes	
<b>Brinjal</b>	Pesticides	3	2	x	
<b>Banana</b>	Ripening, pesticides	3	x	x	
<b>Bitter gourd (memordica)</b>	Pesticides	3	3	x	
<b>Citrus</b>	x	x	3	x	
<b>Beans</b>	Pesticides, heavy metals	2	2	x	
<b>Spices (Chili, turmeric, ginger, black cumin)</b>	Heavy metals, colour, myco-toxin	3	Export only processed items	x	
<b>Jackfruit</b>	Ripening	1	2	x	

Note:

- i. Participants provided their marks on the above parameters for priority ranking i.e. 3-high importance, 2-medium importance, 1-low importance
- ii. x- Nil

**Table 2: Priority of location selection based on selected crops**

Selected crops	Food safety problem	Probable locations
Tomato	Pesticides	Comilla, Narshingdhi, Jessore and Rajshahi
Mango	Pesticides, ripening	Charghat, Rajshahi ( <i>on variety of lengra and himsagar</i> ) and Shibganj (Chapainawabganj)
Brinjal	Pesticides	Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Narshingdhi and Jessore
Chili	Heavy metals	Manikganj, Jamalpur and Pabna

Note: Primarily Jessore for tomato, Chapainawabganj for mango, Jessore for brinjal and Manikganj for Chili was selected for intervention. But, final location will be selected as per crop seasonal point of view and good communication network from Dhaka.

The participants of the meeting agreed that they will provide product-wise lab test parameters as per their requirements for analyzing different food safety hazards like pesticides residues, heavy metals, microbial contaminations i.e. E-coli, *Salmonella spp.*, myco-toxins etc.

The meeting decided that draft minutes shall be delivered to all the participants receiving their comments and suggestions for final one. Finally, the meeting further decided that lets make it short tome with decision.

Dr. S M Monowar Hossain, Managing Director of Hortex Foundation joined in the meeting at last time due to his another meeting with Honorable Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of Bangladesh at BARC. Dr. Monowar suggested that under this project, misconception of safety issues should be awarded to the stakeholders like ripening hormones.

### **2.3 Remarks by the chairperson**

Mr. M. Ahsan Ullah expressed that Hortex had protocol on GAP experienced BRAC with French bean export to EU countries. We have to think about economic rationality of selected crops for intervention, he added. Mr. Ahsan Ullah further said that we should address food safety issue properly for local and export market during implementation of the project. He summarized the suggestions came from the meeting. He appreciated all the members attending in the open discussions and giving their comments and suggestions. Finally, Mr. Ahsan Ullah mentioned that still there is a scope for improvement of recommendations during the time of project design and implementation. He said that from this meeting he is getting insight ideas for food safety issues.

Finally, the workshop came to end with the thanks to and from the chair at 02.00pm.

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