



## PHDEC Newsletter

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*From the Desk of the CEO, Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company (PHDEC)*

Dear Stakeholders, Partners, and Horticulture Enthusiasts,

I am delighted to share updates on PHDEC's recent activities as we progress through the fourth quarter of 2025. In the last two weeks, PHDEC organized two key initiatives: a workshop on exploring the export potential, cultivation practices, and future outlook of garlic in Swabi, and a webinar on guidelines for standard packaging and branding of value-added horticultural products. These events align with our Three-Year Work Plan for 2025-2028, which emphasizes enhancing export-led growth, improving product quality, reducing post-harvest losses, and facilitating market access to position Pakistan as a global leader in horticultural products.

The workshop in Swabi, a major garlic production hub in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, brought together growers, processors, exporters, researchers, and academia to address critical aspects of garlic production and exports. Experts highlighted Pakistan's garlic cultivation on 13,500 hectares, yielding around 115,000 tonnes, with growing exports to markets like Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. Presentations covered integrated pest and nutrition management, common diseases such as white rot, botrytis rot, downy mildew, and yellow dwarf virus, along with control measures including crop rotation, sanitation, and biological controls. Discussions also focused on cultivation practices like land preparation, fertilizer application, sowing methods, and optimal seed rates for maximum yield. A key highlight was the introduction of "Emma Queen," a new high yielding garlic variety developed by the Agriculture Research Station, Swabi, offering extended shelf life and export potential. Emphasis was placed on standard packaging for international markets, cold chain development to maintain quality and reduce spoilage, and PHDEC's role in facilitating trade missions, B2B meetings, and quality improvements through training. Actionable points include connecting exporters with the Pakistan Single Window for registration, organizing B2B meetings via TDAP, sharing details on value-addition companies, and participating in FoodAg-2025. This initiative directly supports our work plan's focus on cluster development, high-yielding varieties, and export enhancement for commodities like garlic, contributing to increased production-to-export ratios and access to high-value markets.

Complementing this, our webinar on standard packaging and branding for value-added horticultural products aimed to boost export competitiveness by educating growers, processors, packers, and exporters on national and international standards. The session covered food-grade packaging materials, shelf-life preservation, labeling compliance, brand identity development, and sustainability practices. Participants learned about traceability through barcodes and QR codes, compliance with certifications like HACCP, ISO, Halal, and Organic, and the role of effective packaging in protecting quality, enhancing brand recognition, and commanding premium prices in global markets. Focus was on value-added products such as dried fruits, pulps, purees, pickles, and juices, aligning with our plan's emphasis on value addition, infrastructure development, and market research to diversify products and meet buyer expectations in regions like the GCC, ASEAN, and the EU.

In line with our commitment to market access, PHDEC is providing handholding support to 30 companies participating in FoodAg-2025, scheduled from November 25-27, 2025. This includes free stalls for select participants, such as the Agriculture Research Station, Swabi, and facilitating B2B meetings to showcase garlic and value-added horticultural products, forging international trade linkages and promoting Pakistan's exports.

These activities underscore our 2025-2028 work plan's goals of strengthening skills, conducting market studies, improving infrastructure like cold chains and processing units, and securing SPS approvals for expanded market entry. By reducing post-harvest losses, boosting yields, and fostering inclusive growth, we aim to elevate farmer incomes, create jobs, and drive Pakistan's export-led economy.

We invite all stakeholders to join us in these efforts. Stay connected for more updates on our transformative journey!

Best regards,

Athar Hussain Khokhar

CEO, Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company (PHDEC)