



CABI News Bulletin Asia

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• Working Together

CABI Member Countries come together to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing humanity

Delegates from the majority of CABI's 49 **Member Countries** joined forces with CABI staff and other partners at CABI's triennial Review Conference to agree joint plans for work on great challenges of our era, including hunger, poverty, climate change, biodiversity loss and gender inequality.

These concerns are the focus of CABI's new Medium-Term Strategy for 2023-2025, starting with the need to improve the food security and livelihoods of smallholder communities around the world.

Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Chief Scientist at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, highlighted the scale of the challenge, noting that: "The world is at a critical juncture of a global food crisis exacerbated by conflict, climate change, and economic instability. The challenge of feeding the global population now – let alone the expected 10 billion by 2050 – has never been so great.

"We must focus on how scientific research and development can contribute to 'turning things around' and provide sustainable





solutions to achieve the SDGs in partnership with organizations such as CABI.

"I'm happy that CABI is an important partner in working towards the SDGs – and in particular SDG2 pertaining to helping end hunger – and look forward to working with you all towards this necessary goal.

"I also encourage Member Countries, partners and donors to support CABI's new Medium-Term Strategy – which in turn will contribute towards the global effort of greater world food security." The food and sustainability crises are exacerbated by an unequal distribution of resources to women farmers, who make up, on average, 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries. If the gender gap was bridged the number of undernourished and hungry people worldwide would fall by 100-150 million. One of CABI's goals for the period ahead is to reduce inequality through better opportunities for rural women and youth. Other CABI goals for 2023-2025 focus on helping communities to adapt to impacts of climate change and on conserving biodiversity and sustainably using natural resources.

In a keynote presentation to the meeting, Dr Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, of the Convention on Biological Diversity, stressed the linkages between food and nutrition security and biodiversity.

Dr Mrema told delegates: "We truly need all hands-on deck to adopt a robust framework that can be leveraged by all to transform the way we produce and the way we consume, and to restore our relationship with nature.

"I count on your leadership, commitment, and efforts to place biodiversity at the core of our approaches to sustainable development. And consider the importance of biodiversity for food systems and the health of all.

"I am excited to see the programme of work the CABI Review Conference brings together from all its Member Countries. And I commend CABI's Medium-Term strategy's focus on biodiversity, food and nutrition security, and sustainable value chains, among other priorities."

Other discussions explored CABI's goal to increase the reach and impact of science in agriculture and the environment. These highlighted the organization's strengths in combining science and evidence with communication and practical action, turning research into policy and practice worldwide.

The meeting concluded by considering the essential role of partnerships in addressing the focus areas in CABI's new Medium-Term Strategy.

Dr Daniel Elger, CABI's CEO, said, "We thank our Member Countries and other partners for working with us to develop a clear strategy for CABI's next phase of work. As stressed at the meeting, concerted action will be just as critical when it comes to delivery of these plans.

"We are confident that with the continuing support and partnership of our Members and donors we will achieve meaningful progress on our shared goals over the next three years."

https://www.cabi.org/about-cabi/membership/

Products and Resources

CABI supports study, practice and professional development through our array of publishing products, research services and support tools.



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News and Updates



EAST ASIA



On 3 August, a senior delegation group from the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) and the Chinese Embassy in London visited CABI's corporate office in Wallingford, UK, to further strengthen the partnership between China and CABI. The Chinese delegation was led by Vice Minister of MARA, Dr Taolin Zhang, and included Mr Yongtian Guo, Director General of the Department of Farmland Enhancement of MARA, Mr Zhenglin Wei, Deputy Director General of International Co-operation Department and Mr Sunan Jiang, Minister-Counsellor for Science and Technology of the Chinese Embassy in the UK. Dr Daniel Elger, CABI's CEO, Dr Andy Robinson, Managing Director, Publishing and Dr Qiaogiao Zhang, Director, Memberships, welcomed the delegation.

This high-level visit was the first opportunity in recent years for CABI leadership to meet with senior MARA and diplomatic officials in person and to explore opportunities to deepen collaboration between CABI and MARA through the MARA-CABI Joint Laboratory for Biosafety based in the Institute of Plant Protection, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the MARA-CABI European Laboratory based in CABI's centre in Switzerland.



Organized by the Institute of Plant Protection and Agro-Products Safety, Anhui Academy of Agricultural Sciences (AAAS), and CABI's centre in China, the 1st Annual Meeting of the Anhui-CABI Joint Laboratory for Agricultural Pest Control (a sub-centre of the MARA-CABI Joint Lab) was successfully held on 17 June. The meeting was attended by over 50 participants, in-person or online. After one year of being established, the Joint Lab has made good progress in scientific exchange and training, collaborative project applications and joint scientific publications, despite challenges posed by the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. The achievements of the Joint Lab were highlighted and positive comments were made by senior officials from both parties: Mr Tan Mingjie, Division Chief, Division of European and Central Asian Affairs, Department of International Cooperation, MARA; Professor Li Zefu, Vice President of AAAS, Professor Zhang Jie, Deputy Director General of IPPCAAS, and Dr Feng Zhang, Regional Director, CABI East & South-East Asia. A workshop on agricultural pest prevention and control followed the management session and included eight presentations delivered by experts from CABI's centres in Switzerland, Pakistan, and China.



Group photo with all participants on 12 July, 2022

On 12 July 2022, the MARA-CABI Joint Laboratory for Biosafety (Joint Lab) organized training on how to sustainably manage fall armyworm in Laos with the support of Chinese technology. Dr Li Hongmei from CABI chaired the meeting. Dr Feng Zhang, Regional Director, CABI East and South-East Asia delivered a welcome address on behalf of CABI and the Joint Lab. With Laos as a neighbouring country of China with similar insect pests and diseases, Dr Zhang said it is vital to jointly deal with the transboundary pests. The cooperation should be further strengthened against fall armyworm using Chinese technologies such as BT (Bacillus thuringensis) and pheromone traps. Prof Zhang Jie, Deputy Director General, Institute of Plant Protection (IPP), CAAS and Mr Phoukaothong Sykaysone from the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) introduced the institution's function and international collaboration, respectively. Virtual training on using the BT product and pheromone traps to manage fall armyworm were delivered and the field experiments were discussed.

Cooperation approaches were fully discussed including exchanges of scientists and students and applications for international and Chinese funding.



Photo from the field

 Between June and September 2020, the yellow-spined bamboo locust migrated in large swarms to several border counties of Yunnan Province, China from neighbouring countries.

There were around 8,900 hectares of affected land in the three worst hit cities which border both Laos and Vietnam. The Joint Lab team has been investigating the research on how to control this locust in a sustainable way. They found that the bamboo locust adults are seeking oviposition areas from July to August and they implemented the field traps against bamboo locust adults in the affected region.



 CABI's Dr Min Wan and Jinping Zhang conducted a field study on the kiwi fruit value chain and farmer cooperatives in the Shannxi province of China for the PlantwisePlus programme in August 2022. The team visited four kiwi farmer cooperatives in two main kiwi fruit production counties, conducted 15 stakeholder interviews to evaluate their knowledge, attitude and concerns on food safety standards and to collect data on the challenges and barriers they face on safer food production. The technical needs collected in the study will help to identify market opportunities for PlantwisePlus on improving the kiwi fruit value chain and food safety communication among diverse stakeholders.



- On 28 June 2022. The 12th Dabeinong (DBN) Science and Technology Award and Zhongguancun Global Agricultural Science and Technology Innovation Forum was held in Beijing. Nearly one million people watched the event online. The application by CABI and Aerospace Information Research Institute Chinese Academy of Sciences (AIRCAS) on how earth observation can help to monitor and predict plant pests and diseases won the DBN's science and technology innovation award.
- CABI project scientist Jinping Zhang has been awarded with the senior agronomists' certification by the Beijing Human Resources and Social Security Bureau. It's the first time a CABI member of staff has received the certificate which is the main way to appraise this specialist technical role in Beijing.



The CABI Publications Award recognizes the CABI scientist authoring or co-authoring the most papers published in high impact journals. CABI project scientist Jinping Zhang was recognized with a Publications Recognition Award for authoring the most publications in 2021. Jinping Zhang's research background is chemical ecology, biological control and integrated pest management. She has published more than 50 scientific papers, authorized six patent certifications and written two books. She has also supervised and co-supervised four PhD students, 10 postgraduate students, and 12 undergraduate students based at the MARA-CABI Joint lab.



 CABI's Feng Zhang and Jinping Zhang were invited to attend the 2nd Shandong Plant Protection Youth Forum, Jinan, China on the 19 August. Dr Zhang gave a presentation entitled "Theory and Practice on International Collaboration in Plant Protection Science and Technology: using CABI as an example." While Ms Jinping's talk was on the biological control of brown marmorated stink bug. More than 50 participants from 18 institutions attended the forum.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- CABI's Dr Muhammad Faheem and Dr Sathis Sri attended a virtual meeting with Wild-Asia SAN Ferrero on 7 July 2022 to discuss the preliminary results of a farmers' survey and interviews with key stakeholders. The team then conducted a pesticide use survey for the Wild-Asia SAN Ferrero project at Perak in September 2022. Nine oil palm growers of different scales: large, medium and small were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. Two key informants were also interviewed to understand the pesticide use practice in the local context. The gathered data will be used for analysis of chemical uses in the oil palm and planning of recommendations for the least toxic chemicals.
- CABI's Dr Sathis Sri and Mr Chan Fook Wing attended the FAO-funded Benefit Sharing Fund Taro progress meeting organized by the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Insitute (MARDI) on 14 July 2022. This is an ongoing project involving three countries: Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. CABI's centre in Malaysia is in charge of communications and visibility by publishing newsletters and conducting surveys. The baseline survey has been completed and the next activity will be conducting the vulnerability assessment for the Taro farmers involved in the project.
- CABI's Dr Sathis Sri attended the 1st International Symposium on Coconut Integrated Pest Management (virtual), organized by the International Coconut Community (ICC) in association with the Philippines Coconut Authority (PCA), 23 – 26 August 2022. CABI's centre in Malaysia is currently working on a coconut online information portal for ICC and its member countries.
- CABI's Dr Muhammad Faheem has started

evaluating AgBiTech's baculovirus-based biological products to manage fall armyworm, diamondback moth and beet armyworm at the CABI South East Asia lab. Initial studies on fall armyworm demonstrated encouraging results. The analysis is ongoing.

- CABI's Dr Muhammad Faheem, together with other external experts, conducted three training sessions for biosecurity and quarantine staff of the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Malaysia. The work was carried out by ITC Consultancy for a project which is training stakeholders on the identification and management of EU quarantined pests for vegetables, flowers, tropical plants and aquatics. Topics for the sessions included: Plant biosecurity on selected food crops through the whole production system, identification of pest fruit flies identification of pest leaf miner.
- CABI's Dr Sathis Sri and CABI associate, Dr Sivapragasam, participated in the final project partner meeting of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) project "Characterisation of Spodoptera frugiperda (fall armyworm) populations in South-East Asia and Northern Australia" in Singapore where Dr Sathis Sri presented the results on bioassay and molecular characterization studies from Malaysia. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research-Grains Research Development Cooperation co-funded project has been ongoing since 2020 and the focus was on conducting the bioassay and molecular characterization of the fall armyworm from Australia and selected Southeast Asian countries. This meeting was held to discuss the findings of bioassay work in all the countries involved and the molecular characterization work carried out by CSIRO. The meeting provided an ideal forum to share experiences and discuss further collaboration.
- AgBiTech and CABI's Dr Muhammad Faheem presented at the fourth 'Biocontrol Workshop Series of ASEAN FAW Action Plan' on "how to control fall armyworms with baculoviruses." The series was organized to

share the initiatives on biocontrol strategies to manage fall armyworm. The presentation by CABI highlighted the ongoing work between AgBiTech and CABI and the mechanisms of NPV (Nuclear Polyhedrosis Virus) to enable effective management of fall armyworm in the field.

- CABI's Dr Muhammad Faheem organized • a seminar on "Fall armyworm Management and Biosecurity Risks" in collaboration with CSIRO and MARDI at MARDI Headquarters. The seminar was attended by the Senior Research Scientist at CSIRO, Dr Wee Tek Tay, who visited Malaysia after the final project partner meeting in Singapore. The seminar was also joined by the MARDI Fall Armyworm-Integrated Pest Management team who shared information about the ongoing work within the institute and also the collaboration with CABI. This meeting was instrumental in creating engagement between different organizations and countries to work together in mutual areas of interest.
- A three-day training workshop on the mass rearing of Trichogramma chilonis and quality control of Trichogramma (*Trichogramma chilonis*) was conducted for MARDI staff at TRF in Malaysia by Drs Muhammad Faheem, Sivapragasam and Feng Zhang. The activity, which is part of the MARDI-CABI Joint Lab Initiative, was organized to share knowledge and technical information.
- Drs Muhammad Faheem, Sivapragasam and Feng Zhang contributed to the final publication of a manual on "Standard Operating Procedure: Mass Rearing of Trichogramma species" under MARDI-CABI Joint Lab Initiative.
- Dr Muhammad presented on "CABI's role in Pest Surveillance, digital tools and the PRISE system" at the final project meeting of the Science and Technology Development Fund (STDF) and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australia pest surveillance project for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Asia-Pacific countries.



- Activities conducted for the STDF Safer spice project, led by CABI Associate, Ms Kim Nguyen included:
 - In Cambodia, the focus was on preparing the GDA (General Directorate of Agriculture) staff to provide support in implementing PGS (Participatory Guarantee System) activities with Sela Pepper Company. The training involved two parts: PGS training and delivery of initial steps in PGS activities with Sela Pepper Company staff and farmers.
 - In Laos, meetings were undertaken with DOA staff, an organic peppercorn processing company and a visit to the Sekong and Tha Teng districts to gather information about peppercorn production and processing in Laos, and agree next steps with DOA team.

SOUTH ASIA



- The Plantwise National Stakeholder Meeting for India was held on 24 September 2022 at Chennai as a part of the ongoing Plantwise programme. All National Level Plantwise stakeholders participated in the event to exchange experiences on the ongoing and planned field activities. CABI Digital tools were also promoted in the workshop.
- A guidance document was drafted for Nepal to help the country institutionalize Plantwise components in the annual national programme. This document has been prepared to support the uptake of the programme by the government. Moreover, meetings were held with senior officials at the department of agriculture in Sri Lanka to help take Plantwise activities forward. Two studies i.e. the agro-dealer study and the Community Business Facilitator (CBF) study have been initiated for Nepal under the ongoing Plantwise programme. These studies would focus on the existing models.
- A CABI team participated in a webinar organized by The Madhya Pradesh Library Association to discuss the challenges and opportunities of making more use of CABI products following the Indian government's new initiative–"One Nation One Subscription". Key publishers and librarians participated in the webinar on 3 September 2022. Key officials were met with on 5 and 7 September

2022 at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) regarding the national consortia and One Nation One Subscription. CABI has submitted an online resources proposal and discussed the next steps with key stakeholders at ICAR.

- A platform orientation was given to the Vice Chancellor, faculties, research scholars, library staff, and key stakeholders of the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, Karnataka. The event was organized on 13 July 2022 by the university librarian Dr Thammaiah and Ms Girija. The university has a multi-year subscription agreement for CABI online resources and the event was organized to provide orientation.
- On 4 July, training of lead trainers on CABI digital tools took place and Training of Trainers was held between 25-28 July in Bangladesh to enhance outreach and uptake of the tools.
- The Rain Forest Alliance Integrated Pest Management (IPM) task force meeting for the tea sector was held in Assam (30 August - 3 September) as a part of the ongoing engagement with the Rainforest Alliance.

CENTRAL & WEST ASIA

- Under the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) project in Pakistan, the team conducted training of BCI farmers Medium farmers (MFs) and Learning Groups (LGs) and their workers on the Better Cotton Standard System (BCSS) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). As the pest pressure increases on rainy days, farmers have been trained through faceto-face training sessions and field visits on key topics including the management of pink bollworm through light traps and pheromone traps, harmful impacts of the banned pesticide, managing insect pests through biological and botanical control and the impacts of deforestation on biodiversity. Farmers were also encouraged to develop a monitoring plan on the conversion of nonagricultural land into agriculture.
- As part of the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) project, extensive consultations were

carried out with international MRL experts to develop protocols to conduct residue decline studies in chili crops. With the support of the Crop Diseases Research Institute, National Agricultural Research Centre Islamabad (CDRI-NARC), field trials were initiated to test the efficacy of Pakistan's first biocontrol product for aflatoxin mitigation in chilies.

- The organic cotton project team visited organic cotton seed trials at Fort Abbas to train the Rural Business Development Center (RBDC; aka Lok Sanjh) where CABI established six organic cotton seed trials. The CABI team also trained RBDC farmers who are part of the Organic Cotton Accelerator non-GM seed trials in village 41/HL, Fort Abbas District Bahawalnagar. Farmers of the area highlighted that they are taking care of all the plants and trying to manage the field operations such as gap filling, thinning, weeding, hoeing, manuring and irrigation application to ensure good results of the organic cotton trails from their area.
- Under the Strengthening Vegetable Value Chains Project (SVVCP), a farmer's field day on potato marketing strategies was conducted. The main objective of this activity was to create awareness among the farming community of potato marketing best practice to enhance the quality of their produce as well as their gross profit. Participants were briefed on the SVVCP project, followed by details of market strategies adopted by the SVVCP farmers including market research, collective sale, gender inclusiveness, sharing of market information, potato trader suggestions and direct marketing. A farmer leader also presented his views on the benefits of adopting marketing strategies.
- The "Capacity building of smallholder potato growers in Punjab" project held an annual meeting with partners at Okara to update them on the project's progress, upcoming interventions and to hear their feedback. The team shared the results of the activities carried out during 2021-22. Representatives of the Potato Research Institute, Sahiwal (PRI) and University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF), sub-campus

Okara asked to establish a demonstration plot at their research centres to validate the advanced potato production technology. The representatives of UAF and Department of Agriculture (Extension), Okara also asked if they could share the extension materials (developed by the project team) to build the capacity of their students, researchers and potato growers. The representative of the Potato Growers Cooperative Society (PGCS) said they would continue their support with hosting conferences, seminars and expos to disseminate the advanced potato production practices recommended by CABI and WUR experts.

- Under the capacity building component of the MRL project, one training was organized for the Arid Zone Research Centre (AZRC), Umerkot scientists and government agriculture extension officers from Sindh Province. The training was covered by a leading national news channel. As part of the communication strategy, the digital contents on aflatoxin issues and its biocontrol technology were recorded (by video) in the Urdu and Sindhi languages, and the handbook on aflatoxin related literature was shared with the communications team for development.
- CABI in Pakistan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Agriculture Department of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Government to strengthen collaboration for the CABI-led PlantwisePlus programme aimed at growing safer and higher quality food through sustainable approaches to crop production. The programme will more comprehensively support governments and farmers to grow the quantity of food required and improve the quality of food produced in a changing climate. CABI in Pakistan also signed MoUs with Agriculture Departments of Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir regions to help implement the PlantwisePlus programme.

Meetings/Events



SOUTH EAST ASIA

 The ASEAN fall armyworm biocontrol webinar (https://www.aseanfawaction.org/events) will be attended by Drs Feng Zhang and Muhammad Faheem. The webinar is part of the 2022 Biocontrol Technical Workshop Series which focuses on biocontrol technologies and tools used in the field to control fall armyworm and other plant pests and diseases. There are seven series in total which are running from April 2022 to November 2022.



 A Cocotech symposium, organized by the International Coconut Community (ICC) (7-11 November), will be attended by Dr Feng Zhang, Dr Sathis Sri and Mr Chan Fook Wing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This technical conference, with the theme "Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy for a Resilient and Sustainable Coconut Agroindustry", is for all coconut stakeholders. The Cocopest online portal is likely to be launched during this event.

SOUTH ASIA

 Lunch and Learn events in Hyderabad and Bangalore will be jointly organized by CABI and EBSCO Information Services. CABI will invite key stakeholders and librarians from the base town and neighbouring districts to promote CABI products. The dates of these events are 28 November and 1 December 2022.

- Phase II of the BCI capacity building programme involved training on the mass production of biocontrol agents and biopesticides. This was a six day training programme which took place from 10 to 15 October 2022 at Anand Agriculture University where participants were trained on farm production of Trichogramma, Chrysoperla, Reduviid bug, Trichoderma, Beauveria Bassiana, Biofertilizers and their quality testing procedures. Following this, an industrial visit will be organized to set up a biocontrol laboratory.
- The Horizon Scanning Tool (HST) roll out in Bangladesh is planned for 13-16 November to enhance outreach. The HST is a decision support tool that helps to identify and categorize species that might enter a particular geographic area from another region. The tool uses CABI data to generate a list of species that are absent from the selected 'area at risk' but present in 'source areas' ie geographic areas with similar climates to the 'area at risk', neighbouring areas or selected trading partners.

CENTRAL AND WEST ASIA

• A PlantwisePlus programme launch and National Forum meeting on Enhanced Membership Cooperation with the Government of Pakistan is planned in December 2022. The purpose of this forum is to work with key stakeholders on plans to strengthen partnerships supporting the CABI-led PlantwisePlus programme aimed at growing safer and higher quality food through sustainable approaches to crop production.



- A nationwide consumer survey in Pakistan carried out for the PlantwisePlus programme will be concluded by December 2022. This survey aims to evaluate the food safety knowledge, attitudes, and concerns among farmers, traders and consumers in Pakistan, and investigate the relationship between socio-demographic factors and consumers' concerns.
- Farmer training on capacity building will focus on organic seed and bio inputs. The training will aim to demonstrate selection and picking of cotton fields for cotton seed, the use of gin and bale machines for farmers, and quality assurance of organic cotton. Moreover, an organic agriculture policy document will be finalized by the end of 2022. The policy document will provide a complete guide for rules and laws of organic agriculture, quality, traceability and testing of organic commodities, and will aim to help establish an environmentally-friendly cropping system.

Explore Our Recent Publications



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- Roger Day and Malvika Chaudhary. (2022). Combatting Invasive Species: The Case Study of Fall Armyworm. In Fall Armyworm (FAW) Spodoptera frugiperda (J. E. Smith) - the status, challenges and experiences among the SAARC Member States. SAARC Agriculture Centre, SAARC, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 130p.
- Mariam Kadzamira, Malvika Chaudhary, Ramasami Rajkumar and Frances Williams. (2022). Local biopesticide production hubs and the empowerment of rural women in Tamil Nadu, India. In Rural 21 – The International Journal for Rural Development. 1 | 2022 VOLUME 56ISSN 1866-8011D 20506 F. Page 41-43.

Explore Our Recent Blogs and News Articles



Click on the picture to read the story



Partnership with MARA, China strengthened with Senior MARA Delegation Group visit to CABI



Maize cob picker helps increase efficiency of harvests in rural Punjab, Pakistan



Study highlights mass rearing capabilities of an important natural enemy to fight brown marmorated stink bug pest



Remote sensing of highly invasive Parthenium weed in Pakistan



Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures: Challenges and opportunities in Asia and the Pacific region



Boosting socioeconomic gender equity for smallholder potato farmers in Pakistan



Better Cotton Initiative: biocontrol training in India



Vegetable project in Pakistan build capacity of agriculture extension staff on value chain approach in Punjab and Sindh



New research proposes local Biological Control Agent hubs to fight fall armyworm in Bangladesh



Women and youth play key role in nutritional aspects of Pakistan's potato value chain

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