

OBITUARY



Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad (1952 – 2016)

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad born 1st April 1952, in Lahore, Pakistan. Dr. Ahmad got his school education from Pakistan Western Railway High School, Sukkar, Sindh, Pakistan and obtained first position throughout schooling. He joined West Pakistan Agricultural University, Lyallpur in 1968 and got his masters degree in 1976. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad has excellent academic career, securing first division in all the university examinations and obtaining merit scholarships for his under and post graduation studies. He joined University of Wales, UK for his doctoral studies and passed out in 1982.

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad initiated his career as lecturer at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad in 1976 and later joined PARC in 1983. He achieved post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Cambridge. Dr. Ahmad rose to the position of Chairman, PARC having shown exceptional research, managerial and leadership skills to steer research groups in knowledge generation and transfer.

Dr. Ahmad designed and established a National IPM Programme with a strong initiative of large-scale implementation of IPM in Pakistan through an innovative farm level research and farmer education approach known as Farmer Field Schools. Focusing on cotton, the Programme has developed a cadre of Research, Extension and Farmer Facilitators as well as a highly motivated front line force of practicing IPM farmers in good agricultural practices to obtain healthy cotton crop. The Programme has won laurels from Farmers and all other stakeholders including international partners.

The Programme has developed innovative approaches like Woman Open Schools, Children Ecology Clubs, Family, Village and Community IPM for wider adoption of IPM Practices and growing healthy crops at the grass root level. Experiences from cotton have been expanded to other crops and cropping systems. These experiences are also being shared with countries in the South and South East Asian, central Asian and African regions.

He has played a key role in the development of disease resistant, high yielding wheat varieties in the country through a tripartite arrangement between the National Breeders, National Coordinated Wheat Programme and Crop Diseases Research Institute. Similarly as leader of the Soil-Health Programme in the rice-wheat system initiative, Dr. Ahmad has played a very crucial role in the adoption of resource conservation technologies in the country.

As part of team of a research initiative on performance based assessment systems with International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR), Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad has introduced Organizational Performance and Assessment System (OPAS) for evaluating the performance of research institutes through a participatory approach at the National level. In addition, Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad has shown a remarkable quality of bringing together the research and educational institutions through a programme of post-graduate research at NARC.

He holds membership of eleven international and national scientific societies including American Phytopathological Society, British Society for Plant Pathology, Institute of Biology, UK and Cambridge Philosophical Society. He has represented Pakistan at the international level due to his excellence in his area of expertise.

In recognition of his excellence in agricultural sciences he was conferred upon the Best Scientist of the Year Award in 1999 by PARC and honored by the Pakistan Academy of Sciences by awarding him Pakistan Academy of Sciences Gold Medal – 1999 for contribution in agricultural research. He was conferred Norman Borlaug award in 2006 and PARC Silver Jubilee Award 2006 for his research contributions.

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad has acted on high profile position at PARC and NARC. These include Director General, NARC, Member (Plant Sciences) and as Chairman, PARC till his retirement in March 2012. He worked as Senior Advisor in FAO Office of the United Nations in Pakistan till September 2012. Dr. Ahmad was again given the responsibility of serving as Chairman, PARC in September 2012. He retired from that post in September 2015. He was working as programme Advisor in FAO Office of the United Nations in Pakistan till his last breath.

Dr. Iftikhar has a very long list of Research Publications and students to his credit.

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