



BIOTECHNOLOGY POTATO PARTNERSHIP

Farming Future Bangladesh: *Sharing the Science of Agribiotechnology*

Innovations in agriculture can be complicated and difficult to understand. This often results in apprehension and mistrust of the technology by those it is meant to benefit. Farming Future Bangladesh (FFB) is a comprehensive communications initiative committed to help improve awareness and understanding of modern agricultural innovations, including crop biotechnology, throughout Bangladesh.

FFB is sharing evidence-based information about the social, economic and environmental benefits of using biotechnology to breed improved crops, especially those that can boost the nutritional content of staple foods, such as Golden Rice. “Our goal is to help people understand that these crops are public goods developed to benefit farmers and consumers,” said Arif Hossain, CEO and Executive Director of FFB.



Hossain and his team will engage key stakeholders and a community of advocates who are working in a coordinated way to promote access to scientific innovation as a means of enhancing food security, improving environmental sustainability and raising the quality of life. FFB has already engaged three key influencer groups; faith-based, media professionals and youth.

FFB brought together more than 80 Imams aiming to [strengthen capacity of religious leaders](#) for information sharing on agriculture, food and nutrition through the applications of modern agricultural technology. FFB with technical assistant of Islamic Foundation, organized the day long Training of Trainers (ToT) session, titled “Agricultural Innovation and Applications of Agri-biotechnology for Sustainable Food Security in Bangladesh” for Imams and Imam trainers and officials of Imam Training Academy. FFB also organized a roundtable discussion with prominent Bangladeshi Muslim scholars and thought leaders.



Imams learn the benefits of biotechnology.



Mr. Shahadot Hosen receives his certificate from the FFB journalist workshop.

Farming Future Bangladesh also reached out to the agricultural journalist community and hosted a knowledge sharing and capacity building workshop on agri-biotechnology in collaboration with International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). Critics of biotechnology often use emotional messages that have no factual basis. Providing journalists with facts based in scientific research will assist them in reporting evidence-based news reports to their readers. “As a journalist and agricultural student, I think reporting science and

agri-biotechnology should be based on facts not myths,” said Mr. Shahadot Hosen, SAU correspondent, the Daily Kaler Kantho attended the workshop. Approximately 30 reporters participated in the [two-day training event](#).

Most recently, FFB launched a “Youth for Science” campaign in Dhaka. The event was attended by youth and academics representing 11 leading Bangladeshi public and private universities. Specific campaign objectives included leadership building, mobilizing youth and forming partnerships with youth lead science outreach groups and science clubs from the country’s respected universities and institutes, as well as forming new organizations. Scientists, academics and students identified the challenges and way forward through dialogue and participatory sessions during the program launch.



Engaging in science-based agriculture innovations, youth are the future for a prosperous Bangladesh

“Youth can play a vital role in developing new technologies to overcome existing development challenges, bringing in new and traditional solutions with their dedication and creativity,” said Dr. Jiban Krishna Biswas, National Consultant International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Advisor to FFB.

Hossain hopes to continue building on these early events to create a strong network of advocates, with the understanding that preparing Bangladesh for a future of hope for all people is collaborative effort that requires teamwork and evidence-based knowledge sharing. “The goal now is to help people understand and gain access to better technology and more nutritious food for a healthier life”, said Arif while talking about recent FFB activities.

In addition to comprising an Advisory board of international leaders in agricultural development, FFB teams with other organizations looking to promote biotechnology and agricultural innovation in Bangladesh. These groups include IRRI, the South East Asia Bt Brinjal Project and the Biotechnology Potato Partnership, public sector entities like Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, ITA, Bangladesh Institute of Research and Training on Applied Nutrition, Bangladesh's Department of Agricultural Extension are also a priority to FFB's work in coming days.



Biotechnology Potato Partnership team members from Simplot and Michigan State University visit the Farming Future Bangladesh office while in Dhaka.



Speakers at the program titled [“Agricultural Innovation and Agribiotechnology in Islamic Shariah”](#) discussed the need to share fact-based scientific information to improve social awareness and acceptance of modern agricultural innovation and agribiotechnology, including GMOs.

Farming Future Bangladesh is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation under the guidance of Cornell Alliance for Science, Cornell University, USA. To learn more about the organization visit their [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) sites or contact the FFB team directly at info@farmingfuturebd.com.