

SUCCESS STORY

Diversifying Crops in Punjab

Food Processing: New Linkages with the Private Sector

Ohio State University/Punjab Agricultural University



Photo by Ohio State University

Professor Usha Bajwa displays mozzarella cheese. The partnership explores local food processing and expanded market opportunities.



Photo by Ohio State University

Land-grant institutions partner in Ohio and India to develop agribusiness in Punjab. Above Professor Minhas meets with Local Food Processing Industry Representatives.

India's economy is booming, yet a staggering proportion of its population remains mired in poverty and suffers from hunger and severe malnutrition. Unfortunately, dramatic increases in agricultural production, especially of wheat and rice, have exacerbated the challenges of a falling water table, soil fertility depletion, erosion, high irrigation costs, decreasing markets for traditional crops, unsustainable production subsidies, and reduced farmer income.

Recognizing the critical need to establish and strengthen ties between its agricultural universities and local agribusinesses, the Government of India recently pledged approximately \$3.3 million to build and equip a Food Industries Center at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU).

USAID/India contributed \$300,000 through HED's Institutional Partnerships to support the project.

Founded in 1962, PAU and its longstanding partner, The Ohio State University (OSU), are collaborating to diversify agricultural production in India by introducing high-value alternative crops and high-quality food products with extended shelf life potential for export. The primary clientele for the Center will be prospective, starting, and existing small and medium-sized food industries in Punjab, with particular focus on the dairy, livestock, and fruits and vegetables sectors.

PAU embraced the project as an opportunity to expand its linkages beyond agricultural production to the agribusiness sector. It will broaden its research and technology focus beyond production matters to post-harvest, value-added, and marketing issues. With support from OSU, PAU is increasing its capacity to cultivate alternative crops and process them in rural areas, thus creating off-farm rural employment, income generating activities, and more equitable income distribution, particularly among rural women.

The partnership also builds on PAU's origins. The university emerged during the "Green Revolution," which began in South Asia over 50 years ago. The movement led to significant increases in agricultural production between the 1960s and 1980s, when U.S. and Indian universities worked together to improve agricultural education, research, and outreach through close educational collaboration and intellectual exchange based on the U.S. land-grant university model.

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