

Kot Musa's home-grown scientist

The Case of Younas Khan

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A young local farmer, Muhammad Younas Khan Baloch of Kot Musa, a small village in the Chowdwan area tends to 350 kanals of land, of which 50 kanals are his own. The entire area is flood-irrigated and only one-third of the land is rain-fed. During droughts, he makes a living by selling livestock and harvesting wood from the land, out of which half of the harvest is the landlord's share. In the harvest season, he earns extra money by working as a daily-wage seasonal hand in other areas.

Observing the work PLI was doing in his village, Younas Khan approached the women's village organization for help. PLI had already commenced activities with women in this area. He requested for the Participatory Technology Development process to be applied to some of the issues he had identified, and especially the problem of enterotoxaemia in goats and of insects in stored wheat grain.

Working with the facilitators of PTD process, Younas Khan first vaccinated his own goats. With the help of technical expert, he then conducted an experiment on grain storage. The experiment was designed to test the effect of three different storage conditions on the level of protection of the grain against infestation. The three storage conditions were a) open storage inside a room; b) placed inside a plastic bin; and c) wrapped in a "tajjar", i.e., a plastic sheet sprinkled with sand and then lined with a cloth sheet. Apart from conducting his own experiment, Younas Khan also observed the practices adopted by the other farmers and the results they yielded.

While the vaccination worked and protected the health of his animals, the grain storage experiment yielded slightly confusing results. Grain infestation happened with all three storage conditions, but the wheat placed in tajjar yielded better but not optimum results. Younas Khan pondered over this and came up with a modification in the experiment design: at the next harvest time, i.e., early summer, he intends to line the *tajjar* with dried straw instead of sand.



At a meeting organized by Salook, the male village organization facilitated by PLI, Younas Khan shared his experiences and conclusions regarding the grain storage experiment. His views were carefully heard by the other farmers of Kot Musa, who decided to use his tips for protecting grain against insect damage.

Younas Khan also wants to plant more trees on his land so that he could get fodder for his animals; fruit; and wood to make farming implements. With these purposes in mind, he conducted an experimental plantation of drought-resistant trees with the help of facilitators of PTD. The plants included *sheesham*, *shahtoot*, *iple iple*, *ber* and *jaman*. The plants not only survived but grew well, and Younas Khan finds them and their presence beautiful. He would like to acquire training in the nursery raising and grafting of trees.

An active and well-respected general body member of Salook and an executive body member and signatory of Ittefaq Women Welfare Organization, Younas Khan makes intelligent contributions to discussions at the organizations' meetings, and participates actively in their various activities. Noting his keen interest in learning—and in sharing what he learns with fellow villagers—PLI is in the process of introducing him to relevant

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government departments responsible for agricultural extension work. It is expected that his interaction with these institutions will benefit both him and other farmers in his village.

Younas Khan is pleased with the results of his experiments. Since he succeeded in protecting his wheat seed this year, he does not need to buy additional seed in the next growing season. His goats have better health, and there is shade on his land. However, he is extremely conscious of his limitations as a poor and illiterate farmer, and the fact that these limitations make him and other farmers highly vulnerable to any calamity. Nevertheless, he says, farmers like him self can achieve much more stable livelihood conditions, provided government and non-government play their role of providing technical assistance and direct them in the right path.

