

BUSINESS

PSQCA developing accreditation scheme

By Our Reporter

LAHORE, June 29: The Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) is in the process of developing a comprehensive scheme 'The Accreditation Scheme for Halal Food Certification Bodies' (ASHFCB) to guide and control manufacturing industries in accordance with Pakistan Halal Standards.

"Halal food market is emerging as the largest food market in the world and Pakistan's share in the world trade of Halal food is zero," said Prof Dr Faqir Anjum, who is director-general of the National Institute of Food Science and Technology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, and president of Pakistan Society of Food Scientists and Technologists (PSFST).

In his keynote address at the 'International Workshop on Halal Food Issues and Ingredient Concerns' organised by the PSFST in collaboration with Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) here on Monday, Dr Anjum said there was no institution for the promotion of the trade and also no laboratory had been set up to inspect the ingredients of imported food items.

"The large Muslim population in the Middle East, North Africa, South and Southeast Asia, former Soviet Union and China present a lucrative market for the food industry. The significance of food supply and particularly of Halal foods become more apparent when we look at the magnitude and rate of population growth in

Muslim majorities countries.

It is estimated that 70 per cent Muslims (every fifth person in the world is Muslim) worldwide follow Halal food standards. In total, Muslim consumer base is estimated to be 1.9 billion which is spread over 112 countries and the global Halal market is currently a \$580 billion industry, he said adding a golden opportunity for Pakistani food industry to tap the Muslim market which demanded Halal food products to meet their dietary needs.

He said that in view of the high food demand and the promising market worldwide many western food companies had been successful in doing business because of appropriate structures for monitoring and certification of Halal food production and exports. "The global Halal food market is expected to reach up to \$500 billion by 2010. The demand is higher than ever before and is increasing day by day. It is not yet too late for Pakistan to step in and cease the opportunity," Dr Anjum said.

In his presentation on the rising demand of Halal food items and certification activity, IFANCA president Dr Muhammad Munir Chaudhry, a career food technologist, said that Indonesian government under pressure from students protesting against the use of lard by restaurants asked the Indonesian Religious Council in 1992 to intervene. The council created a certification agency known as Institute for the Assessment of

Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics.

"Following the Indonesian model, several other countries like Brunei, Thailand, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia developed Halal approval systems for domestic as well for imported products," Dr Chaudhary said. He said the IFANCA Halal Certification had its network in 56 countries and had 600 client companies. "The IFANCA certified products imported by Pakistan include French fried potatoes, appetizers, MRE meals, flavours and concentrates."

Among other speakers who highlighted different aspects of the growing Halal food demand and how Pakistan could cease this opportunity include Dr Javed Rashid, **Dr Mian Nadeem Riaz**, Prof Dr Javaid Aziz Awan and Hameed Khalid Lateef.

After its development, the ASHFCA will look into the Halal status of food ingredients, issues of standardisation of Halal requirements, meeting Halal customer satisfaction, the importance and the problems associated with labeling in Halal markets, the role and responsibilities of certification bodies, trading with the Middle East countries, regulation for control of Halal food importation, investment opportunities for the other Muslim countries and the management of these investments and to locate export opportunities for Pakistani food companies.