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**Agricultural credit disbursement soars over 16%
to Rs 57.60 Bln in first four months of FY09**

Disbursement of credit to the agriculture sector by commercial and specialized banks has increased 16.20 percent year-on-year to Rs 57.60 billion during the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year (2008-09).

Agricultural credit disbursement, in absolute terms, rose by Rs 8.031 billion in July-October, 2008 period when compared with disbursement of Rs 49.569 billion during the same period of the last fiscal year (2007-08). Overall credit disbursement by five major commercial banks including Allied Bank Limited (ABL), Habib Bank Limited (HBL), MCB Bank Limited, National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) and United Bank Limited (UBL) stood at Rs 31.455 billion during July- October, 2008 period, compared with Rs 26.838 billion during the same period of the last fiscal year, depicting an increase of Rs 4.617 billion or 17.20 per cent.

Zarai Taraqiat Bank Limited (ZTBL), the largest specialized bank, has disbursed Rs 12.089 billion in July-October, 2008 period, compared with Rs 10.008 billion during the same period of the last fiscal year, while disbursement by Punjab Provincial Co-operative Bank Limited (PPCBL) stood at Rs 882.732 million in July-October, 2008 period, compared with Rs 1.318 billion during same period last fiscal year. Besides, 14 domestic private banks (DPBs) also loaned a combined Rs 13.173 billion in July-October, 2008 period, up 15.50 percent when compared with Rs 11.405 billion disbursed in July-October, 2007 period.

It may be recalled that the State Bank of Pakistan has set an indicative credit disbursement target of Rs 250 billion for the agriculture sector for the current 2008-09 fiscal year (FY09) which is higher by Rs 50 billion or 25% than last fiscal year's target of Rs 200 billion and Rs 38 billion or 18% higher than the actual disbursement of Rs 212 billion in FY08.
