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**Agricultural credit disbursement soars over 28 %
to Rs 46.62 Bln in first quarter of FY09**

Disbursement of credit to the agriculture sector by commercial and specialized banks has increased 28.36 percent year-on-year to Rs 46.618 billion during the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year.

Agricultural credit disbursement, in absolute terms, rose by Rs 10.299 billion in July-September, 2008 period when compared with disbursement of Rs 36.319 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 25.638 billion during July- September, 2008 period, compared with Rs 19.494 billion during the same period of the last fiscal year, depicting an increase of Rs 6.144 billion or 31.52 per cent.

Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL), the largest specialized bank, has disbursed Rs 8.741 billion in July-September, 2008 period, compared with Rs 7.222 billion during the same period of the last fiscal year, while disbursement by Punjab Provincial Co-operative Bank Limited (PPCBL) stood at Rs 0.819 billion in July-September, 2008 period, compared with Rs 1.265 billion during same period last fiscal year. Besides, 14 domestic private banks (DPBs) also loaned a combined Rs 11.42 billion in July-September, 2008 period, up 36.97 percent when compared with Rs 8.337 billion disbursed in July-September, 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 fiscal year which is Rs 50 billion or 25% higher 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.
