



The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

**Rating Report**

**Welcon Chemicals (Pvt.) Limited**

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**Rating History**

Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch
26-Aug-2020	BBB-	A3	Stable	Upgrade	-
27-Aug-2019	BB+	A3	Stable	Maintain	-
25-Feb-2019	BB+	A3	Stable	Initial	-

**Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers**

Welcon Chemicals (Pvt.) Limited (herein referred to as 'Welcon' or 'the company') operates in three segments, namely: i) pesticides ii) seeds and iii) fertilizer, through its dealer and distribution network. With time, it has expanded its operations by entering into different businesses in the agriculture industry and achieving operational efficiency. The company is part of one of the pioneer groups of the industry. After incorporation in 1995, the company has been able to cement its position as a major market player in the sector. Welcon has reported adequate turnover, with ample contribution of each segment. That being said, pesticide remains the predominant segment, in terms of revenue. Profitability of the company, though, is inferior to the other prominent market participants. The company's plant is located at Jhanian, near the company's home market (Multan), which has a positive impact on the cost structure. To enhance foot print in the market, the group's R&D performs research and tests frequently. The customers are engaged by arranging gatherings in far flung areas, to address the farmers' concerns. The company meets its working capital requirements through a mix of internal cashflows and short term borrowings. However, the financial risk remains under control on account of low long term finance and adequate coverages. Supply mechanism of raw material, predominantly from China, was under pressure, in the wake of the global pandemic Covid-19. Subsequent to the ease in lockdown restrictions, such constraints have subsided. The ratings take comfort from the sponsor strength, with AllahDin Group having interests in various segments of the agriculture industry, spanning more than 2 decades. Having a diversified product mix bodes well for the company and the group, in the wake of an ever-changing landscape in the industry. The ratings also take into account the superior quality of the production process and notable production capacity of the company. Going forward, the improvement in bottom-line and cash flows, standardization in governance structure and financial transparency is vital.

The ratings are dependent on improvement in business and financial profile of the company. Any deterioration to topline, margins or cash flows remain critical to the ratings. The company's sustained business performance in the currently stretched economic scenario, amid Covid-19 and locust swarms, remains vital to the ratings.

**Disclosure**

<b>Name of Rated Entity</b>	Welcon Chemicals (Pvt.) Limited
<b>Type of Relationship</b>	Solicited
<b>Purpose of the Rating</b>	Entity Rating
<b>Applicable Criteria</b>	Methodology   Corporate Ratings(Jun-20),Methodology   Correlation Between Long-Term And Short-Term Rating Scale(Jun-20),Criteria   Rating Modifier(Jun-20)
<b>Related Research</b>	Sector Study   Pesticides(Feb-20)
<b>Rating Analysts</b>	Jibran Cheema   jibran.cheema@pacra.com   +92-42-35869504

## Profile

**Legal Structure** Welcon Chemicals (Pvt.) limited (herein referred to as 'Welcon' or 'the company'), a pioneer company of the AllahDin Group, is a private limited company. Welcon is primarily engaged in the sale of pesticides (including formulation), seeds and fertilizer, through its dealer and distribution network, within the country.

**Background** Welcon is one of the prominent pesticide companies in the country. It was established as the first company by the AllahDin Group, in 1994. In the 1980's, the sponsoring family was mainly engaged in the construction business, whereas one sibling was associated with the agriculture industry, having the required knowledge of the sector. Subsequently, the second company by the name of Warble (Pvt.) Limited was also incorporated, in a bid to break the monopoly of multinational companies, with other companies like Ali Akber Group and 4 Brothers (4B) group.

**Operations** Welcon's head office is located in Lahore. The formulation facility is at Jhanian Multan (referred to as the Heart of Cotton Belt) equipped with Chinese machinery and technology. It is spread over 4 acres of land. Currently, the company is operating with over 375 employees, mainly consisting of sales and marketing teams, given its importance in the pesticide business.

## Ownership

**Ownership Structure** There has been a recent shift in the ownership structure of the company. The shareholding of the founding generation comprising Ch. Ifitikhar Nazir, the Group Chairman and CEO, and his brother Mr. Atta ur Rehman has been transferred to their respective sons, while Mr. Zia ur Rehman has retained his ownership in the company. Welcon is now majorly owned by Mr. Zain Ifitikhar (66.4%), followed by Mr. Zia ur Rehman (26.5%) and Mr. Masood Ur Rehman (3.9%). Lastly, Mrs. Ghazala Asmat, the wife of Ch. Ifitikhar, holds 3.2% the shareholding of the company.

**Stability** As evident from the above, clear succession lines have been drawn and implemented, throughout the Allahdin Group.

**Business Acumen** The Allahdin Group family has been associated with the agriculture sector for a considerable amount of time. The Group encompasses a number of companies in its ambit.

**Financial Strength** The history of the Allahdin Group dates back to the 1990's. The Group reported a turnover of over PKR~5bln in FY19. It has vested business interests in Agriculture, Bottling, and the Pharmaceutical industry.

## Governance

**Board Structure** The overall control vests with a two member Board of Directors. Ch. Ifitikhar Nazir holds an executive position on the Board, while Mr. Zia Ur Rehman is a non-executive director.

**Members' Profile** Board members carry adequate skills, competence and knowledge. The members Ch. Ifitikhar Nazir and Mr. Zia Ur Rehman have been associated with the business for almost three decades.

**Board Effectiveness** There are no formal board committees in place. The meetings of the Board with senior management are conducted on a frequent basis. Proper record is kept of the meetings.

**Financial Transparency** M/s. Tabussum Saleem and Co., Chartered Accountants, a QCR rated firm, is the external auditor of the company. It has given an unqualified opinion on the company's financial statements for the year ended June'19. Overall, the financial transparency of the company, has room for improvement.

## Management

**Organizational Structure** Welcon has a lean organizational structure, divided into four key functions, namely (i) Sales & Marketing, (ii) Finance, (iii) HR & IT and (iv) Taxation & Accounts. Each function reports to COO, who ultimately reports to the Chairman.

**Management Team** The Group Chairman and CEO of Welcon, Ch. Ifitikhar Nazir is the pioneer of the AllahDin Group of Companies. He has done his graduation. Mr. Zain Ifitikhar Chaudhry, the son of Ch. Ifitikhar Nazir, is COO of the company. He is a graduate in Financial Management Services, from York University, Toronto.

**Effectiveness** Meetings of management are conducted on a frequent basis, depending upon the requirement. Senior management gives input in the decision making while Ch. Ifitikhar Nazir is the final authority for all decision making processes.

**MIS** Welcon deploys an ERP system, which generates reports on daily, weekly and monthly basis.

**Control Environment** The company's plant is located in the hub of Agriculture, Jhanian Multan while the Head office in Lahore. In order to avoid the freight charges, the company has followed a strategy to develop the plant in the center of Punjab. There is room for improvement in internal controls and systems, particularly in terms of adopting good governance practices and management of timely financial reporting.

## Business Risk

**Industry Dynamics** Pakistan's agricultural sector holds a ~19% contribution to its GDP, showcasing its importance to the economy. The pesticide industry is an important segment of agriculture, since it is one of the major crop inputs. The size of the pesticide market is estimated to be in the range of PKR~60bln to PKR~75bln. The local pesticide market is import dependent, with ~20% to ~30% of the pesticide cost component being imported to the country, majorly from China. The absolute dependence on imports, presents the risk of supply constraints amid a lag in international trade, as was the case briefly, in the initial months of the worldwide lockdown, in the wake of the pandemic Covid-19. On the other hand, the demand for necessities is in-elastic, which bodes well for the sustenance of the industry, even in times of economic contraction. The issue of locust swarms, if aggravated, may add some uncertainty to the future demand side mechanics. The pesticide market is fragmented, comprising MNCs and local Companies. Major players (11) make up ~81% of the total pesticide market.

**Relative Position** The AllahDin Group holds a strong position and brand name in the industry. The Group, overall, holds ~10% market share in the industry and is the 4th largest group in pesticides after Syngenta, Ali Akber and Sun Crop.

**Revenues** In 9MFY20, the company reported a topline of PKR~1,236mln (9MFY19: PKR~1,090mln), depicting a growth of 13%, compared to the corresponding period. The largest contributor to the topline, is the Pesticides segment (75%), followed by Fertilizer (15%) and Seed (10%). Turnover of Pesticides was dominated by the hugely popular Insecticides (60%), followed by Herbicides (30%) and Fungicides (10%). While Insecticides are still the most consumed Pesticides in the market, its demand is on a downward shift, due to falling cotton yield and environmental concerns. On the other hand, due to increasing awareness, the share of offtake of Herbicide and Fungicide is on the rise. Majority of the offtake takes place in Punjab (70%), followed by Sindh (20%) and KPK (10%). The company operates via its sizeable network of distributors and dealers.

**Margins** The prices are decided by the supply demand gap in the industry. The company has been able to secure its margins by controlling its costs. Gross and net profit margins in 9MFY20 stood at 19.9% (9MFY19: 17.8%) and 3.4% (9MFY19: 2.0%) respectively.

**Sustainability** Going forward, the management will keep its focus on sustaining its cost leadership and performance uptrend. The company is securing its business by registering its farmers and providing them pesticides and in return purchasing their crops. The idea was implemented in the segments of cotton and wheat.

## Financial Risk

**Working Capital** The company's networking capital requirements, is a function of inventory, receivables and payables. The net cash cycle during 9MFY20 remained high after clocking in at 240 days (FY19: 241 days). The company meets working capital requirements through a mix of internal cashflows and Short Term Borrowings (STBs). The quantum of STBs stood at PKR~138mln as at End-9MFY20 (End-FY19: PKR~106mln). The current ratio clocked in at 1.1x (End-FY19: 1.0x).

**Coverages** During 9MFY20, the company's EBITDA amounted to PKR~121mln (9MFY19: PKR~85mln). FCFO of the company also reached healthier levels by clocking in at PKR~116mln (9MFY19: PKR~82mln). Even though there has been a growth in this regard, such figures are still deemed low, when compared with peers. Interest coverage in 9MFY20 stood at 3.0x (9MFY19: 2.8x).

**Capitalization** As at End-9MFY20, the company's total leveraging stood at PKR~178mln (End-FY19: PKR~167mln), including leased financing. The company's exposure is mainly in short term borrowing. The company's equity stands at PKR~367mln (End-FY19: PKR~325mln) which has increased due to a rise in the unappropriated profits. Gearing ratio decreased to 32.6% (End-FY19: 34.0%), primarily due to higher equity.



Welcon Chemicals (Pvt.) Limited Pesticides	Mar-20	Jun-19	Jun-18	Jun-17
	9M	12M	12M	12M

#### A BALANCE SHEET

1 Non-Current Assets	317	337	274	197
2 Investments	-	-	-	-
3 Related Party Exposure	131	169	65	70
4 Current Assets	1,324	1,380	997	976
<i>a Inventories</i>	968	997	579	609
<i>b Trade Receivables</i>	179	159	138	127
5 Total Assets	1,773	1,885	1,337	1,243
6 Current Liabilities	1,224	1,389	920	896
<i>a Trade Payables</i>	60	73	65	46
7 Borrowings	178	167	117	76
8 Related Party Exposure	-	-	-	-
9 Non-Current Liabilities	5	4	4	4
10 Net Assets	367	325	295	267
11 Shareholders' Equity	367	325	295	267

#### B INCOME STATEMENT

1 Sales	1,236	1,537	1,462	1,517
<i>a Cost of Good Sold</i>	(989)	(1,271)	(1,213)	(1,269)
2 Gross Profit	246	266	250	248
<i>a Operating Expenses</i>	(141)	(174)	(163)	(157)
3 Operating Profit	105	92	87	91
<i>a Non Operating Income or (Expense)</i>	(4)	(3)	(3)	(4)
4 Profit or (Loss) before Interest and Tax	100	89	84	87
<i>a Total Finance Cost</i>	(39)	(41)	(38)	(33)
<i>b Taxation</i>	(19)	(19)	(17)	(15)
6 Net Income Or (Loss)	43	29	28	39

#### C CASH FLOW STATEMENT

<i>a Free Cash Flows from Operations (FCFO)</i>	116	108	105	79
<i>b Net Cash from Operating Activities before Working Capital Changes</i>	77	67	66	47
<i>c Changes in Working Capital</i>	(99)	(25)	16	14
1 Net Cash provided by Operating Activities	(22)	43	83	60
2 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Investing Activities	-	(51)	(54)	(11)
3 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Financing Activities	11	12	(6)	(52)
4 Net Cash generated or (Used) during the period	(11)	4	23	(2)

#### D RATIO ANALYSIS

1 Performance				
<i>a Sales Growth (for the period)</i>	7.2%	5.1%	-3.6%	9.3%
<i>b Gross Profit Margin</i>	19.9%	17.3%	17.1%	16.3%
<i>c Net Profit Margin</i>	3.4%	1.9%	1.9%	2.6%
<i>d Cash Conversion Efficiency (EBITDA/Sales)</i>	9.8%	7.6%	7.4%	7.3%
<i>e Return on Equity (ROE)</i>	16.4%	9.5%	9.9%	15.9%
2 Working Capital Management				
<i>a Gross Working Capital (Average Days)</i>	255	257	181	223
<i>b Net Working Capital (Average Days)</i>	240	241	167	182
<i>c Current Ratio (Total Current Assets/Total Current Liabilities)</i>	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
3 Coverages				
<i>a EBITDA / Finance Cost</i>	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.5
<i>b FCFO / Finance Cost+CMLTB+Excess STB</i>	1.4	0.6	1.6	1.2
<i>c Debt Payback (Total Borrowings+Excess STB) / (FCFO-Finance Cost)</i>	0.7	2.6	0.9	1.2
4 Capital Structure (Total Debt/Total Debt+Equity)				
<i>a Total Borrowings / Total Borrowings+Equity</i>	32.6%	34.0%	28.4%	22.0%
<i>b Interest or Markup Payable (Days)</i>	7.1	8.1	13.5	7.6
<i>c Average Borrowing Rate</i>	29.7%	27.7%	37.9%	35.6%

**Credit Rating**

Credit rating reflects forward-looking opinion on credit worthiness of underlying entity or instrument; more specifically it covers relative ability to honor financial obligations. The primary factor being captured on the rating scale is relative likelihood of default.

Scale	Long-term Rating Definition
AAA	<b>Highest credit quality.</b> Lowest expectation of credit risk. Indicate exceptionally strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments
AA+	
AA	<b>Very high credit quality.</b> Very low expectation of credit risk. Indicate very strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.
AA-	
A+	
A	<b>High credit quality.</b> Low expectation of credit risk. The capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be vulnerable to changes in circumstances or in economic conditions.
A-	
BBB+	
BBB	<b>Good credit quality.</b> Currently a low expectation of credit risk. The capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse changes in circumstances and in economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.
BBB-	
BB+	<b>Moderate risk.</b> Possibility of credit risk developing. There is a possibility of credit risk developing, particularly as a result of adverse economic or business changes over time; however, business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.
BB	
BB-	
B+	
B	<b>High credit risk.</b> A limited margin of safety remains against credit risk. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is contingent upon a sustained, favorable business and economic environment.
B-	
CCC	<b>Very high credit risk.</b> Substantial credit risk “CCC” Default is a real possibility. Capacity for meeting financial commitments is solely reliant upon sustained, favorable business or economic developments. “CC” Rating indicates that default of some kind appears probable. “C” Ratings signal imminent default.
CC	
C	
D	Obligations are currently in default.

Scale	Short-term Rating Definition
A1+	The highest capacity for timely repayment.
A1	A strong capacity for timely repayment.
A2	A satisfactory capacity for timely repayment. This may be susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions.
A3	An adequate capacity for timely repayment. Such capacity is susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions.
A4	The capacity for timely repayment is more susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions. Liquidity may not be sufficient.



\*The correlation shown is indicative and, in certain cases, may not hold.

**Outlook (Stable, Positive, Negative, Developing)** Indicates the potential and direction of a rating over the intermediate term in response to trends in economic and/or fundamental business/financial conditions. It is not necessarily a precursor to a rating change. ‘Stable’ outlook means a rating is not likely to change. ‘Positive’ means it may be raised. ‘Negative’ means it may be lowered. Where the trends have conflicting elements, the outlook may be described as ‘Developing’.

**Rating Watch** Alerts to the possibility of a rating change subsequent to, or, in anticipation of some material identifiable event with indeterminable rating implications. But it does not mean that a rating change is inevitable. A watch should be resolved within foreseeable future, but may continue if underlying circumstances are not settled. Rating watch may accompany rating outlook of the respective opinion.

**Suspension** It is not possible to update an opinion due to lack of requisite information. Opinion should be resumed in foreseeable future. However, if this does not happen within six (6) months, the rating should be considered withdrawn.

**Withdrawn** A rating is withdrawn on a) termination of rating mandate, b) the debt instrument is redeemed, c) the rating remains suspended for six months, d) the entity/issuer defaults., or/and e) PACRA finds it impractical to surveil the opinion due to lack of requisite information.

**Harmonization** A change in rating due to revision in applicable methodology or underlying scale.

**Surveillance.** Surveillance on a publicly disseminated rating opinion is carried out on an ongoing basis till it is formally suspended or withdrawn. A comprehensive surveillance of rating opinion is carried out at least once every six months. However, a rating opinion may be reviewed in the intervening period if it is necessitated by any material happening.

**Note.** This scale is applicable to the following methodology(s):

<p><b>Entities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Broker Entity Rating</li> <li>b) Corporate Rating</li> <li>c) Financial Institution Rating</li> <li>d) Holding Company Rating</li> <li>e) Independent Power Producer Rating</li> <li>f) Microfinance Institution Rating</li> <li>g) Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) Rating</li> </ul>	<p><b>Instruments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Basel III Compliant Debt Instrument Rating</li> <li>b) Debt Instrument Rating</li> <li>c) Sukuk Rating</li> </ul>
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- ii. PACRA, the analysts involved in the rating process and members of its rating committee, and their family members, do not have any conflict of interest relating to the rating done by them | Chapter III; 12-2-(e) & (k)
- iii. The analyst is not a substantial shareholder of the customer being rated by PACRA [Annexure F; d-(ii)] Explanation: for the purpose of above clause, the term "family members" shall include only those family members who are dependent on the analyst and members of the rating committee

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- (20) PACRA initiates immediate review of the outstanding rating upon becoming aware of any information that may reasonably be expected to result in downgrading of the rating; | Chapter III | 18-(c)
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(22) PACRA's Rating Scale reflects the expectation of credit risk. The highest rating has the lowest relative likelihood of default (i.e, probability). PACRA's transition studies capture the historical performance behavior of a specific rating notch. Transition behavior of the assigned rating can be obtained from PACRA's Transition Study available at our website. (www.pacra.com). However, actual transition of rating may not follow the pattern observed in the past | Chapter III | 14-(F-VII)

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