

## P.M. Abiy Ahmed Visits ATA ACC Wheat Clusters

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## P.M. Abiy Ahmed Visits ACC Wheat Clusters in Amhara and Oromia Regions

H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) visited ACC Wheat Clusters in Moretina Jiru woreda, North Shewa zone of the Amhara region and Ginir woreda, Bale zone of the Oromia region on December 2 and 8, 2018 respectively.

The places visited showcased the ATA flagship initiative - the Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC). The Initiative works by prioritizing specific commodities to areas that have a comparative advantage in growing those commodities. Smallholder farmers who take part in the cluster are provided supports that range from training and advisory services to facilitation on introductions of new

technologies and mechanization, input supply, and market linkages.

On the occasions, Prime Minister Abiy discussed with smallholder farmers who are cultivating wheat in the new cluster farming approach. Having noted the high productivity, he appreciated the hard work of the farmers and the works being done.

In his speech to the smallholder farmers, the Prime Minister noted the patriotism of the people, and called on each farmer to exhibit the same level of devotion in development to alleviate themselves out of poverty.



“Our country is known for its rich resources that are still underutilized.” Dr. Abiy said. “But works like these are indicators that we have the capacity to feed the entire nation,” he added.

Having appreciated the works that have been done so far, the Premier tasked the ATA to further work on creating formal market linkage between clusters and large

millers, institutional buyers and government organizations importing wheat. Khalid Bomba, CEO of ATA, gladly accepted the task and promised to speedily act on it and report.

“My team and I will work hand in hand with all stakeholders to stand to the additional task assigned to us,” Khalid said. “As always, we’ll deliver professionally and timely.”





*Farmer working on his  
Teff Harvest*

Location- Welkite  
Picture by Abiy Solomon



## MoA Commends ATA for Supporting the Apiculture Sector Unleash Its Potential

Minister of Agriculture, Ato Oumer Hussien, commended ATA for its effort in enhancing the apiculture value chain. This was said during the official opening ceremony of the International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations (APIMONDIA) Symposium that took place from 30 Nov- 4 Dec 2018 in Addis Ababa.

The international symposium which brought together hundreds of beekeepers, scientists, researchers, and all concerned development partners around the world was held with the theme "the role of bees in food production". Different products and byproducts of apiculture are also put in the exhibition for shows and sales.



*ABOVE: H.E Ato Oumer Hussein, Minister of Agriculture, FDRE*

*BELOW: Khalid Bomba, Chief Executive Officer, ATA*

Ato Oumer, in his opening remark, said that better-managed beekeeping will not only benefits the country through honey and beeswax but also increases food production through bees' role in pollination. "The government will provide all the necessary policy guidance to create an enabling environment to ensure the apiculture sector unleashes its unique development potential in this country," the minister noted.

Khalid Bomba, CEO of ATA, on his part, highlighted that Ethiopia different agro-ecologies and rich botanical diversities make the country one of the most favorable habitats for beekeeping, which has been practiced for centuries. "Ethiopia is blessed



with such a huge potential and opportunities to commercialize and transform the lives of millions of smallholder beekeeping farmers in the sector," said Khalid. "Commercializing and transforming the apiculture sector, besides its economic contribution, will play a role to food security, employment generation as well as biodiversity and environmental protection" he added.

The APIMONDIA symposium took place for the second time on African soil since its establishment 120 years ago. Ethiopia is currently bidding to hosting the APIMONDA Congress 2023.



## ATA at the Intra-Africa Trade Fair (IATF)

The ATA Agribusiness team joined the Ethiopian business delegation drawn from the private sector and government organization at the first Inter African Trade fair held in Cairo, Egypt from 11- 17 December 2018.

ATA, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Coffee and Tea Authority and private sector trade associations took part in the trade fair representing Ethiopia.

Ethiopian delegates successfully promoted the country's potential in Agro-Processing, manufacturing, Agriculture, and exports of commodities. Private exporters seized the opportunity and had a business to business (B2B) meetings with various buyers at Ethiopian pavilion to promote their products and sign contractual agreements for export of sesame, pulses, spices, coffee, meat, and live animals.

## Development Partners and Government Officials Attend Farmers' Field Day

ATA organized a field visit to see the performance of Accelerated Full Package Scale up (AFPS) project in Wheat and Malt Barley Clusters in Lode Hitosa and Limuna Bilbilo woredas of the Oromia region on 3 October 2018. Development partners and government officials from the Oromia regional state attended the field visit, also known as "Farmers' Field Day".

This visit, led by Khalid Bomba, CEO of ATA, along with senior ATA officials and experts was attended by Diplomats from the Embassies of Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Italy in Addis Ababa, as well as Senior Oromia Regional Government Officials including the Vice Presidents Dr. Girma Ament and Head of the Regional Bureau of Agriculture Ato Dabba Debele and Zonal and Woreda level Officials.

AFPS is an initiative that promotes the application of the full research recommended package at an accelerated rate, with the objective of obtaining massive and incremental productivity gains.



## ATA signed a Grant Agreement with Danish MoFA

ATA and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) signed a grant agreement on 29 November 2019. The agreement was signed between Khalid Bomba, CEO of ATA and Karin Poulsen, Danish Ambassador to Ethiopia at the Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa. This fund is earmarked to support the Agricultural Commercialization Clusters (ACC) Initiative.

The ACC initiative which is under implementation by the ATA is a cohesive and systemic value chain approach. It comprises all aspects from addressing capacity gaps of

farmers and extension workers, to facilitate better access to credit, services, and inputs. It also stimulates the demand side, working with product aggregation and sales and access to both domestic and international markets.

The ACC initiative works in Oromia, Amhara, SNNP and Tigray regions on 30 clusters in 252 woredas focusing on six priority commodity value chains: wheat, maize, sesame, malt barley, tef, and horticulture (tomato, onion, mango, banana, and avocado).

## 2018 Farmers' Homestay

By Dagmawi Zeleke

### 2018 Edition of Farmers' Homestay Took Place in Amhara Region

42 ATA staff members (15 women, 27 men) took part in the 2018 edition of Farmers Homestay that took place in Wonberima Woreda, Amhara Region from 12-15 December 2018. This exercise is designed and is implemented in a bid to provide the ATA staff the opportunity to learn more about the lives of smallholder farmers on the ground. The event further serves as an opportunity to recognize the importance of each staff's efforts in transforming the livelihoods of the farmers for the better.

This year's Farmer's Homestay was held in three kebeles of Wenberima woreda. Participants spent 24 hours at their host families where they were engaged in various daily activities like harvesting, threshing and helping in the daily household chores.

"The social committee plans various social activities for the staff amongst which the Farmers' Homestay remains the biggest one," said Henok Alemu, Chairperson of the Social Committee. "It helps our staff members to practically understand everyday lives of farming households and you could see the excitements on the faces of the participants. And as ATA nowhere is the right place to be at than the framer's home" Henok added.

For most of the participants, this was a new experience like they have never seen before. They went to the event looking for some

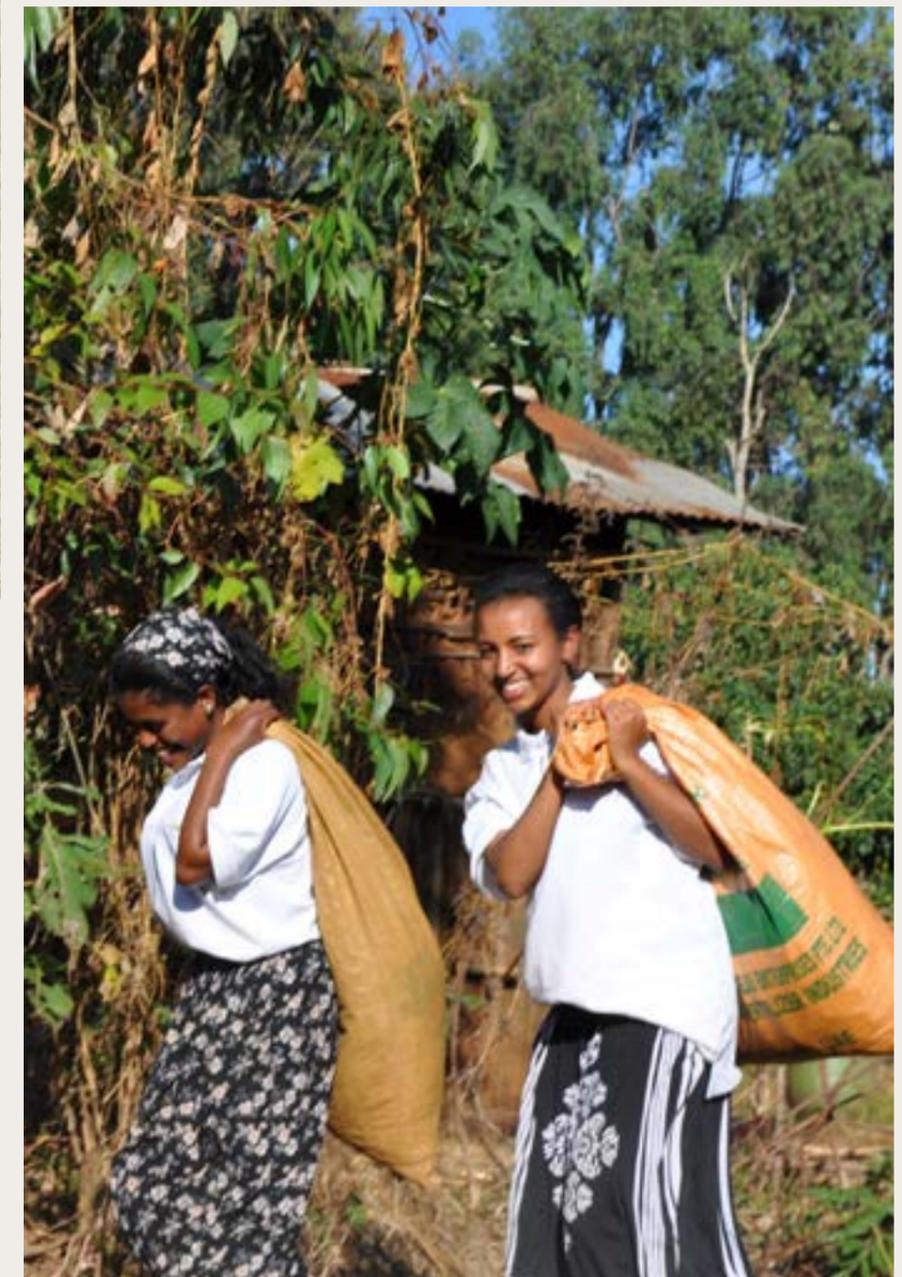


insights and new perspectives.

"The visit has given me the inspiration to work even harder with an understanding that my contribution impacts the livelihood of farmers positively," said Bezawit Habtamu, one of the participants. "The visit has also provided me with a chance to observe and reflect on the things ATA could do to improve the lives of farmers," she added.

The host farmers appreciated that they are being visited by people from the city. "For me to see that farming is being respected by these highly educated people is heartwarming," a farmer told us. He thought, people living in the city are not supposed to

"The visit has given me the inspiration to work even harder with an understanding that my contribution impacts the livelihood of farmers positively,"



touch anything of such works. The Farmer's Homestay is an annual event organized by the Social committee of ATA to familiarize the lives of smallholder farmers among its staff by staying at the farmers' home and helping what they do every day. Following the Homestay, the participants visited Lake Zengena, which is located 412Kms from Addis Ababa where they were able to relax and have some breath of fresh air before returning back to Addis Ababa.

# Cluster Farming and Dreamers of Agricultural Transformation

By Berihun Mekonnen

Haji Mahmud Ahmed is a humble farmer, but a dreamer. Nevertheless, he has never dreamt of shaking hands with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) nor hugging him. His dream has always been to be a better person by working hard.

In December when the Prime Minister visited a clustered wheat farm in Ginir woreda, Bale zone of the Oromia region Haji Mahmud shook hands with the PM and share words with him. "I shook hands with the Prime Minister, I even gave him a hug, a big hug," says Haji Mahmud with smiles all over his face. "This happened just because I am one of the smallholder farmers who is working hard and growing wheat with other fellow farmers in the newly introduced cluster farming approach."

The ATA introduced the new farming approach in 2014 through its Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC) Initiative. The Initiative was developed as an approach to integrate geographically targeted interventions to ensure rapid, sustainable and inclusive development for prioritized agricultural commodity value chains. Smallholder farmers who take part in the cluster are provided supports that range from training and advisory services to facilitation on introductions of new technologies, input supply, and market linkages.



*Haji Mahmud Ahmed at his wheat farm: Ginir woreda, Bale zone of the Oromia region*

Ato Nigussie Teshome, 48, another dreamer, met the Prime Minister during his visit to the area. He grows bread wheat besides Haji Mahmud's farm. He highly appreciates the cluster farming approach not only for the introduction of new farming technologies and inputs but also an equally important aspect of the market linkage. "We don't have to worry about the market," said Ato Nigussie. "What we are concerned much is how to increase our productivity as the market is already secured for a much better price than the local market."

Haji Mahmud and Ato Negussie land are identified as one of the potential areas for wheat as a priority commodity. "A few years back development agents and experts from the Woreda Agricultural Office provided training on the practices and benefits of cluster farming to farmers in my village" remembers Haji Mahmud. "As I am always eager to do something new to change my life, I was willing to participate in this

cluster farming approach, and here I'm." ATA facilitates market linkage for products in the ACC intervention woredas by coordinating a contract farming where buyers and producers sign agreements before the harvest is done. In many cases, the buyer provides supports to smallholder farmers including the provision of improved seeds, fertilizers, and agrochemicals and mechanization services. They also take the produces with the better price of the product in any of the country's markets and take the products at the farm gate with no transport cost to the farmers.

Haji Mahmud and Ato Nigussie have witnessed a remarkable change in their lives with the improvement of productivity year after year. Last year, for example, both smallholder farmers were able to produce 65 quintals of wheat per hectare. This year as they have used better inputs such as improved seed, fertilizers, and agrochemicals as per the recommended standard they expect 70-80 quintals of yield per hectare.

Previous to the introduction of the cluster, very strong farmers were only able to produce 30-40 quintals per hectare.

Many of the farmers now own houses with corrugated iron sheet roof. This is seen as a sign of having better means. Many of them are also able to buy modern household goods such as modern beds and Televisions. Tibebu Jiru, 26, is a young development agent who has been working as a crop expert in that kebele in the past three years. "The number of people who are participating in the Kebele has been growing year after year, Tibebu said. "In the current harvest season, every household in the kebele is under the cluster farming." All the 817 households have participated in 19 bread wheat and two durum wheat clusters cultivating 2,549 hectares of land.

The Cluster farming has particularly very useful in employing mechanization technologies and the prevention of post-harvest losses. They can rent tractors, combiners or agrochemical spray machine in a group as they prepare their lands, take care of weeds and pests as well as harvest crops at similar times. This also gives a cost minimization as mechanization service providers can provide the services easily.

The dreamer Haji Mahmud dreams for himself and the fellow smallholder farmers who work alongside with him to own a combiner and a tractor of their own. "If we continue increasing our productivity year after year we can save some money and buy those combiners and tractors," said Haji Mahmud, in a confirmed mood. Nothing is impossible for a dreamer 'Every great dream begins with a dreamer'.

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## EAAP calls for Enterprises to Apply for Incubation

ATA's Ethiopian Agribusiness Accelerator Platform (EAAP) is a demand-driven, value chain focused business incubator and accelerator that helps professionalize and scale growth oriented agribusinesses.

EAAP is currently working with seven honey processing enterprises who are selling in the domestic and international markets. The project has established partnerships with the Entrepreneurship Development Center (EDC) and Technoserve to facilitate business management training and deliver contract farming schemes for the enterprises and beekeepers respectively.

EAAP has disbursed 4.1MN ETB of seed capital to the enterprises and helped secure additional financing worth 22MN ETB through the Development Bank of Ethiopia and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. The project has delivered an input financing scheme for beekeeping inputs to 190 beekeepers

through Rural Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations. In addition, EAAP is partnering with the World Bank to internationally accredit an Ethiopian laboratory to provide full honey and wax quality testing.

Enterprises in the incubation track have achieved their targets through participating in 3 rounds of business management and technical training workshops on wax and honey, strategy, financial management, marketing, and communications. The enterprises have also been assigned mentors to facilitate the strengthening of their operations through high-level strategic guidance and specific topical areas including accounting and technical expertise.

EAAP is recruiting enterprises for the second intake of the incubation track. The application deadline is 31, January 2019, more information can be found on the ATA website ([www.ata.gov.et](http://www.ata.gov.et)).