

ATA NEWS



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Clean your hands thoroughly for at least 20-40 seconds with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub to protect yourself from viruses

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The event kicked off with the opening remarks of H.E Oumer Hussein, Minister of Agriculture, where he acknowledged the journey the Ethiopian agriculture has come in a span of ten years. “It is important to take stock of what ATA has been able to contribute to the transformation of the sector” he added. “Despite the promising changes we have noticed, the sector is riddled with various problems that challenge the smallholder farmers of Ethiopia, and addressing such challenges and commercializing the sector could lead Ethiopia to further exploit its agriculture potential both in crops and livestock. Resolving the systemic bottlenecks in the crop and livestock value chains will drive inclusive growth helping us attain food security”

Following the opening remarks, the journey of ATA over the past ten years was presented by ATA CEO, Khalid Bomba. During the presentation, the CEO highlighted the overall process behind the establishment of the ATA, its achievements, and challenges in a span of ten years. “The success of the ATA is not the sole responsibility of the Agency; rather, it has been a combination of collective efforts and contributions ranging from the Government of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Bureaus of Agriculture, the community of partners extending from development partners to civil society organizations to NGOs to the private sector, the farmers and DAs whose concerted efforts have made the ATA successful” he added.



Since its establishment in December 2010, the ATA has been working across four mandate areas namely, conducting Studies, Projects, Implementation Support, and Linkage and Coordination. Within these mandate areas, the organization has adopted two approaches to catalyze agricultural transformation: addressing systemic bottlenecks through the Agricultural Transformation Agenda Deliverables (TAD) and integrating solutions in high-priority commodity value-chain and geographies through the Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC) program. Under the TAD and ACC programs, the ATA has undertaken various impactful projects that have improved farming approaches, facilitated access to inputs, services and markets, and thereby improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

The event also saw an independent evaluation presentation of the performance and impacts of the Agency over the past ten years by Mr. Maximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The presentation covered the corporate impacts of the Agency’s activities in the country in terms of projects executed, studies conducted, and other impactful activities implemented to drive agricultural transformation, growth, and poverty reduction.

In its first decade of operations, the ATA has delivered over 250 studies and implemented 45 projects, some of which are currently ongoing. It has managed to consistently deliver on its other mandate areas as well, acting as a sector coordinator, and building implementation capacity among various stakeholders in the sector.

Additional presentations and panel discussions were also held on the future strategy of the agency by ATA senior directors and panelists that attended the event in person and online due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.



ATA Teams up with partners to deliver Livestock and COVID-19 information to farmers

The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ethio-Telecom and Ethiopian Public Health Institute, has incorporated and deployed livestock advisory and COVID 19 health advisory contents on its 8028 Farmers Hotline. The new contents are currently available in five local languages (Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, Wolaytigna and Sidamigna).

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2018), the livestock sector where about 1.3 billion people are dependent on for their livelihood contributes to 40 percent of Global agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Ethiopia's livestock is one of the largest in Africa, contributing nearly 20 percent of the country's GDP, and 15 percent of export earnings (FAO, 2019). The livestock sub-sector supports the livelihoods of about 80 percent of rural people in Ethiopia.

"Farmers across Ethiopia should have easy access to crucial and relevant information for them to make informed decisions regardless of their locations. Moreover, they should also have updates regarding the current pandemic that is challenging the world so that they can protect themselves, their families as well as their community. Hence, we have decided to team up with our partners to ensure delivery of important and up-to-date livestock and COVID-19 information to our smallholder farmers using 8028 farmers toll-free hotline services in a way they can easily access it." ATA CEO Khalid Bomba said.



Dr. Fikru Regassa, State Minister for Livestock Development at MoA said "Livestock is one of the primary assets of Ethiopian farmers with enormous contribution to livelihood/income, household nutrition, employment opportunity, and other social obligations. Besides, it has been making significant contributions to country's foreign earnings. Thus, it is highly important to provide smallholder livestock producers with the necessary information and updates on improved production and management practices, and COVID19 prevention mechanisms. That's why we have partnered with our key stakeholders to ensure that farmer get the proper advisory service while at the same time protecting themselves from the current pandemic".

Ethio Telecom has been always our partner in supporting crop producing smallholder farmers using the 8028 Farmers' hotline service. So far, the 8028 Farmers' hotline, with a registered callers of over 5 million farmers has received approximately 46.5 million calls from smallholder farmers that has been provided by Ethio Telecom as a toll-free service.

The 8028 Farmers' Hotline livestock is an additional advisory service launched to provide necessary information in four major livestock categories: dairy, fattening (cattle and small ruminant), apiculture, and poultry (small scale commercial poultry and improved household poultry). The advisory service also makes the consumption of technologies with improved management practices in feed resource production and utilization of proven technologies easier with little demonstration and engagement of dedicated extension workers which has become difficult following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cognizant of the challenges of the current pandemic, the ATA, in collaboration with Mercy Corps Ethiopia and Ethiopia Public Health Institute (EPHI), has launched the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) service on COVID 19 for 8028 Farmers Hotline system users. Users can now get COVID 19 health advisories focusing on Safe Farming, Family and Community Interaction, Handling COVID death and Myths.

John Mundy, the Mercy Corps AgriFin Program's Desert Locust & Covid-19 Emergency Manager & Digital Climate Smart Agriculture Lead explained "The role of digital channels has been critical in addressing COVID-19 information gaps with smallholder farmers who are often located in difficult to reach rural areas. With this in mind, we have teamed up with ATA's 8028 Farmers Hotline Project team to deliver best ways of maintaining one's own health as well as keeping the community safe from COVID-19". The incorporation of this service will serve crucial in rural areas where medical services and facilities are highly scarce. It will also be more efficient in delivering health lessons to remotely located farmers especially COVID 19 without any need for appearing physically.

The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) has launched 8028 agronomic advisory IVR/ SMS service in partnership the Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research and Ethio Telecom after going through a five-month pilot test in 21 Woredas of Oromia, Amhara, SNNPR and Tigray in 2014. With six years of uninterrupted service, users of the 8028 Farmers Hotline and help desk system have been accessing information about 21 crop types across cereals, pulses and oilseeds and household irrigation crops across a wide range of agricultural activities with content length of each up to five minutes.

ATA funded Tef Laboratory- office complex building Inaugurated in Bishoftu Town

The tef laboratory office complex which is the first of its kind in the country, was inaugurated on the 8 October 2020 and officially declared open by H.E Ato Oumar Hussien the Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture in the presence of the CEO of Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency Ato Khalid Bomba and other higher Government officials.



The laboratory office complex is fully funded by the ATA with financial support from The Embassy of Denmark and The Embassy of The Netherlands. The laboratory complex cost 39,420,675.28 million ETB and took three years to complete.

Tef (*Eragrostis tef*) is the most important cereal of Ethiopia. The crop is annually grown on over 3 million hectares of land, accounting for about one-third of the total cereal acreage and about one-fifth of the gross cereal grain production in the country. It is grown by about 6.77million smallholder farmers. Tef offers numerous advantages over the other cereals grown in the country with respect to both husbandry and utilization of both the grains and the straw.

The crop grows under wider range of ecological conditions from sea level up to 3000 meters above sea level and performs better than the other cereals under adverse and marginal conditions.

Despite its importance, the productivity of tef is extremely low compared to other cereals due mainly to the widespread use of landraces lacking desirable agronomic traits coupled with traditional husbandry practices. It is also produced under rain-fed conditions which render it vulnerable to rainfall scarcity and variability due to climate change.

Therefore, this laboratory is built with the aim of enhancing the national tef research capacity in terms of shortening the breeding and variety releasing time by making the use of the laboratory when it is fully equipped with the necessary facilities.

The laboratory is transferred to the long-term owner the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural research (EIAR) based on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that was jointly developed and signed between ATA and EIAR.

From this laboratory, it is estimated that more than six million smallholder tef farmers' households will benefit. Moreover, the emerging commercial farmers, traders, processors, exporters, and the country at large are also expected to benefit from the project.

In the future the Debre Zeit National tef research center is expected to generate new and innovative technologies to resolve the major tef production constraints of the smallholder farmers.

Direct Seed Marketing project handed over to MoA



The ATA run Direct Seed Marketing (DSM) project has officially been handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture following a handover event that was held on 7 November 2020 in Adama Town. The handover event was attended by H.E. W/ro Aynalem Nigussie State Minister of Agriculture (MoA), delegates from the regional Bureau of Agriculture and representatives of the ATA.

The event kicked off from opening remarks from Dr. Chimdo Anchala, Senior Director of Production

and Productivity Vertical at the ATA. During the remarks Dr. Chimdo emphasised on how the importance of stakeholder engagement has helped the Project succeeded and also called upon the involvement to continue their Support once the handover is complete.

Following the opening remarks, presentation that gave an overview of DSM including the background, achievements, challenges, and way forward were presented by Dr. Yitbarek Semeane, Director, Inputs & Crop Protection at the ATA. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session which was chaired by W/ro Aynalem and Dr. Yifru Tafesse, Senior Director of the CEO Office Vertical at the ATA. The Q&A session saw questions and comments on the performance of the project by the participants.

The event concluded with the project document officially being handover from the ATA to the MoA.

Regional Forum for Model Farmers and Cooperative Unions Conducted

The Agriculture Trade and Investment Promotion (ATIP) team organized an Agro-processing investment forum targeting Model Farmers and Cooperative Unions in Oromia Regional State on 16 December 2020. The forum was organized as a part of the ongoing work to accelerate attraction of Agro-Processing investments into Bulbula Integrated Agro-processing Industry Park (IAIP).

The forum was successfully held by working in close collaboration with Oromia ATA, Oromia Industrial Park Development Cooperation, Oromia Agricultural Bureau and Oromia Investment Commission. Almost 75 participants from Federal and Regional Government Bureaus, University Presidents, Oromia Cooperative Bank and top management of Cooperative unions and Model farmers participated in the Forum. The forum was followed by a field visit to the Bulbula Integrated Agro-processing Park and Meki Rural Transformation Center.