

## Planning Ahead For Sustainable Agricultural Production

Written by Kesete Ghebrihiwet

---



Enhancing productivity through the adoption of appropriate technology has been identified as a prerequisite to achieving sustainable food security. The different departments within the Ministry of Agriculture have been set up to the realization of efficient, competitive and sustainable agricultural sector. Revitalizing and developing the agricultural infrastructure, has also been the focal point in achieving envisaged plans. The ministry recently conducted a comprehensive annual assessment meeting with regards to the overall agricultural projects and activities that were undertaken in 2009.

In the meeting that was held at Hager Media Hall within the premises of the Ministry of Information from 28th to 29th of January 2010, representatives of the six regions, and different departments within the Agriculture Ministry presented reports that included different areas of the sector such as livestock, poultry, wildlife conservation, water and soil conservation, tilling and cultivation efforts.

As part of the efforts to boost milk production, the introduction of 65 buffalos and 30 trolley milk machines in the Southern and Gash Barka regions has been one area which is showing promising outcomes. Moreover, these buffalos can produce 14 liters of milk at the highest and 7 liters at the lowest per a day. Though this can be considered as an achievement, generally speaking, milk production in comparison to that of the previous year has decreased due to the reduction in the number of milk producing livestock.



Research and supervision activities are to be ranked atop if the set plan is to be achieved as desired for every endeavour need to be centred on intensive research before implementation. A regulatory service for the inspection of animal and plant health, milk and milk production, agro marketing and agro processing has been conducted throughout the nation. To protect from poor animal and plant health fallouts compulsory vaccination activities have also been rendered and

## Planning Ahead For Sustainable Agricultural Production

Written by Kesete Ghebrihiwet

---

quarantine activities have been conducted to different imported plant and animal species. As cited in the meeting, milk and milk processing plants that fail to comply with the required standards have been suspended from producing pasteurized milk and producing yogurt.

As regards to irrigation development, different areas have been selected for irrigation and studies of water diversion structures have been completed. Inventory forms for drip and sprinkler irrigation have also been designed for the six regions although much progress has not been registered in this respect due to some delays. As indicated in the meeting the work plan for the year 2010 includes increasing milk production through an increase of herd size by 75% and enhancing forage development program, minimizing disease outbreaks through compulsory vaccination activities, monitoring and supervision of seeds multiplication sites and field visits for crop performance evaluation and seed selection.

The expansion of the cultivation of strategic plants such as moringa and jatropha trees which are highly tolerant to wide range of soil and rainfall conditions have also been among the action plans that are set to be carried out in 2010 in different zones of the country. In addition, completion of new laboratory buildings and the establishment of vaccine, quality and safety control laboratory units include some of the plans for the next year.

Following the presentation, the participants of the meeting held extensive discussions on the presented papers and forwarded suggestions for possible management mechanisms on varied topics. Delays in tilling and cultivating the rain-fed farm fields was a



iso cited as a constraint observed in the previous year. Concerning wild life conservation in the Gash-Barka region, a map for the proposed elephants' habitation enclosures has been prepared which is expected to play due role in solving the problem faced by farmers due to elephant herd stampedes.

The meeting has also evaluated the horticultural activities that have been undertaken and discussed on how to enhance the skill of cultivating plants, especially fruits and vegetables. The introduction of easily cultivated and potentially rich vegetables such as sweet potato as well as distributing planting materials to farmers and interested individuals was also another area of the extensive discussion.

As assessed in the meeting, low and uneven distribution of seasonal rainfall has negatively

## Planning Ahead For Sustainable Agricultural Production

Written by Kesete Ghebrihiwet

---

affected agricultural yields of 2009. In this connection, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Arefaine Berhe disclosed that plans for the enhancement of agricultural products should be based on priorities. Selected seeds that are tolerant to the climatic conditions of each respected area should be identified and utilized beforehand. The minister went on to elaborate that measures that could boost the agricultural outcome should be taken focusing on irrigation and identifying sites and seeds with high potential of yielding sufficient harvest. He also recommended that utilizing natural compost should be considered in cases where deficits of industrial fertilizer occur.

The meeting reviewed different aspect of agricultural activities in detail and assessed the weak and strong sides of last year's agricultural undertakings and was concluded by reaching common consensus to work jointly towards attaining comprehensive and sustainable accomplishments.