

Joint Farmers Field Day for Joint Lesson learning

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The joint farmers' field day organized by BENEFIT partners in collaboration with Kafta Humera wereda office of agriculture and Humera Agricultural Research Center (HARC) has been facilitated on 2nd October 2016 in Kafta Humera wereda. During the field day demonstration sites of ISSD, CASCAPE and Humera agricultural research center were visited by the participants. The field day organized by BENEFIT partners (CASCAPE, ISSD, and SBN) and other stakeholders has the following main objectives;

- Contribute to the transfer of agricultural knowledge among farming community, experts, and researchers;
- Raise awareness of the farmers and stakeholders about the newly promoted agricultural technologies and farming practices;
- Create linkage of different actors and build up feedbacks on the implementation of all BENEFIT projects;
- Document knowledge and experience shared during the farmers field day;

To cascade the main objectives; each partner identified at least two learning sites for the joint learning visit. In the first visited HARC demonstration site invited participants were inquired by researchers to identify best performed sesame seed varieties and sorghum as well. Here, 10 varieties of sesame seeds were in adaptation trial fulfilling various treatment mechanisms such as fertilizer application, seed rate, planting method, planting time and seed bed preparations are among others.

Similarly a fertilizer impact for sesame seed experiment was also applied in CASCAPE's demonstration site at



Well performed sesame seed variety [Credit: MU-ISSD/Oct. 2016/G.haweria B.]

Bereket extension area. The adaptation trial site at *Bereket* was visited by 856 farmers from

different weredas and regional invited guests. Inviting so many farmers in need, to the demonstration site is therefore considered as effective agricultural learning field.

Another best practice of sesame seed production of the Seed producers Cooperative (SPC) has been visited by the different participating stakeholders at *May Kadra* extension area. Members of *Walta* SPC organized for sesame seed production through co-funding partnership by MU-ISSD and HARC for sesame seed production shared their best practice with the participants. According to the SPC's chairperson, Ato Hayelom Abera, *Walta* SPC has 21 members (four women). 19 members are engaged in multiplication and production of improved seed varieties in 69.5 ha of land. The members sown improved sesame seed variety (Setite-1) and expect to harvest an average of seven quintal per ha.



Chairman explains SPCs best practice of seed production [Credit: MU-ISSD]

The SPC appreciated the co-funding support by MU-ISSD project together with HARC. However, as reflected by the SPC members, there are still problems of storage, office, arable land, and other agricultural facilities.

After the field trip, a joint discussion was held with all participants. The discussion was chaired by HARC director, wereda and zonal representatives. Farmers asked different questions related to the field trip and modern agricultural inputs like row planting machine and modern tractor. Responsible bodies from zone, wereda, and HARC answered the questions raised by the participants.

As a means of knowledge sharing, BENEFIT partners prepared and distributed magazines, newsletters, leaflets and banners which they think is useful to convey messages among the participants.

Eventually, in collaboration with PHL-IL Ethiopia project, farmers and experts were lead to a solar drier technology displayed by engineers from Mekelle University mechanical department. Farmers and experts were exposed to the moisture drying and the techniques for moisture contents of sesame harvests. As a result, farmers have shown greater interest and have requested for practical demonstration of the post-harvest technology in order to mitigate the post-harvest loss.