

Potato: agro-processing untapped potential

(MU) March 30, 2016 - The consultative workshop on potato value chain and agro processing facilitated by MU-ISSD program with the financial support of Interchurch for Development (ICCO) cooperation indicated that potato is a potential tuber for fast food. The objective of the workshop is therefore to bring about potato potentials of the region for agro processing especially preparation of potato made fast foods in a modern packed way.



Dr. Tsehaye Asmelash Vice President, Research and Community Services (VPRCS) of Mekelle University, underlined that potato is still produced in a traditional way and it is important to improve the poor post-harvest management system. The vice president, so hoped that the work shop will address the major bottlenecks of potato production in the region and draw workable action plan to mitigate the major ones.

Professor Fetien Abay, the scientific coordinator of ISSD Tigray on her part indicated that if we, the stakeholders, research institutes and universities, the regional government and development partners are able to set workable action plan in an integrated manner, the problem of potato seed and production will be addressed. As a result, the potato value chain and agro-processing will improve and will be one area of job creation for the youths, both females and males and will contribute to the improvement of the



rural and urban livelihoods.

Research conducted on potato production by Tigray Agricultural Research Institution (TARI) demonstrated that, in Tigray there is potato productivity improvement but the plots of land covered by potato are decreasing from time to time. However, the research revealed that to maximize the potato production there are opportunities of irrigation expansion, high demand of potato consumption and government concerns.

Ato Girmay kiros, chairperson of Shewit seed producer cooperative, presented the cooperative's best practice. He told participants that, the cooperative is better off in exhibition preparation, CoC certified seed production and multiplication, construction of five modern potato warehouses and other agronomic practices of the farmer owned seed producer cooperative.

However, he mentioned that, in adequate market linkage, access to credit and transportation are the basic challenges of potato seed production which needs to be solved in the near future.

Finally the workshop participants come up with basic recommendations to be applied in the potato production. The value chain and agro-processing financial support worth 2.3 million birr is designed to benefit some 1,550 individuals. Out of the total, 242 will be female headed beneficiaries.



Participants of consultative workshop on potato value chain and agro-processing