

## BENEFIT Strives for Boosting Seed Production

Partners in the Bilateral Ethiopian Netherlands Effort for Food, Income and Trade program (BENEFIT) jointly organized farmers' field day at Kafta Humera and Asgede Tsimbla weredas on 30 September and 1 October 2017. Humera Agricultural Research Center and the Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resource also took part in the field day.

A total of 258 participants from all walks of life (small holder farmers, private investors' agriculture experts, high ranking government officials and researchers) participated in the event. In

the farmers' field day the minister

Agriculture and Natural Resources and Trade were among the guests of honor.



H.E Dr. Isayu Abraha, ministry of agriculture and natural resource visiting ISSD demonstration [Credit: MU-ISSD/Sep. 2017]

The purpose of the farmers'

field day was to share BENEFIT program to a wider audience of high level officials, stakeholders and donor representatives.

### Specific objective of the Farmers' field day:

- Contribute to the transfer of agricultural knowledge among farming community (small holder farmers, seed producer cooperatives and investors), experts, researchers and others;
- Raise awareness of the farmers and other stakeholders about the newly introduced agricultural technologies and farming practices;
- Create linkage of different actors and build up feedback on the implementation of the BENEFIT projects.
- Document knowledge and experiences shared during the field day for future use

### Sesame Renaissance

Western and North western zones of Tigray are sesame potential corridors. Kafta Humera being one of the sesame potential weredas of Western zone is typical in conducting demonstration sites to be scaled up to small holder farmers, investors and

seed produces cooperatives. CASCAPE, SBN and ISSD are currently working to bring about changes of appropriate research based outputs in a bid to boost sesame production.

During the first half of the field day there was crop performance observation of sesame, sorghum and sunflower in the town of Humera and its vicinity. Diffident field trials and agricultural equipments were demonstrated by private seed producers and stallholder farmers.

To cascade the best practices in trial, sister projects identified more than two learning sites. In all the demonstration sites participants were inquired by organizers to find out best performed sesame and sorghum seed varieties. As a result, different varieties of sesame and sorghum seeds were in adaptation trial fulfilling numerous treatment mechanisms such as fertilizer treatment, seed rate, planting method, planting period and seed bed preparations, evaluating effects of plowing time on yield.

Similarly a fertilizer impact for sesame seed experiment was also applied in CASCAPE's demonstration site at *Maykadra* investors' mechanization demonstration area. Inviting small holder farmers, investors and cooperatives to the demonstration site is therefore considered as an effective agricultural learning means. Here below are some of the best performed trials:

Table 1 Collaboration works on sorghum adaptation trail at farmer level

Owner	Description	One of the well performed adaptation trial sites in Sorghum (ISSD)
T/zeab Teklay (farmer)	<b>Variety:</b> Melkam <b>Planting date:</b> 26/10/09E.C <b>Area:</b> 10m x 10m <b>Tilling:</b> 3 times <b>Panting type:</b> row planting <b>Seed Amount:</b> 120g <b>Space:</b> 75cm x 15cm <b>Fertilizer treatment:</b> 1kg Blended/ha 1kg Urea/ha <b>Weeding status:</b> 2 times	

Table 2 Investors' full package sesame demonstration on station

Owner	Description	Partial view of Teklay's 50ha sesame production plot
Teklay Kidanu (investor)	<b>Variety:</b> Setit 2 (improved) <b>Sowing date:</b> 06/11/09E.C <b>Area (Planted):</b> 4 hectare <b>Panting type:</b> row planting using machine <b>Fertilizer application:</b> 100kg DAP/hectare 50kg Urea/hectare	

Table 3 Validating fertilizer type and rate on sesame (farmer level)

Owner	Description	K/H/Mariam's 3ha of sesame production
Keshi H/Mariam G/Hiwet CASCAPE	<b>Variety:</b> Setit 2 (improved) <b>Sowing date:</b> 04/11/09E.C <b>Area (Planted):</b> 3 hectare <b>Panting type:</b> row planting <b>Fertilizer application:</b> 50kg DAP 75kg Urea 50kg KCI (potassium)	

In the discussion with the ministers of Trade and Agriculture and Natural Resource participants asked questions related to sesame production, challenges faced and supply of modern agricultural technologies (row planting machine, post-harvest technologies), mechanized agriculture, effects of Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), branding, and alternative road to Port Sudan. At the end of the discussion, the two ministers and the House of People's agriculture representative standing committee member answered the questions raised by the participants.

The Minister of Trade H.E Dr. Bekele Bulado said, "We need to reform the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) in such a way that helps enhance sesame business well. A

plan is under way to use Port Sudan as an alternative route. Sesame produce from Kafta Humera will have its own brand to be more competitive in the international market.”

The following day October 1, 2017 sites on Sorghum adaptation trial, PVS, and crowd sourcing were visited in Asegede Tsimbela Woreda. During the visit H.E Dr. Eyasu Abrha and his deputy pledged to supply row planter for demonstration in the FTC of Selam extension area.

