

Tsegana Integrated Farm Pioneering

Certified Commercial Compost Production in Eritrea



Since early 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is undertaking vigorous efforts to promote organic farming by strengthening experts and various agricultural firms to get involved in the production of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides. Tsegana – Milk and Milk Products Processing Plant is based in Geshnashm Village – 30 kms North west of Asmara – in the Sub-zone of Serejeka. It is one of the agricultural sites which is dedicated to organic farming and mass production of compost. The Public Relations Division of the MoA has conducted an interview with Mr. Mussie Gaim, the General Manager of the Plant with regards to the general development of the company in general, and compost production endeavors in particular.

When was the plant established?

- It was established by my father, the late Gaim Tekie, when Geshinashm village provided us a farm land in 2011.

Could you briefly tell us about the progress of the plant?

- Generally, we began our activity with livestock fattening in 2012; and we added milk processing activities at small scale in 2013-14. Side by side, we started producing compost to increase productivity of forage and

vegetables in our farm. In 2019, we started installing infrastructure of milk processing plant; and in 2021 we fully kicked off producing certified milk and milk products.

***Let's come back to our today's main focus which is compost production?
When did you start this business?***

- We started producing compost in 2013-14. We were collecting the animal dung (then, the main raw material for our compost) from our livestock fattening and dairy activities. At that time, we started to process compost and used on our forage and vegetables plots. Then, we were trying compost making by putting all the raw materials in a small space. However, we couldn't say the process, at that time, followed all the necessary scientific procedures.



Currently, your plant is a pioneer in producing compost in a bulk. How did that happen?

- In 2018-19, we got technical backstopping from agricultural experts, and started to produce compost from livestock and poultry dung, charcoal, organic matter and soil. Through these processes, in 2021 we got a certificate of quality assurance from the Ministry of Agriculture – Department of Regulatory Services; and entered a new era of producing compost at a bigger scale.

What did you do, then, to fine tune the quality of your compost to make it popular?

- Since there is always room for improvement, we strive to shorten the time and minimize the cost of production. For this reason, we have started to use Indigenous Essential Microorganisms (IEM) solutions to speed up decomposition of the raw materials. In addition, we are making the best use of paper and carton discards to improve our carbon-nitrogen ratio.



Have you started supplying compost to the local market?

- At first, we initiated this business just to make use of our livestock dung and other resources for producing compost to be consumed within our farms. Then after, we started producing surplus; and we also managed to standardize our compost. Hence, since 2021, we started providing compost to the local market, i.e farmers in different parts of the country.

How do you sell your product?

- We sell the compost in two forms. If it is needed for a large farm, we sell it in a bulk form in terms of meter cube. If the demand, however, is very fragmented and in different places, we sell them in sacks of 50 kgs. For

this purpose, we have got a machine that sorts, sieves, weighs, fills and packs the compost.

Did you get feedback of your compost yet?

- After all, we are the first-hand users of our compost. Hence, we can witness the impact of it in our farms. In addition, we always get a very positive feedback from those who use our compost. The only thing is that awareness of farmers in compost is still very limited; and should be promoted by all means.

What do you intend to do in the future?

- Since we have reached the stage of producing certified compost for local consumption, we will strive to improve the quality. We will continue using IEM solution in a more concerted way; and we will also search for techniques to make our compost assume better quality and higher standard. We also plan to reach as many farmers as possible across the country with fair price.

If you have final words?

- I urge all farmers to get involved in compost making with the resources they have in their vicinity because this kind of organic fertilizer has numerous benefits to the health of the soil, the plants, the animals and finally the human being. Furthermore, I want to take this opportunity to thank Geshinashm village for being behind us from the very beginning. The Ministry of Agriculture has also provided this plant with technical and consultancy services. Hence, I thank the Ministry in the name of this family business.

Thanks Mr. Mussi

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