

Ministry of Agriculture Promotes Dairy Value Chain Activities



By: - MOA

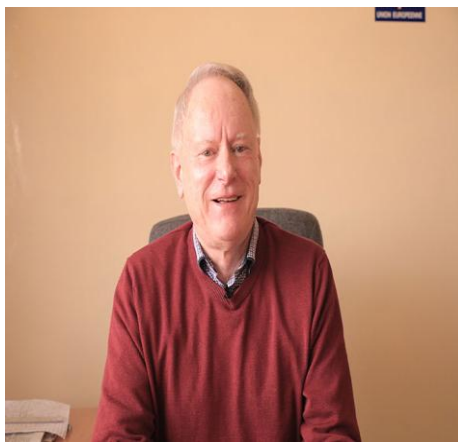
The Ministry of Agriculture has been introducing a number of initiatives to improve milk production and productivity. Promoting green feed, introduction of Artificial Insemination, improving dairy cattle breeds and enhancing the capacity of milk and milk products processing plants are among the important endeavors to this end.

As part of the aforementioned programs, a pilot dairy development project has been implemented for the last 12 years in 17 villages of Debarwa sub-zone, Debub Region, in collaboration with The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority (Teagasc) and VITA senior experts.

Concurrently, in the year 2018, Teagasc in conjunction with the European Union introduced a program known as Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) in a number of countries. A project known as Climate Smart Agriculture Research and Innovation Support for Dairy Value Chains in Eritrea (CSARIDE) came out as a result of this program.

The Public Relations Division of the MoA, has conducted a brief interview with the coordinators of the project and other visiting senior experts with regards to the progress of the project related activities; during a workshop on 'Roles of National Identification and Dairy Herd Performance Recording in Strengthening Dairy value-chains' which was convened in Asmara, on January 13, 2023.

Dr. Lance O'Brien is the CSARIDE project coordinator. According to him, the project is focusing on strengthening dairy value chain activities in three Zobas namely; Debub, Maekel and Anseba. The full dairy value chain incorporates production of milk on individual farms, collection and cooling of the milk, delivery of the milk to processors who are in charge of pasteurizing the milk and processing it into butter, cheese and yogurt etc. The chain also goes up to retailers and consumers. In order for the value-chain to fully function, there are also a number of activities such as animal-feed research and production, provision of agricultural supplies, capacity development activities and others.



Dr. Lance O'Brien

Dr. Lance underscored the importance of capacity building across the dairy value chain actors, and hence mentioned the short-term and long-term training provided as corner stones to sustain the core objectives of the project even after the project phases out.

Dr. Enyew Negusie, a senior livestock researcher in the Finnish Natural Resource Institute (LUKE), was the coordinator of the workshop. He stated that the core objectives of the workshop were to exchange experiences between Eritrean and Ethiopian livestock experts who are involved in dairy value chain. Speaking on his Eritrean experience, he said, "I had an opportunity to visit Eritrea, for the first time, last year in August. Then, I was able to visit small-scale dairy farmers which are the basis of dairy development in Eritrea and, in all East African countries. The interest of the Eritrea dairy farmers to learn how to boost their productivity is really promising. It is good to note that dairy is one of the best ways to eradicate poverty. I can see that there are many Eritrean and

Ethiopian farmers who started with just one cow, and reached 20 up to 60 cows.”



Dr. Enyew Negusie

To boost Eritrea’s dairy value chain, Dr. Enyew recommended to have a comprehensive national roadmap to accomplish the short and long term programs. “For this reason, we brought four dairy experts from Ethiopian Livestock Development institute, who have been closely working with us for the past 12 years.” He said. Finally, he mentioned strengthening individual herd performance record, advisory systems, and establishment of a systematic, uniform and consistent livestock identification systems are among important areas that need special focus in Eritrea.



Dr. Selam Meseret

Dr. Selam Meseret is also a senior Livestock Geneticist who works for the International Livestock Research Institute in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She highlighted the importance of ICT and Genomic technology in improving the livestock sub-sector. She noted the importance of ICT technology in capturing, managing, processing as well as disseminating livestock data and information.

She also outlined the role and importance of genomic technology to shorten the time to improve livestock genetics. “For this reason, it is important to invest in capacity building for those who are directly or indirectly involved in the dairy value chain.” She stressed.

Speaking about the experiences that Eritrea could share from Ethiopia, she mentioned best performing-local breed improvement, capacity development, establishment of national livestock data-base and network systems.



Mr. Kahsay Negash

Mr. Kahsay Negash is the Director of Crop and Livestock Development Division at the MoA, and the National Focal Person of CSARIDE. He stated that experience sharing about livestock identification, record keeping and data-base management were among the core objectives of the workshop. He further elaborated that such workshops are important which can enable dairy producers or farmers at least to have a record of their dairy performance; like milking, reproductive issues, health and so on.

“This workshop has helped us to learn from the achievements and challenges of our Ethiopian counterparts across their development of cattle identification and performance recording systems. Consequently, experts of the MoA, Agricultural Strategic Information System Division (ASISD) who participated at the workshop, were able to gain experience on developing dairy database system, ear tag printing technology and other ICT related areas.

Mr. Kahsay mentioned provision of capacity building opportunities through short and long term trainings; as well as studies to the MoA and HAC staff;

institutional capacity improvement; procurement of dairy, irrigation, laboratory, solar power, ICT and audio-visual related equipment as some of the major DeSIRA/ CSARIDE achievements.

Since the project is run under Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA), we will push towards implementing climate-smart dairy production activities, Mr. Kahsay stated. “For example, he said, “Instead of using fuel powered irrigation system, we will promote solar powered and water efficient irrigation systems to cultivate forage crops.” He also mentioned wise utilization of the locally available feed resources, conducting collaborative research with NARI and HAC focusing on climate-smart dairy production system; strengthening technical capacity of the MoA and HAC staff, as some of the short and long term plans of the project.

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