



The State of Eritrea

# Ministry of Agriculture Newsletter



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## Transforming Small Farms: SPFP Initiative Changing Farmers' Lives

The Eritrean Ministry of Agriculture continues to work diligently to improve farming practices and strengthen national food and nutrition security. Guided by the goal of ensuring "safe and nutritious food for everyone, everywhere," the Ministry has been promoting the Small and Productive Farm Plot (SPFP) comprehensive strategy throughout the country.

The comprehensive SPFP initiative promotes intensive and well-organized farming on small plots of land as an alternative to traditional extensive cultivation. It encourages farmers to maximize productivity per unit area by applying improved agricultural practices such as the use of selected and improved seeds, organic fertilizers, row planting and effective soil and water conservation measures. In addition, the initiative promotes an integrated farming system that combines crop production—such as cereals and vegetables—with complementary activities including backyard poultry, beekeeping using top-bar or frame hives, and keeping one dairy cow or six goat for milk. Through this holistic approach, farmers can increase productivity, diversify their food sources, and sustainably secure nutritious food from their own farms. The major goal of the SPFP initiative is to enable Eritrean farmers to rely on their own farms to secure a balanced and nutritious diet. By applying improved and carefully

guided farming practices on small plots of land, farmers are achieving remarkable increases in productivity while using fewer resources.

Encouragingly, the initiative is steadily producing positive results. Many farmers across the country are becoming successful implementers of the SPFP package. In recognition of these achievements, the Ministry of Agriculture has recently identified and honored seven exemplary farmers, awarding them certificates of recognition for their outstanding productivity and commitment to good agricultural practices.

### A Pioneer of the SPFP Initiative

One of the most inspiring examples is Mr. Bereket Tekeste, widely recognized as the "father of the SPFP Initiative." In 2025, he produced 8.5

quintals of wheat per 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of farmland using the SPFP approach. Mr. Bereket explains that the strategy is both simple and highly beneficial. Compared with traditional farming practices, it saves seeds, labor, and other resources while reducing production costs.

His journey began in 2020, when he experimented with just 100 grams of selected wheat seeds on a 6m<sup>2</sup> plot and harvested got 9.1 kilograms. The results surprised him and encouraged him to expand his efforts. Within three years, the 100 grams of wheat production dramatically increased to 70 quintals.

According to Mr. Bereket, adopting the SPFP initiative transformed his life and farming practice. He expresses deep appreciation to the Ministry of Agriculture for its consistent



Mr. Bereket Tekeste

technical support, which has helped farmers become more self-reliant in producing safe and nutritious food.

#### Achieving Success Through Careful Practices

Another successful farmer, Mr. Mahder Mantay from Zoba Anseba, also shared his experience with the SPFP initiative.

"It is through this initiative that I have achieved meaningful progress in my farming life," he said.



Mr. Mahder Mantay

Using selected maize varieties supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture, adopting row planting, and organic fertilizers, Mr. Mahder produced 6.92 quintals of maize per 1000 m<sup>2</sup> in 2025 in the village of Muhabesh, Ella Ber-ed sub-zone. He emphasized that high productivity comes from careful organization of resources and intensive management of a small area rather than relying on conventional extensive farming practices.

"Any farmland can produce better results with intensive care through the SPFP initiative—farmers only need to follow the instructions provided by the Ministry of Agriculture," he advised.

#### Women Farmers Leading the Way

Women farmers are also playing a significant role in demonstrating the success of the SPFP strategy.

Ms. Nazret Ghebrehwet, a farmer from Adi Tekelezan in Zoba Anseba, explained that the strategy significantly improved her farming methods and productivity. After receiving training from agricultural experts, she obtained improved



Ms. Nazret Ghebrehwet

variety seeds from the Ministry of Agriculture and convinced her husband to follow the recommended agronomic practices. By planting in rows and applying organic fertilizers, they produced 6.4 quintals of wheat per 1000 m<sup>2</sup> in 2025.

Ms. Nazret describes the SPFP initiative as both timely and transformative and encourages all farmers to adopt it for higher productivity.

Another inspiring example is Ms. Rshan Tewelde from Ametsi village, Berik sub-zone in Zoba Maekel, who produced 6 quintals of maize from 710 m<sup>2</sup> (equivalent to 8.45 quintals per 1000 m<sup>2</sup>).



Ms. Rshan Tewelde

Explaining her success, she highlighted the importance of proper land preparation, soil and water conservation activities, the use of improved maize seed variety provided by the Ministry, and the application of organic fertilizers.

“The results were encouraging,” she said. “I strongly recommend farmers to apply the SPFP initiative, as it brings multiple benefits.”



Mr. Abraham Mesmer

#### More Farmers Achieving Remarkable Productivity

Mr. Abraham Mesmer, from Serejeka sub-zone in Zoba Maekel, also achieved impressive results by strictly following the recommended practices of the comprehensive SPFP initiative. In 2025, he harvested 2.5 quintals of wheat from 320m<sup>2</sup> (which is translated in to 7.81 quintals per 1000 m<sup>2</sup>).

He began by cultivating 6 kilograms of wheat seeds provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, planting them in rows and applying organic fertilizers. The results exceeded his expectations.

“The space between rows makes cultivation easier and allows farmers to manage the crops more effectively,” he explained. Like many other farmers, he was surprised by the level of productivity achieved on such a small plot of land.



Mr. Tesfazgi Habtemaryam

Another exemplary farmer is Mr. Tesfazgi Habtemaryam from Gala Nefhi sub-zone in Zoba Maekel, who produced 5 quintals of maize from 600 m<sup>2</sup> plot of land (equivalent to 8.30 quintals per 1000 m<sup>2</sup>).

His success began with careful adherence to technical guidance and continuous consultation with agricultural experts from the Ministry. Initially, he experimented the initiative in a very small plot of land. Encouraged by the result, he continued the SPFP initiative, and later harvested 5 quintals from 600 m<sup>2</sup>. Today, Mr. Tesfazgi fully implements the comprehensive SPFP initiative and has diversified his farm by introducing poultry and beekeeping, creating

a more integrated and productive farming system.

Similarly, Mr. Abdu Osman Mohammed from Hawatsu village, Adi Keyh sub-zone in Zoba Debub was recognized for producing 11 quintals of wheat from 1700 m<sup>2</sup> of land in 2025. This is translated in to 6.5 quintals per 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. He recalls that his land previously produced less than one quintal, but after applying the SPFP practices, his production increased to 11 quintals.

Expressing gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Abdu emphasized that the SPFP initiative is highly effective and should be adopted by all farmers.

#### The Role of Front-Line Agricultural Experts

The success of the SPFP strategy would not have been possible without the dedication of front-line agricultural experts. Recently, more than 50 agricultural professionals were recognized for their outstanding contributions to promoting the comprehensive SPFP strategy.

These experts work closely with farmers, providing practical training, technical advice, and continuous field follow-up to ensure proper implementation of recommended practices.



Mr. Abdu Osman



Mr. Yosief Zere

One of these experts, Mr. Yosief Zere, has trained numerous farmers in Hmbrti, Zoba Maekel, enabling 60 farmers to successfully apply the comprehensive SPFP initiative. Through field demonstrations and close mentorship, he helps farmers adopt integrated practices, including organic fertilizers, poultry and beekeeping.



Ms. Feven Kidane

Similarly, Ms. Feven Kidane, from Gala Nefhi sub-zone in Zoba Maekel, has helped 50 farmers implement the SPFP initiative. She works tirelessly to help farmers understand the simplicity and advantages of the approach, encouraging them to adopt safe and environmentally friendly farming methods.



Ms. Rim Idris

In Assab, Ms. Rim Idris faced initial challenges because urban agriculture was not widely practiced in the area. However, through persistent awareness campaigns and collaboration with local administration and colleagues, she successfully encouraged farmers to adopt the SPFP initiative. Today, farmers in the area are beginning to cultivate vegetables and pulses, with plans to produce twice per year using the SPFP approach.

Likewise, Mr. Kokobe Goitom from Adi Tekelezan in Zoba Anseba explained that convincing farmers was initially difficult. Many farmers were skeptical about the new approach. However, through continuous awareness-raising efforts and coordinated work,



Mr. Kokobe Goitom

farmers gradually began adopting SPFP practices such as soil and water conservation, row planting, organic fertilizer use, and improved seed varieties.

In Arbe-rebue, Zoba Maekel, Ms. Freselam Teweldemedhn works closely with farmers in a mountainous area that is particularly suitable for beekeeping and poultry production. In 2025, she successfully enabled 48 farmers to implement the SPFP full-package strategy. With farmers already seeing improved productivity, she expects even better results in the coming years.



Ms. Freselam Teweldemedhin

#### Moving Forward

The Ministry of Agriculture remains committed to expanding the SPFP strategy across the country. The dedication of both farmers and agricultural experts demonstrates that small, well-managed farm plots can significantly improve productivity.

Through the SPFP strategy, Eritrean farmers can transform their agricultural practices and moving closer to the national goal of self-reliant production of safe and nutritious food for everyone; everywhere.

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