A biannual newsletter that updates latest information from the FAO Representation in Ethiopia.
About FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations is the specialized agency of the United Nations for food, nutrition, agriculture, and forestry. FAO’s global vision is for a world free from hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards for all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. Achieving food security for all is at the heart of FAO’s efforts – to make sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.

Our three main goals are:
- the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
- the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and
- the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

The FAO Strategic Objectives:
- Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
- Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable;
- Reduce rural poverty;
- Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems; and
- Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

FAO and Ethiopia

Ethiopia has been an FAO member since 1948, and in 1981 FAO opened an office, which today serves as the Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa and FAO Representation to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission as well as FAO Representation in Ethiopia. An active partnership has resulted in 100 FAO projects over the past decade alone, ranging from support to policymaking, natural resource management and land administration to livestock, crop and fruit production and agribusiness development. In addition to development programmes, FAO supports emergency crop and livestock assistance and resilience interventions.

Matching FAO’s expertise to Ethiopia’s development priorities

FAO assistance in Ethiopia is shaped by the 2016-2020 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which centres on three priority areas:
- Improving crop production, productivity and commercialization;
- Improving livestock and fisheries production, productivity and commercialization; and
- Enhancing sustainable natural resource management and improving livelihood resilience to threats and disaster.

In addition, the following cross-cuttings priority areas are addressed across programmes: resilience building, climate change, policy analysis, investment support, coordination, and knowledge management. Jointly developed with the Government and other partners, the CPF is aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia and supports national development objectives.

FAO’s programmes in Ethiopia have been funded by the following agencies and Governments:

Note from the FAOR to Ethiopia

We are giving people the tools, the training, the skill and the support they need to grow enough of their own food.

Having enough to eat for millions of people in Ethiopia is a blessing, but it is not just a right. But no parents should have to watch their children go hungry because they cannot afford to produce enough food.

Although there is enough on this planet for everyone to eat, for one in eight (815 million) people, daily hunger is the shocking reality.

Once only a dream, a world free of hunger is now within our reach. We can produce enough food, we possess the technology, and we know what policies and actions work best. However, in our effort to realize our vision to achieve Zero Hunger for everyone, we face huge challenges driven by nature and man.

Recurrent droughts in pastoral Ethiopia have exposed the critical feed shortage that prevails in the country. Between 2000 and 2017, six drought episodes have been registered, with the latest in the last two years devastating pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods. Herders and farmers continued reliance on natural, rain-fed pasture and agriculture, in the face of factors that are accelerating the scarcity of these resources has meant their livelihoods are less and less able to cope with shocks like drought.

The current food security and nutrition challenges in Ethiopia are linked to the collapse of livelihoods and a failure to invest sufficiently in local food production. Rapid and efficient response to agricultural threats and emergencies saves lives, promotes recovery and reduces the gap between dependence on food assistance and self-reliance.

The Government of Ethiopia deserves a commendation for taking exemplary leadership in the efforts to responding to the drought challenges and building resilience. This is where we learn how political commitment can ensure smooth management of disaster situations in the most effective way.

FAO, for its part, with its available expertise and resources, supports Ethiopia in its effort to address the drought challenges and build the resilience of its vulnerable population. We will strengthen our collaboration in saving the livestock-based livelihoods, as well as strengthening coordination, information analysis for food security and agriculture.

Now is the time for all of us to act together. Luckily, there is hope. With our international development and resource partners, FAO is reaching out to millions of the most vulnerable populations. We are giving people the tools, the training, the skill and the support they need to grow enough of their own food, so they can feed themselves for life.

Fatouma Djama Seid
FAO Representative to Ethiopia

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note from the FAOR to Ethiopia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAOR presents Letter of Credence</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency seed support</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening rural jobs creation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Ambassador’s visit</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of RBAs visit Ethiopia</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling youth migration</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining global effort to end rabies</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-SHARE program strengthens animal disease surveillance</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National platform for climate resilience agriculture</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening animal production interventions</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal feed support saves core breeding animals</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing capacity of animal health workers</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting livestock feed to protect assets and improve livelihoods</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving cactus from carmine cochinal</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invasive waterweeds continue threatening fishermen’s livelihoods</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Ethiopia has reaffirmed its commitment to continue supporting the Government of Ethiopia to achieve the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) through the jointly developed Country Programming Framework (CPF) that is aligned with the Government’s priority areas.

FAO Representative to Ethiopia, Ms Fatouma Djama Seid made this commitment when she presented her Letter of Credence to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mrs Hirut Zemene, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia accepted the Letter of Credence and acknowledged a strong collaboration with FAO and its support to the Government of Ethiopia on food and agriculture and especially SDG2, ending hunger.

In her remarks, Ms Fatouma expressed her thanks for the warm welcome and confirmed that FAO is increasingly an active supporter to realize the goal of hunger eradication from Ethiopia and is committed to assisting the government’s effort to commercialize the agriculture sector and improve agricultural production and productivity.

By this diplomatic act, Ms Fatouma is officially and formally recognized and has assumed duty as the Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Ethiopia.

In her separate meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr Eyasu Abreha, Ms Fatouma said that FAO will continue assisting the Ministry with capacity building, introducing new technologies and institutionalizing programmes. On his part, Dr Eyasu articulated the agriculture sector priority areas as increasing production and productivity, marketing of agricultural products and agricultural transformation. He added that his ministry expects more support from FAO on controlling the Fall Armyworm, water hyacinth and cochineal beetles, which are a challenge to crop and fishery productions.

Prior to her current appointment, Ms Fatouma Seid, a Djiboutian national was the FAO Representative in Mali.
Emergency seed support for improved livelihoods and seed security

“There was no rain; there was no pasture. People were hungry. I didn’t have any crop seed to plant for the following season when the rain finally arrived. Luckily, I was given sorghum seed which I planted in 2016 and continued using from what I saved for the consecutive seasons,” said Kelegn Achaw, working in her sorghum field which she owns in Delegnimur village in Southern Ethiopia.

Ethiopia faced one of the worst droughts in its history driven by El Niño phenomenon in 2015 and 2016. The consecutive failure of two rainy seasons (Belg and Meher) has had profound impact on lives and livelihoods of millions, especially impacting rural households engaged in the agriculture sector. It resulted in significant crop losses in the drought affected areas of Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions.

Smallholder farmers and agro-pastoralist communities who are dependent on crop and vegetable production lost their main source of food and income, as well as their ability to plant in the following agricultural seasons due to exhausted seed stores and limited income to buy at market. The communities faced food and nutrition insecurity and uncertain future as their means of livelihoods was seriously threatened and ability to cope up with the challenge was reduced.

In response to the crisis, an Emergency Seed Working Group (ESWG) was established to coordinate emergency agricultural interventions. To reduce the food gap and mitigate the risk of malnutrition, and as part of the agriculture sector emergency response, 1.7 million smallholder farming and agro-pastoral households were identified as seed-insecure and required urgent humanitarian livelihood assistance. The support comprises provision of agricultural inputs including maize, sorghum, teff, wheat, vegetable, mung bean and forage seeds as well as training to the beneficiary communities.

From this intervention, 1.7 million crop-dependent households benefitted from the distribution of 32,000 tonnes of seed in 377 weredas (districts) in six regional states, making it the largest emergency seed distribution campaign in Ethiopia’s history. FAO’s emergency seed response projects benefitted over 570,000 people through direct procurement and distribution of 4,000 metric tonnes of seeds and planting materials. To support recovery and build resilience to similar shocks in the future, forage seed was also given to agro-pastoral communities to grow and feed their animals.

The support contributed to increased food and nutrition security of drought affected smallholder farmers and agro-pastoral communities. The seed intervention introduced improved varieties that increased the production of crops up to five times higher than what they used to produce. Beneficiary farmers explained that the support has increased their food production and ability to save seed for the following farming seasons.
Kelegn Achaw, 36 years old and a mother of ten lives in Delegnimur village in Southern Ethiopia. She looks after some animals and does some farming. The El Nino-induced drought that affected her community in 2015 and 2016 left Kelegn and her community with no seed to plant for the following season. “There was no rain; people were hungry. Our animals were dying because of lack of pasture. We were selling some animals to buy food to feed our family,” said Kelegn.

FAO supported Kelegn and her community with improved sorghum seed to help them plant when the rain arrived. Training was also given on planting and land preparation. “When compared with what we used to plant before, the sorghum seed provided to us is more productive. We harvested good produce and used for household food and exchanged for goats,” she said. Kelegn saved seed from what she harvested in 2016 to plant in 2017. If I didn’t receive the support, I would sell most of my animals and lose my livestock asset, Kelegn said.

Mikael Mume, aged 25 lives in Bekola village in Eastern Hararghe, Oromia Region. He lives on farming and mainly grows wheat using seasonal rain. The drought in 2015 completely destroyed his crop and put his means of livelihood at risk. He didn’t have seed to plant for the following planting season when the rain arrived.

With FAO’s seed support interventions, he received improved wheat seeds which he planted on 1.2 acre of land. The improved wheat seeds increased the production by fivefold of what he was harvesting before.

“I harvested ten quintals of wheat last year and used most for family food and sold some to upgrade my home to a metal roofed house,” Mikael said. Mikael saved from last year produce which he planted in 2017. He is able to secure his seed supply at least for the coming three years if similar drought hits again.
Strengthening rural job creation, key to tackle the root causes of migration

World Food Day 2017 celebrated in Ethiopia

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Government of Ethiopia and key stakeholders have called for strong collaboration to create employment opportunities for the vulnerable young people to sustainably tackle the root causes of migration.

Speaking at the World Food Day event, Dr Mulatu Teshome, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, said, “People migrate to escape poverty, food insecurity and lack of employment opportunities, as well as conflict and different forms of discrimination.”

By addressing the root causes of migration, such as hunger, extreme poverty and climate change, we are at the same time working towards reaching the global Zero Hunger goal, he added.

Dr Mulatu went on, World Food Day 2017 represents a unique opportunity to gather global awareness on the importance of integrating agriculture and rural development issues in the migration agenda at national, regional and global levels.

In recent years, Ethiopia has given a priority for creating job opportunities for the young people and those especially vulnerable to migration.

“Our Growth and Transformation Plan II has given due emphasis to create employment opportunities for young people to reduce poverty and tackle irregular migration,” said Dr Eyasu Abreha, “The Government of Ethiopia has allocated 10 billion ETB as a revolving fund to support young people to engage in self-employment activities.”

Investing in agriculture means creating employment for a larger population, he added. “The agriculture sector is working to create more employment options for young people so that we can give people more options to stay at home.”

FAO works closely with the Government of Ethiopia on multi-sector issues and youth mobility, food security and rural poverty reduction efforts.

In her keynote address to over 300 participants of WFD2017 celebration, Fatouma Seid, FAO Representative to Ethiopia said, “Agriculture and rural development can address factors that compel people to move by creating business opportunities and jobs for young people.”

We work in migration-prone areas of Ethiopia by providing unemployed rural youth with training and equipment to start their farming businesses, she added.

WFD2017 was celebrated in Ethiopia through different awareness-raising activities such as stakeholder’s discussion on the media, keynote addresses, musical drama on WFD theme, panel discussion and exhibition.
The nutrition sensitive agriculture programme being implemented with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is said to be a key programme in making a qualitative difference in the lives of the farming communities in Ethiopia.

There is no doubt that because of the nutrition sensitive agriculture that is being implemented in this community, your children grow up healthier – physically and mentally, said King Letsie III of Lesotho, speaking to a local community who benefit from a nutrition-sensitive agriculture project in Southern Ethiopia.

About 84 percent of the Ethiopian population relies on agriculture for livelihoods. Over the past couple of decades, the Government of Ethiopia has embarked on a number of broad-based economic growth and poverty reduction policies, strategies and programmes to improve nutrition.

As a result, the nutrition policy landscape shifted from food-security-based responses to periodic crises to a multi-sector approach to address chronic malnutrition. FAO is working with the Government of Ethiopia to incorporate nutrition into agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector policies with the aim of improving their contribution to the fight against hunger and eliminate stunting by 2030.

As a Special Ambassador of FAO for Nutrition, King Letsie supports with increasing awareness of the issues of nutrition and malnutrition, and encourages key stakeholders to invest in nutrition.

As I carry out my assignment as Ambassador of FAO, he said, I will use what I have seen from the nutrition-sensitive agriculture project here today as a real and living example of what good nutrition can do and contribute in improving the lives of ordinary people.

The existing link between nutrition and agriculture is crucial. Through the “Growth and Transformation Plan”, the “National Nutrition Programme”, and the high political sensitization for nutrition in the agricultural sector, the Government of Ethiopia has proven its deep understanding of this link and its steady commitment to actually make it work in the country.

“Your children will attend school more regularly and perform better in their schoolwork,” he added. “They will grow up as productive citizens of this country and will be able to contribute to the economic and social growth of Ethiopia.”

The promotion of healthy diets and nutrition must be placed at the heart of agricultural policies and programmes, said Amadou Allahoury, former FAO Representative to Ethiopia, nutrition should be incorporated in all aspects of the value chain, if we are to achieve Zero Hunger.

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture is an
approach that seeks to maximize agriculture’s contribution to nutrition security. If rural farmers differentiated the production of their commodities also based on nutrition needs, agriculture would better contribute to improved food access for poor households, as well as to their food security and economic status.

FAO supports local communities to grow nutrition-rich food. School children can play a great role in increasing awareness of good nutrition in their communities. The nutrition-sensitive agriculture project works with school clubs by setting up demonstration sites and provision of training and vegetable seeds. A community member said, “We didn’t have enough awareness of the benefit of balanced diet before. After we received training and inputs, we have started to grow different vegetables and prepare diversified food for my family.”

Confirming his commitment, King Letsie said, “I will continue to pledge the support for FAO in helping communities and the Government of Ethiopia in promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture so that within a short period of time we will be able to overcome the problems of malnutrition not only in Ethiopia but throughout the continent.”
Survival priorities are clear for livestock owner Mohamed: “I need to save my animals to sustain my life,” he says, sitting outside his thatched home in Dolobat village in Somali region. This part of Ethiopia’s south-east is gripped by a devastating drought: rains have failed for the third consecutive year which has caused hunger to soar and malnutrition rates to rise to alarming levels.

The drought has already killed 70 of Mohamed’s goats and six cows. He and his family now rely on emergency food support, and are desperately trying to keep their remaining few cows alive. “Everything is in the hand of God,” he says.

After concluding visit to Tigray and the drought-stricken Somali region, the heads of the United Nations food agencies made a joint call for greater investment in long-term activities that strengthen people’s resilience to drought and the impacts of climate shock.

José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Gilbert F. Houngbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), made their plea after they visited projects that treat dwindling herds to limit further livestock deaths and met drought-affected people receiving food rations.

Back-to-back droughts have left at least 8.5 million people in Ethiopia in need of food aid. In the Somali region, rains have failed for the third consecutive year. The death of many livestock has caused a breakdown in pastoral livelihoods, contributing to soaring hunger levels and alarming increases in malnutrition rates. While the emergency response led by the Government has begun to stabilize the situation, additional resources are still urgently needed to prevent any further deterioration.

“It is essential to invest in preparedness and provide farmers and rural communities with knowledge and tools to safeguard themselves and their livelihoods. We’ve witnessed here that saving livelihoods means saving lives - it is people’s best defense against drought,” said Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, the organization that is providing emergency livelihood support for drought-affected livestock owners and farmers, as well as support to stabilize communities’ long-term resilience.

“A drought does not need to become an emergency,” said Houngbo, President of IFAD, the agency that provides the government with loans, grants and technical expertise for rural development projects. “We know what works. In the Somali region, where there is investment in irrigation systems, water points, rural financial institutions, health and veterinary services and other long-term development projects, the communities can better sustain themselves and their livestock through this devastating drought. This is what we need to build on.”

“We have seen clearly here that working together the three UN food agencies can achieve much more than alone,” said Beasley, head of WFP, which is providing life-saving assistance to 3.3 million people in the Somali region, the epicentre of three years of drought.

“Of course we already collaborate, but now we will take these models and replicate them and scale them up across the world. We need to save lives while investing to support sustainable, resilient environments for communities across the globe so they prosper and succeed.”

All three agencies are working closely with the Government of Ethiopia to eliminate hunger in the country.
Tackling youth migration through rural job creation

Unemployment and migration
Ethiopia’s population is increasing steadily. The age group below 15 represents 44 percent and the working age population represents 53 percent of the total population. The economic growth could not adequately respond to the growing youth unemployment. Each year many young people leave their homes and migrate to cities and move abroad in search of a better future. The distress, induced by poverty and lack of employment opportunities push many young people in search for jobs elsewhere.

A priority for the Government
The Government of Ethiopia has recently prioritized “creation of job opportunities for young people” in its programmes. The Government planned to create decent rural jobs for 4.7 million youth during the implementation of the Second Growth and Transformation Plan for the period 2016-2020. To facilitate this implementation, the Government has established a new State Ministry for Rural Jobs Creation and Food Security in the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

FAO’s pilot project to address rural youth unemployment
FAO, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation initiated a project – youth mobility, food security and rural poverty reduction (RYM) that aims to address the root causes of migration and reduce distress rural out-migration through promotion of youth employment in rural areas.

Addressing the links between distress migration and rural development
A project on youth mobility, food security and rural poverty reduction strives to reduce the number of people migrating from rural areas out of distress was launched in 2015 to provide motivated youth in the regions of high distress migration with profitable alternatives. The aim is to promote innovative pathways for youth employment and entrepreneurs in rural areas and the impact is already felt.

The pilot initiative provided 166 youth in 11 groups in Amhara region and 200 youth in 20 groups in Oromia region training and equipment. The youth started rural agricultural activities such as animal fattening, sheep and goat rearing, horticulture, beekeeping, poultry and dairy production.

Creating rural employment opportunities project is benefitting direct participants and their families by promoting agricultural enterprises in migration-prone areas. The young people are given the choice to remain in their communities.

Testimonies of project beneficiaries have already indicated that the project has supported them to stay at home and have a future in their own country. If we invest in rural job creation for young people, we can successfully tackle distress economic migration.
Mohamed Seid lives with his wife and two children in Waraba village, Amhara region, Ethiopia.

He used to rely on the little support his parents could give him. Unemployed and with limited access to land, his life changed when he became part of the FAO supported Rural Youth Mobility project in December 2016.

Mohamed and 16 other young people formed the Edget Horticulture Producers Youth Enterprise. The project provided training in gardening and improved agricultural practices as well as vegetable seeds, tools, and a water pump for irrigation. It also facilitated the provision of land for the young people to grow a range of crops – from vegetables to mung bean.

“We chose to grow vegetables as we can grow 2-3 times a year now that we can use the water thanks to the irrigation system,” he said.

The youth group sells their vegetables on the local market and plans to provide their produce to other markets as well.

“We want to grow our business and be a model for other young people in our area,” added Mohamed.

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Amiat Ahmed, 27 years old and a single mother of a two-year-old boy lives with her parent in South Wollo Zone of Amhara Regional State.

With the support of a chain of human traffickers, she managed to migrate to the Middle East. Amiat went through a lot of challenges on the way - walking for days in the desert, mistreated by traffickers, hunger, thirst and running away from border patrols.

She finally managed to reach Saudi Arabia and started working for an Arab family as a domestic helper, doing household chores - cleaning, cooking and washing.

However, the situation for Ethiopian migrants has become difficult since three years ago when the Saudi Government requested illegal migrants to leave. Amiat was forced to leave after working for five years. She returned empty hand leaving behind her belongings.

After she returned she didn’t have any means of employment. With the help of the local administration, she was involved in a poultry farming cooperative, established with the support of the RYM project.

The cooperative looks after pullets for profit-making business. The members buy a day old chickens, keeps for 45 days and sells on a local market for a profit. As the their capital grows, members divide up the profits.

Amiat is a member of this cooperative and participates in a day-to-day activity. She said, “I see my future in our poultry farming. We have already sold the first group of chickens for good profits. I don’t want to migrate again.”
Rabies is a deadly zoonotic disease with worldwide occurrence and the rabies virus is transmitted mostly commonly from carnivores to humans and livestock. Dogs are responsible for about 99 percent of human rabies cases and dog-mediated human rabies affects all parts of the society, especially children. It is estimated that at least 59,000 people die from rabies every year. People’s livelihoods are also affected when livestock get rabies, a loss estimated at over USD 500 million per year. What’s more, the disadvantaged are the most affected by rabies as they cannot afford dog vaccinations and cannot afford to adequately provide proper dog management. The estimated rabies burden in Ethiopia shows an annual human rabies incidence of 2.33 cases per 100,000 (Jemberu et al., 2013) and 1.1 rabies deaths per 100,000 population (Deressa et al., 2017).

The paradox here is that rabies is a 100 percent preventable disease if dogs are vaccinated and in fact, there is global target to eliminate dog-mediated rabies death by 2030. The challenge is whether dog vaccines are affordable, readily available to dog owners, and whether people are willing to properly manage their dogs which would include vaccinating them for rabies.

To this effect, on the World Rabies Day 2017, global partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), announced the plan to end human deaths from dog-transmitted rabies by 2030 which requires continued stakeholder engagement at all levels.

Through the Emergency Center for Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) program, FAO Ethiopia has been supporting the Government of Ethiopia to mitigate the current and potential impacts of high impact emerging and re-emerging zoonotic and priority endemic zoonotic diseases like rabies. Funded by USAID, contributing to the global health security agenda, and being implemented through multi-sectoral collaboration or One Health, ECTAD is helping mitigate the impacts of zoonotic diseases, including rabies, on people, livestock, wildlife, livelihoods and economies.

FAO's-ECTAD program works in collaboration with the Ethiopian Government and non-governmental One Health partners, and has been strongly supporting the establishment and work of the multi-sectoral rabies technical working group in Ethiopia. The working group has developed a national rabies prevention and control strategy as well as a monitoring and evaluation plan.

The ECTAD Program is also making significant contribution to enhance real-time surveillance of rabies incidence through mobile notification system and strengthening laboratory diagnostic capacity. Enhancing public awareness and understanding about the transmission, prevention and control mechanisms of rabies is also another area of ECTAD’s engagement and this translates into making people at community level safer.

Let’s join hands to make rabies history by 2030.
EU-SHARE Program strengthens animal disease surveillance and outbreak response systems

Yonas Tafesse, PPR Project Extension Communication Officer

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Federal Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (MoLF), supported by the European Union’s “Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (EU-SHARE) Program”, are working to strengthen animal disease surveillance, reporting and outbreak response systems.

The EU-SHARE Program supports regional animal health services and woreda (district) animal health personnel both financially and technically to effectively strengthen the National Animal Disease Surveillance System (NADSS). NADSS effectively employs two kinds of modern information exchange technologies, namely, the Disease Outbreak and Vaccination Reporting (DOVAR-II) and the Animal Disease Notification and Investigation System (ADNIS).

DOVAR-II is a web-based application through which monthly disease outbreak reports are uploaded, stored, collated and analyzed at regional veterinary laboratories. Since April 2016, 11 regional veterinary laboratories have been using the DOVAR-II application in order to report disease outbreaks and this practice has increased the reporting rates from 37.8 percent to 43.8 percent. It is believed that an improvement in the Internet infrastructure at the federal and regional levels is going to further improve the disease reporting rates.

Prior to adopting DOVAR-II and ADNIS technologies, woreda veterinary personnel and regional veterinary laboratories were reporting few disease outbreaks and investigated even less cases. According to a 2013 Survey by the EU-funded Livestock Value Chain–Public Private Dialogue (LVC-PPD) Project, less than 30 percent of woredas were sending reports to the Federal Animal Health Directorate every month.

DOVAR-II and ADNIS are now strengthening the NADSS in Ethiopia, preventing the spread of animal diseases, curbing the loss of animals, and thereby contributing to the protection of livelihoods of tens of thousands of farmers and pastoralists, because of the concerted efforts of the EU, FAO, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (MoLF) and other development partners.

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A community-based animal health worker vaccinating goats against PPR in the Afar Region.
National level platform established to coordinate climate-smart agriculture

Building resilience to the changing climate

FAO and key partners from the Government of Ethiopia, international development organizations and civil society has established a national level platform for coordinating climate-smart agriculture (CSA) efforts.

Key actors and stakeholders discussed and shared information and knowledge on climate-smart agriculture activities and developed a roadmap for scaling up and promoting climate smart agriculture across wider communities and regions.

Climate-change induced droughts affect Ethiopia more frequently than before. Climate change has had direct impacts on agriculture and food security, challenging agriculture by decreasing production, increasing variability of production and causing complete failure. Ethiopia’s impressive economic growth is heavily relied on agriculture, which is 97 percent rain-fed, climate sensitive and practised by vulnerable smallholder farmers. However the impacts of climate change and weather variability have put the economic progress to the test, challenging the efforts to tackle high level of malnutrition and food insecurity.

Currently farming is practised traditionally in the face of the changing climate and continued land degradation. Adapting and using climate smart agriculture approach and technologies by stakeholders to address farming challenges through landscape approach has been found to be slow. The effort to promote sustainable economic growth requires change in the attitude and practice of farmers and extension workers to consider agro-ecology and landscape approaches.

To facilitate CSA promotion and learning in Ethiopia, FAO Ethiopia, together with the Government, NGOs, Civil Society Organizations and the private sector has established a national climate-smart agriculture coordination platform that FAO co-chairs. The platform facilitates information exchange, dialogue, integration, experiences and knowledge among the actors to strengthen the knowledge, skill and understanding of government offices, private and non-government organizations for scaling up.

The climate smart actors agreed on the importance of putting in place community level weather forecasting for climate smart agriculture and mainstreaming of agro-metrological advisory service in the agriculture extension system.

FAO estimates that agricultural production will have to increase by 60 percent by 2050 when the world population is expected to increase by one-third. However, climate change is estimated to have reduced global yields of maize and wheat by 3.8 and 5.5 percent since 1980. Climate smart agriculture is, therefore, needed to sustainably increase food production to feed the growing population.
Strategic animal production intervention

Shaif Abdullah, International Field Coordination Consultant (Livestock), Jigjiga

Background and context: The Somali Region in Ethiopia is one of the largest among the nine regions and occupies a surface area of approximately 375,000 square kilometers. The Somali Regional state borders the Ethiopian regions of Oromia, Afar and Dire Dawa to the west, as well as Djibouti to the north, Somalia to the north, east and south, and Kenya to the south-west.

In 2015 and 2016, Ethiopia faced the worst drought in 60 years. The drought and subsequent floods resulted in thousands fleeing dry or flooded lands leaving thousands of household’s food insecure. The phenomena of abnormal rainfall level impacted the pasture and water availability which lead to deterioration of livestock body condition, abnormal migration, significant livestock mortality which increased food insecurity and malnutrition among affected communities.

The Somali region has a large livestock population which plays an important role in the livelihood and economy of the region and the country. According to the Livestock and Pastoralists Development Bureau (LPDB), the Livestock population in 2011/2012 was estimated to be 41.5 million heads.

In addition to common livestock diseases e.g. PPR, CCPP, CBPP, SGB, LSD, camel pox and common worms which routinely affect the livestock production, the main chronic challenge is lack of animal feed particularly during the drought period.

Currently FAO with LPDB as well as other organizations and NGOs is providing animal feed and animal health support to the main drought affected zones to protect and assist the vulnerable affected pastoralists and save the core breed. However, stakeholders need to work closely to sustainably address the challenge with fodder and feed storage system. A proper and strategic storage facility maintains the quality and reduces distribution period and transportation costs.

Opportunities for action: Despite the recurrent drought phenomena, the region has rich natural resources and access to different rivers namely; WabiShabelle, Genala, Dawa and Weybi. Most of these river sites have potential for fodder production. With the availability of fodder storage facilities, they will serve as strategic fodder production and distribution intervention points. Other potential locations can be easily identified and improved as main livestock water points such as the ‘Badass’ water point in Danan woreda, Demberweyne kebele, Shabelle zone.

For further improvement around the above main locations the following can be established:

- Animal shades
- Veterinary clinics and animal health extension centers
- Livestock drinking ponds/water catchment areas
- Training and extension centers
- Fodder and animal feed centers/storage centers
Livestock is the lifeline of Hammar pastoral communities in South Omo Zone in southern Ethiopia region. It is a source of food and social prestige as well as a means of income. However, the drought in 2016 severely affected the entire Hammar area, resulting in shortage of pasture, poor body condition and production, disease outbreak and livestock death.

It was therefore essential to provide livelihood support system to protect livestock-based livelihoods of people who rely on livestock for a living. With a financial support from UNOCHA, and in collaboration with regional bureaus of livestock and fisheries, FAO provided supplementary animal feed to Hammar communities in early 2017 to enable livestock survival until the following season when the rain was expected to arrive.

The case of Haike Aska - my cows would have died if I hadn’t received animal feed support

Haike Aska, aged 25 lives with his wife Pita Benda and three children in Boria village, Southern Ethiopia. The family lives on animal rearing and little farming. The drought hit the entire area in 2016 and 2017 devastating livelihoods, killing animals and field crops. “We rely on our animals for a living. We also grow some maize and sorghum. However, the drought killed our animals and field crops,” said Haike.

The impact of the drought was huge. Haike had 300 heads of cattle before the drought, but only 10 cows and three oxen survived the drought.

To assist pastoral communities with saving core breeding animals, FAO provided nutrition-rich animal feed and health support. “I mix molasses, bagasse and water to make animal feed. We fed to cows and other weak animals to help them regain better body condition. My cows would have died if we hadn’t received the support,” said Haike. The animal feed support improved the animals’ body condition and milk production. Haike also received training on forage production and has a plan to start growing forage for his animals.

Haike changed the way he looks after cattle since the droughts have affected livestock rearing. He looks after a few oxen, fattens them and sells on a local market for profit. “I used to rely on traditional way of animal rearing, as the animals die due to shortage of pasture, I started to look after fewer ones, which I sell for income to buy food for my family,” he said.

Fortunately, the expected rain arrived in the second half of 2017, and the pasture situation improved. Nevertheless, as the climate variability and rain situation has already become unpredictable and erratic, the future of pastoral communities remained uncertain.
Increasing capacity of community-based animal health workers

Alote Ewinyu, Reporting Officer

Twenty-three year old Abdi Fatah is an Animal Health Assistant and the head of the animal health post in Demberwene village in Somali Region. He is also a family man married to one wife with a five-month old son. He graduated from college with a diploma in animal health.

As an Animal Health Assistant, part of his tasks includes working with the community to provide animal health services. Like most parts of Ethiopia, in Dhanan woreda, livestock are a key asset for rural households throughout the developing world and are increasingly seen as a means of reducing poverty. Abdi has provided basic animal health training to five other members in the community. These five participants were selected by the kebele administration for him to train and consisted of one female participant. They are now able to monitor and follow up the livestock in the kebele and report on a limited range of animal health problems.

However, many rural areas like those in Demberwene are characterized by limited or no accessibility to veterinary services. Through the FAO drought response, Abdi has benefited from the capacity building of community-based animal health workers and continues to provide much needed support to the kebele. He noted that Demberwene households benefitted from the FAO animal health interventions since the beginning of the drought. All villages in the woreda were reached by these emergency livestock services which were timely and went a long way in saving the livelihoods of households. Through vaccinations that he participated in doing with the regional livestock team, livestock in the woreda were treated against livestock and external parasites and other infectious diseases.

Abdi hopes to upgrade his veterinary knowledge and become a renowned vet and become famous for serving his community and helping them get out of poverty and stop their livestock from undergoing some of the easily treatable livestock diseases.
Promoting livestock feed security to protect livestock asset, increase income and improve livelihoods

Gizachew Lemma (Dr), Livestock Production Officer

Year-round supply of quality feed is vital for the maintenance of health and productivity of farm animals. Well-fed animals better withstand disease and parasitic stresses, and maintain favourable level of growth, production and reproduction. As it currently stands, virtually livestock in all agro-ecologies and production systems of Ethiopia are poorly fed and undernourished for most part of the year. Even in apparently normal years, the marked seasonal fluctuation in feed supply seriously compromises livestock performance. At times of drought, the gap in feed supply and need reaches its critical level often culminating in massive livestock mortality.

The underlying causes of the livestock feed shortage are the degradation of the rangelands and grasslands and the under-development of improved forage production agriculture. In addition, the livestock feed insecurity is further aggravated by inefficient management of locally available feed resources and the continued conversion of traditional grazing areas to other forms of land use.

To address the immediate livestock feed crises as well as minimize similar future shocks, FAO and its development partners are taking various feed intervention measures. Cognizant of this fact, FAO has actively been engaged together with the Regional Agricultural and Pastoral Development Bureaus and other development partners in actions that help ensure feed security. Among others, such actions include the technical capacity development of the extension personnel and beneficiaries, the promotion of good practices and the facilitation of stakeholders’ platforms deliberating on issues undermining livestock feed development. FAO promotes good practices in livestock feed development and the management of feed crisis, which if expanded to scale up could help alleviate the chronic feed shortage.

Production and use of multi-nutrient blocks (MNBs)

FAO is promoting the production and use of MNBs to address the cyclic feed crisis in semi-arid environments of the country. The raw materials used to manufacture the blocks are locally available at a relatively cheaper cost. MNB manufacturing cooperatives were established with the support of FAO in strategic locations of Afar and Somali Regions. The cooperatives received the required skill training, machine and inputs to manage cooperatives and manufacture MNBs. Lactating animals, receiving MNBs with modest amount of fibrous forages have been noted to recover faster from the impact of the nutritional stress and resume milk production. The increased availability of milk in the households is crucial in overcoming malnutrition in children and lactating and pregnant women. The MNBs, which are manufactured from molasses, urea, oilseed
cakes, wheat-bran, mineral and binding agents, are supplying the badly needed survival feeds to hundreds of thousands of heads of livestock in Afar, Eastern Somali, Eastern Amhara, Southern Tigray, Southern and Central Oromia Regions.

**Efficient management and use of cereal crop residues**

Crop residues (cereal straws or stovers) are becoming increasingly important as feed sources for ruminants in the mixed farming and agro-pastoral areas. These feeds are generally characterized by relatively low nutrient and high fibre contents, and slow digestibility and voluntary intake. It is therefore all about equipping cattle herders and agro-pastoral households with appropriate technical skills and inputs necessary to treat cereal crop residues with urea-molasses. The treatment of crop residues with urea-molasses minimizes wastage, improves nutritional value and extends the duration of crop residue use. Like the MNBs, crop residues treated with urea-molasses have the potential to increase livestock production. FAO has been working with Government of Ethiopia partners in Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ regions to promote good practices that help upgrade the feeding value and the efficient utilization of these feed resources. Physical processing of urea, molasses and effective micro-organism (EMO) treatments has been promoted as a feed technology to herders and agro-pastoralists in different parts of the country. Apart from saving the lives of core breeding stock at times of crisis, urea molasses or EMO-treated crop residues are capable of increasing weight gain and cattle and goat milk production.

**Community-based irrigated forage production and use**

The agro-pastoral and farming communities along the perennial rivers such as Awash, Dawa, Genale and Wabi-Shebele were targeted with irrigated forage-based feed intervention. FAO’s support constitutes the provision of forage planting materials, farm tools and skill enhancement training. Targeted households of the forage development interventions are already benefitting from the initiative through increased drought preparedness and the generation of income from the marketing of forage planting materials. Other than addressing the immediate feed gaps, the local production of cultivated forage would eventually help stop the costly mobilization of fibrous feeds from the central highlands.

**Participatory rehabilitation of degraded rangelands**

Loss of vegetation cover and the rapid spread of invasive species into the grazing lands are the most daunting threats to livestock feed security in the lowland areas. Together with the Government and partners, FAO has been promoting good practices that help restore the health and productivity of the degraded rangelands in Oromia, Somali and the Afar regions. An exemplary invasive plants management initiative, which involves the reclaiming of the most notorious alien invader (Prosopis juliflora) and its economic utilization, has also been piloted in Afar.

*Forage production managed by the Afar Regional State.*
Food and economic benefits
Cactus pear which is locally known as “beles or kolkol bahri” is common in the most northern state of Tigrai. Cactus pear is mainly popular in the northeastern region of Tigrai state, but it is known and consumed throughout the state. It is used as a source of food, cash income, as a fire wood, and animal feed by local people. Cactus was introduced to Tigrai in the 1800 hundreds by Catholic Missionaries. There are 50 varieties of cactus pear found in Tigrai.

Cactus, a drought-tolerant plant, is a source of food for many farmers in the period from June to Mid-September, when food items depleted before the next harvest is ready for consumption, contributing to food security and poverty reduction. It is also used as animal feed which can sustain livestock through the dry season of the year when pasture is less available.

Threat to cactus plant
In recent years, cactus pearl production is challenged by cochineal insect. Cochineal insect was intentionally introduced to the Tigray region in April 2003 to be used as a source of natural dye for food processing and cosmetic industries. The purpose was to promote the insect as an unprocessed commodity for export; thus, the issue of mass reproduction of cochineal was seen as job creation for resource poor rural youth. Because of lack of a sustainable marketing outlets, the carmine cochineal multiplied in uncontrolled way and invaded and damaged the cactus plant especially in Southern and South-Eastern Zones of Tigrai.

The uncontrolled spread of the insect has affected cactus plants, threatening household food security and leading to environmental degradation.

FAO’s support to avert the threat
FAO is supporting the region in evidence-based decision making through comprehensive analysis and management of cochineal. FAO, with the support of national consultants, has conducted ‘Comprehensive Assessment and Identification of a Management Strategy for the Carmine Cochineal in Cactus Pear in Tigrai’ which has generated evidences on the extent of the damage and socio-economic impacts of the cochineal insect.

Following the assessment, cross-sector policy dialogue consultative workshops were organized to highlight the need to improve cross-sector coordination. As a response, regional steering committee involving focal points from various regional bureaus and higher institutions, and agencies crucial to the sustainable management of cochineal was established. The steering committee and working groups at all levels are used as a platform of dialogue. The assessment has led to formulation of short- and – long-term policy on cochineal management.

Through the project ‘Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Implementation of the Management Strategy of the Carmine Cochineal in Cactus Pear’, FAO provided different training and capacity building to strengthen Regional Cochineal Case Team, stakeholder consultation platforms at all levels and different consultative workshops. These efforts have increased the awareness of the general public on the threat of carmine cochineal. The communities participated in Cochineal eradication activities such as cutting and burning or burying of cactus cladodes infested with Cochineal. Thanks to FAO’s technical and policy advice and capacity development activities, carmine cochineal buffer zone and free areas have been established. As a result, further spread of the insect into Eastern Tigrai is prevented.
Invasive waterweeds continue threatening fishermen’s livelihoods

An invasive waterweed known as water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes) has been infesting thousands of acreage of the edge and surface of Lake Tana, threatening the water level and livelihoods of communities around the lake.

Lake Tana, the largest freshwater body in Ethiopia, is a source of the Blue Nile River and provides a fishing potential of 50,000 metric tonnes per year. However, Lake Tana has been severely infested since 2011 by water hyacinths with estimated size of infestation in the range of 20,000 hectares (September 2012), posing a significant threat to livelihoods, biodiversity and tourism. The lake is also important as the main source of the Blue Nile biodiversity hotspot with about 70 percent of the fish species in the lake being endemic.

A threat to fishing industry

The costs of invasive weeds infestation on the environment, social and economic systems are enormous. Among others, it has threatened the fishing industry that supports the livelihood of an estimated 400,000 riparian communities. While October and November (post-rainy season) is the most biologically productive season, significant reduction in water levels during the dry season (December to May) causes large amounts of the water hyacinth to die and decomposition of the water hyacinth causes massive algal blooms which affect the taste of the fish with the result that fisher folks being unable to sell their catch.

Difficult to eradicate

The potential for water hyacinth as a problem is real and will continue threatening the livelihood of fisher communities if not well managed.

Although the harmful effects of the water hyacinth are generally known, it is very difficult to totally eradicate once established in an ecosystem. Water hyacinth is therefore expected to remain a permanent feature in Lake Tana.

Water hyacinth management

FAO provided support to facilitate an assessment and mapping of the extent and distribution of water hyacinth in Lake Tana and documented its historical development. Together with other stakeholders, FAO facilitated establishment of a Water Hyacinth Steering Committees at all levels (regional, zonal and woreda) and provision of training of trainers for regional and zonal officers in water hyacinth management.

A water hyacinth management strategy developed with the support of FAO recommends scaling up the current water hyacinth control efforts and aligning organizational resources in order to maintain water hyacinth levels to ecologically acceptable levels. The strategy strengthens the effectiveness and efficiency of zonal and regional coordination units to mobilize resources and key stakeholders to monitor and control water hyacinth.

Furthermore FAO supported development of a five year comprehensive project proposal to be used for soliciting fund for scaling up the current interventions of manual removal and to integrate it with other options that requires a biological and physical control.

Recently, stakeholders met to exchange information and knowledge and discuss on potential water hyacinth control options. In this workshop it was agreed to strengthen existing steering and technical committee to effectively coordinate and network stakeholders efforts and actively guide and oversee the implementation of water hyacinth control by various actors, including the need to strengthen research activities to test biological control methods.
Every year, World Food Day is celebrated on October 16 with different activities, which are designed to promote understanding and awareness of food security issues and the drive to end hunger in our lifetime. The theme of World Food Day 2017 “Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development”, has been chosen to draw global attention to the link between migration, food security and rural development. This highlights how by addressing some of the root causes of migration, we can give people more options to stay at home, if they feel it is safe to do so. At the same time, we contribute to SDG2, Zero Hunger, harness migration’s potential to support development, and build the resilience of displaced and host communities, thereby laying the ground for long-term recovery and inclusive and sustainable growth.
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