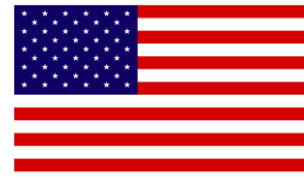


Press Release



Embassy of the United States of America
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2017/09

For further information, call 011-130-7033
<http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov>

Feed the Future Ethiopia Commercial Farm Services Project Opens Center in Bako

Bako, Oromia Region, Ethiopia, May 12, 2017 – The Bako Farm Service Center, established via a public-private partnership to expand Ethiopian smallholders’ access to supplies, marked its grand opening today. It is the first of 20 centers to open through the Feed the Future Ethiopia Commercial Farm Services Project, implemented by the ATA in collaboration with the ministry and regional bureaus of Agriculture and Natural Resources, with financial support from the USAID and technical support from Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture.

“Meeting Ethiopia’s comprehensive and ambitious development agenda requires recognition of the critical importance of agriculture in the economy. However, access to quality agricultural supplies at affordable prices at the right time of the season is a significant challenge,” said USAID representative Stephen Morin.

The Bako Farm Service Center is located in the maize belt area of Ethiopia, in the remotest part of the country where access to agro-supplies has been a critical challenge to smallholder farmers. Owned by Alemitu Hordofa, a female entrepreneur, the Bako center is a one-stop-shop that provides smallholder farmers with quality farm supplies such as improved seed, chemicals, farm equipment, veterinary drugs and equipment, as well as consultancy services and training, which enable smallholder farmers to sustainably increase productivity and household income. “I strongly believe in the impact that my farm service center can have in this community. It will offer the solution for farmers to access good quality goods and services at an affordable price in close proximity,” said Alemitu. “My farm service center will impact the lives of more than 10,000 smallholder farmers in Bako and neighboring *woredas* (districts).”

According to Khalid Bomba, ATA’s CEO, “The opening of Bako Farm Service Center marks the successful expansion of an innovative one-stop-shop input distribution system leveraging private sector actors. In addition to addressing the needs of farmers in inputs and services, farm service centers, such as this one in Bako, will also serve as a platform to disseminate new techniques, technologies and practices.”

The project is establishing farm service centers in Ethiopia’s main farming regions: six in Amhara, seven in Oromia, four in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, and three in Tigray. Each farm service center will open in collaboration with qualified entrepreneurs who were identified through a competitive process to receive grants up to \$50,000 to start their business. Each successful bidder is contributing a minimum of 50 percent of the funding necessary to establish their center—designed and operated based on standards and support provided by the project.

Feed the Future, a \$3.5 billion global hunger and food security initiative, sustains the U.S. Government’s commitment as one of Ethiopia’s largest partners in developing the agriculture sector, which is a fundamental cornerstone of the Ethiopian economy.

###

For more information, see <https://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia>