

MONTHLY UPDATE – DECEMBER 2009

# Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program

“INCREASING RURAL INCOMES AND EMPLOYMENT”

“የገጠር ገቢዎችንና የሥራ ዕድልን መጨመር”

## From the project director

It is never easy losing a staff member, and here at USAID-ATEP we lost a key part of our team recently: Ato Abayneh, our Coffee Sector Manager. He was always a gentleman. The soft-spoken coffee specialist was a leader in Ethiopia’s coffee sector and knew its history, problems and strengths better than anyone. An invaluable asset to the project and the sector, Ato Abayneh provided institutional strength and integrity to USAID-ATEP. On page three of this monthly bulletin, friends and colleagues pay tribute to this great man. He will be missed, but his legacy lives on in his family and in the numerous smallholders, extension workers and technical staff who he helped over his many years of work in the industry.



*Thomas H. Carr, Chief of Party,  
Ethiopia Agribusiness and Trade Expansion  
Program*

## USAID-ATEP supports annual meeting of EPOSPEA

The annual general meeting of the Ethiopian Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Processors and Exporters Association (EPOSPEA) was held on December 21. It served as a forum for promoting EPOSPEA and the oilseed sector while strengthening alliances among members and stakeholders. Attendees included private and government banks, insurance companies, revenue and customs authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD), the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI), SNV and the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX).

To encourage consistent export performance, prizes were awarded to the



Photo by Fintrac

**USAID-ATEP Coffee Agronomist Tesfaye Negash trains workers at Amaro Gayo.**

## USAID Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program

This project is implemented by Fintrac Inc., a US agribusiness consulting firm. Consortium members include Boot Coffee Consulting & Training, the Economic Competitiveness Group, Manchester Trade, and the Rainforest Alliance. It covers four agricultural production sectors in four regions of Ethiopia, which are supported by business development and health programs.

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best producers in the pulses, oilseed and spices sector. Ethiopian State Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Yaekob Yalla presented the awards. USAID-ATEP lead clients won in three categories.

At the end of the event, EPOSPEA's executive board presented a report on the sector's export performance and discussed the intended action plan for the current budget year. Major issues related to taxation, port facilities and finance were also discussed with the state minister.

### **Warehouse assessment conducted in Gondar and Humera**

In December USAID-ATEP conducted a survey of warehouses owned by program-supported unions and union-affiliated cooperatives. More than half of the 23 warehouses surveyed were found to be in poor condition. The spaces lack adequate ventilation due to poor infrastructure and warehouse management practices, and the conditions are ripe for insect infestation. The result is that product quality is negatively affected, as is the cooperatives' ability to respond to price fluctuations.

Program staff met with managers and members of the unions and cooperatives and recommended training in better methods of storage and management with supervision from USAID-ATEP. In addition there is a need to reconstruct nine of the warehouses and to reinforce another eight warehouses.

### **USAID-ATEP scales up extension services for coffee-producing smallholders**

Based on the plan to scale up the extension services for coffee smallholders, USAID-ATEP provided pruning shears, bow saws and saw blades to 100 model coffee farmers. The cutting tools will be used to rejuvenate old coffee tree stems by stumping. The pruning shears will be used to prune bearing branches.

Through this intervention it is expected that smallholders will improve coffee production, harvesting, and processing, resulting in increased sales for the farmers.

Besides the provision of the farm tools, USAID-ATEP is providing comprehensive and consistent on-farm training in coffee production, processing and marketing for both the commercial growers, smallholders, cooperatives and exporters.

### **Training needs assessment conducted for oilseed cooperatives**

USAID-ATEP conducted a comprehensive assessment of training needs in the Tigray and Amhara regions to identify capacity gaps of client cooperatives. Surveyed institutions ranged from client



Photos by Fintrac

**Prize winners pose for a commemorative photo at the annual general assembly meeting of EPOSPEA.**



**USAID-ATEP Coffee Agronomist Mohammednur Mohammed shows smallholder farmers harvesting techniques in Eastern Hararge.**



**Community Animal Health Workers receive training in the Keyafer area.**

primary cooperative unions to cooperatives' promotion agencies, as well as agricultural and rural development offices. The results will aid the design of a management training program, the preparation of training manuals, and the provision of technical field assistance.

Major gaps identified by the assessment include: absence of business risk-aversion strategies, weak linkages between the cooperatives and their members, an absence of technical backups from concerned government institutions, interest clashes and stiff market competition among cooperative unions and their affiliated members, and a lack of experience and formal training among board members.

USAID-ATEP recommended specific training courses and schedules for the respective groups.

**USAID/BEAT visits ATEP project areas in Northern Ethiopia**

Semunesh Demetros, a representative of USAID's Business, Environment, Agriculture and Trade (BEAT) office, visited USAID-ATEP lead clients including farmer cooperatives, smallholder farmers, agricultural offices and research centers. Clients identified areas for further assistance including business development services (BDS), capacity building trainings, supply of agricultural inputs, and local and international market information.

The five unions have 91 primary cooperative members and 50,231 beneficiaries. USAID-ATEP extension agronomists and the BDU expert are assisting 14 primary cooperatives with 13,304 beneficiaries. The program will continue to benefit clients with on-farm trainings, technical assistance, and BDS until December 2010.



Photo by Fintrac

**Employees of USAID-ATEP lead client JJ Kothary pack beans.**



**USAID-ATEP meets with the Kazayesus Primary Cooperative.**

**ABAYNEH ALEMU (1954-2010)**

Abayneh Alemu joined USAID-ATEP in 2006 as the coffee sector manager. Under his guidance, the program provided technical assistance and training to 27 lead clients and 64,248 beneficiaries in Oromiya, SNNPR, and Eastern Hararghe. He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Sirguta G/Sellase, and his three children.

**USAID-ATEP remembers Alemu**

"He had always been devoted to his job, and managed to build a career that made him knowledgeable in the Ethiopian Coffee industry. In short, I can say he was a responsible citizen that contributed his share for his country."

– Teka Redda (Oilseeds & Pulses Sector Manger)

"I will always remember him as a person of his word, responsive, positive and accountable."

– Asmare Melesse (M&E Coordinator)

"I have known him for many years, never seen him as my boss, but rather as my mentor. I have no words to further describe him."

– Getachew Zeleke (Technical Services Coordinator- Coffee Sector)

"Abayneh was a colleague that was respectful, knowledgeable, dedicated and helpful. It is not only a loss for USAID-ATEP but for our country as well."

– Astede Yohannes (Finance Manager)

"Each day he was caring, forward-looking and dedicated to his duties. We will all miss him. May God rest his soul in peace."

– Kidist Mulugeta (Sector Coordinator)

