

SUCCESS STORY

Improved haricot bean basic seed multiplication increased yield/income & quality

In Ethiopia, haricot beans are produced by smallholder growers for commercial export to the EU. The country's exports of haricot beans have increased over the last few years, from 58,126 MTs in 2005 to 78,271 MTs in 2007. Despite these volume increases, improvements in quality and yield are limited by the availability of quality seed in Ethiopia, where farmers have an acute need for certified seed that is high yielding and disease resistant. At present, domestic sources such as the Ethiopian Seed Enterprise (ESE) provide less than 10% of the estimated farmer demand for certified haricot bean seed, while the balance of demand is made up of uncertified seed obtained from the previous year's harvest.

To increase the availability of certified haricot bean seed, USAID-ATEP teamed with the Melkassa Agricultural Research Center (MARC), a unit of the Ethiopian Institute for Agricultural Research (EIAR), to produce 70 MTs of improved haricot bean seed (four varieties) on 50 hectares of its land.

This basic seed was then distributed to a number of groups to multiply the basic seed into certified seed, including Ethiopian Seed Enterprise; ACOS, a processor and exporter; and Catholic Relief Services, working with the Lomi and Meki Farmer Cooperatives Unions (FCUs), among others. Working with local farmers in their areas, these groups multiplied an estimated 945 MTs worth of certified seed from the basic seed stock during the November/December 2008 harvesting period.

The average yield for the new varieties, from trial conducted to date, is around 1.8 MTs per/ha, significantly higher than the normal yields of 0.8 to 1.0 MTs/ha obtained with uncertified seed. Ato Haile Wako, a commercial farmer at Boset, Oromiya notes "Because I have used the basic haricot bean seed, I was able to produce an average yield of 1.8 – 2 MTs/ha, and sell the certified seed to Lome FCU for 15% over the prevailing market price." Research trials at MARC also indicated that, with improved management practices and favorable weather, smallholders could obtain yields as high as 3 MTs/ha.

This seed will be sold in April/May 2009 to an estimated 10,000 farmers, who will each receive 100 kgs of the new certified seed to be used for planting. USAID-ATEP's assistance also included organizing a field day at MARC to introduce producers, exporters and WoARD development agents to the improved seed varieties.

The quality of the haricot beans produced by these farmers will exceed exporter requirements, enabling the 10,000 farmers to sell an estimated 17,000 MTs of quality beans at premium prices following the Spring 2009 harvest.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.
Haricot bean seed field day organized at Melkassa Agricultural Research center, June 2008.



USAID/ATEP Oilseeds and Pulses sector manager, Ato Teka Redda, supervising certified seed harvesting by commercial farmer Ato Haile Wako, Boset, Oromiya.

"I was able to produce an average yield of 1.8 to 2.0 MTs per ha, and sell the certified seed for 15% over the prevailing market price."

— Ato Haile Wako, Commercial Farmer, Boset, Oromiya