

Press Release



Embassy of the United States of America
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2014/21

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

OVER 11 MILLION SMALLHOLDER FARMERS POISED TO DOUBLE THEIR YIELDS FROM NEW BLENDING FERTILIZER INITIATIVE

First cooperative-run fertilizer blending factory opened in Ethiopia

Tullu Bollo, Oromia, Ethiopia, June 1, 2014 – The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), today inaugurated in Oromia the first ever fertilizer blending factory in Ethiopia. The MOA is working with other partners to open three more in SNNP, Amhara and Tigray. USAID supported the construction of the Oromia factory with a \$1.2 million Feed the Future innovation grant and collaborated with the MOA, ATA, and Becho-Woliso Farmers' Cooperative Union on its operational plan.

The MOA's fertilizer initiative aims to introduce custom tailored fertilizers to Ethiopia and start in-country production of these fertilizers to greatly increase crop yields. It is expected that this initiative will lead to widespread adoption and accessibility of blended fertilizers, benefiting more than 11 million smallholder farmers in the four regions. The farmers' cooperatives unions are a vital part of the fertilizer initiative as they will run the factories on a commercial basis with support from the regional governments and Bureaus of Agriculture.

The MOA, in collaboration with the ATA, regional bureaus of agriculture, and USAID's Agribusiness Market Development activity, have conducted more than 40,000 new fertilizer demonstrations in the four target regions. The results showed yield increases up to 100 percent, when compared to conventional fertilizer application.

“Improved inputs, such as fertilizer and seeds, are a proven factor in agricultural productivity,” said USAID Mission Director to Ethiopia Dennis Weller. “The U.S. Feed the Future Initiative has awarded over \$4 million in grants for improved inputs to help transform Ethiopian agriculture and benefit smallholder farmers.”

The lack of available fertilizer blends customized to Ethiopia's soil, the local production cost advantage over importation and the benefits of in-country production to the Ethiopian agribusiness sector led to the establishment of this blended fertilizer factory in Ethiopia.

According to Professor Tekalign Mamo, State Minister of Agriculture, who oversees the national soil fertility survey and establishment of fertilizer blending factories, “It is a dream come true!”

###