

# Press Release



Embassy of the United States of America  
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## New Fortified Wheat Flour Launched by ASTCO Food Complex

***The affordable product contains micronutrients that will improve the health of consumers, both children and adults***

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 17, 2015** – Through a public-private partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Partners in Food Solutions and TechnoServe, the ASTCO Food Complex today launched its new flour product, bringing Ethiopia one of the first locally fortified wheat flours. Based in Addis Ababa and founded in 2004, ASTCO is committed to expand its production of fortified wheat flour.

According to the 2014 Mini-Demographic and Health Survey, an estimated 40 percent of children under the age of five are short for their age, meaning they have not received adequate nutrition during their early years. An important contributing factor to malnutrition is micronutrient deficiencies. This new fortified flour with minerals and vitamins will therefore have a significant contribution to improved health of the Ethiopian population. In the near future, ASTCO's macaroni and spaghetti products will contain essential minerals and vitamins.

"This is an extremely significant development that addresses nutrition challenges in Ethiopia, where undernutrition accounts for 45 percent of all child deaths," said U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Peter Vrooman. "We expect the new products processed and packaged by ASTCO and other flour millers and processors to set a trend in micronutrient food fortification."

The public private partnership, known as the African Alliance for Improved Food Processing (AAIFP), provides customized technical assistance to 20 medium and large-scale wheat processors as well as industry wide training to more than 165 food processors in Ethiopia. The knowledge and experience is remotely transferred from employees of world-class companies—General Mills, Cargill, Royal DSM and Buhler. The project objectives are to increase the quality and competitiveness of Ethiopia's food processing sector and expand the availability of affordable wheat based nutritious food.

AAIFP in Ethiopia is supported by USAID through the U.S. Government's \$250 million [Feed the Future Initiative](#), whose dual objectives are to improve agriculture productivity and the nutritional status of women and children in Ethiopia. AAIFP is also working with five more processors to fortify wheat flour with vitamins and micronutrients, which will increase the availability of nutritious foods in the country.

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