

Press Release



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USAID AND PROJECT MERCY TRANSFER CROSS-BRED DAIRY HEIFERS TO DAIRY FARMERS

Chacha, Amhara, Ethiopia, November 25, 2013 – Project Mercy in partnership with the U.S. Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), today provided its first round of pregnant cross-bred dairy heifers to five selected household dairy farmers in the Chacha District of the Northern Shewa Zone, Amhara Region. With these heifers, the recipients will be able to feed their children and sell surplus milk to supplement their family income.

Through the four-year grant to Project Mercy, USAID is building the capacity of smallholder farmers by providing technical assistance and training to improve cow milk production and household income in the district.

“Transferring ownership of these five heifers to Project Mercy beneficiaries is the next step in implementing the training managed through USAID’s AGP-Livestock Market Development project,” said USAID Mission Director Dennis Weller. “This mentoring and guidance is linked directly to the targeted households, who are working to establish a business, as a next step to moving beyond subsistence farming and into a revenue producing environment.”

The five dairy farmers who received the heifers are among 83 dairy household farmers who were trained on improved dairy farm management through the USAID project. Zelekash Wolde Amanuel is one of five household women farmers who received a pregnant cross-bred dairy heifer during the ceremony. For Zelekash, one of the forty-four women trained under the project, it is her first time to be involved in managing a cross-bred dairy heifer. She received the three-day training and is confident that she will get the best of it as she stated, “I have the experience in keeping Ethiopian indigenous cows. They give a small amount of milk. I am expecting to get more milk from the cow that I received today.”

USAID’s five-year project is part of President Obama’s Feed the Future Initiative in Ethiopia. Project Mercy is a not-for-profit relief and development organization based in the United States and Ethiopia providing aid, comfort and support to alleviate human suffering and overcome systemic poverty in Ethiopia. USAID has cooperated with Project Mercy over the last decade on emergency food aid and medical assistance.

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