

Press Release



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U.S. GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NEW FARM SERVICE PROGRAM TO ASSIST RURAL ENTREPRENEURS:

*Six Farm Service Centers in Oromia to Provide Farmers Affordable, Timely and Reliable
Access to Quality Goods and Services*

February 4, 2013, Addis Ababa – As part of President Obama’s Feed the Future Initiative in Ethiopia, the U.S. Government through USAID launched the Commercial Farm Service Program today in support of the Government of Ethiopia’s Agricultural Growth Plan (AGP). The new two year program will provide grants and training to rural entrepreneurs, both men and women, to help create one wholesale and six retail farm service centers (FSCs) designed to meet the operational needs of farmers. The FSCs will reach at least 30,000 smallholder farmers in the Oromia Region.

FSCs are medium to large-scale suppliers that provide an array of agricultural supplies, or inputs, such as fertilizers, seeds, agricultural tools and other equipment. FSCs also provide extensive services including machinery rental, processing, veterinary consultation and marketing. Each FSC comes equipped with a training facility where farmers can receive professional technical assistance. FSCs also extend credit to farmers, enabling them to procure high quality inputs that lead to increased production and profits.

Opening the event, Teshome Lakew, the Ministry of Agriculture’s Director of Agricultural Input Supply, said, “Farm service centers build value chains that are very important to participating farmers and their families. From ensuring know-how and quality inputs to building links with businesses and markets, these centers are a valuable resource for achieving our Agricultural Growth Plan.”

The Commercial Farm Service Program will also help establish a wholesale buying cooperative, owned by and dedicated to serving the FSCs and link them to national and international suppliers. Through the improved access to technical expertise and supplies, the program will stimulate increased productivity and competitiveness in agribusiness which will in turn improve smallholder productivity, food security and incomes through the development of sustainable, private-sector driven agricultural input supply and services.

With a focus on local ownership, the project will help FSC owners build sustainable enterprises. “USAID is proud to support this effort to assist dedicated entrepreneurs who are working to support their families and contribute to the overall growth and prosperity of Ethiopia,” said USAID Deputy Mission Director Jason Fraser.

CNFA (formerly the Citizen’s Network for Foreign Affairs) is implementing the \$2 million USAID project.

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