

Press Release



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USAID and Irish Aid Collaborate to Award Ethiopian Dairy Innovation Fund Recipients

Addis Ababa, March 16, 2015 -- The Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator (ESAI), a project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), held a graduation ceremony today for 14 entrepreneurs who successfully introduced an innovative idea to the sesame, dairy and honey sectors, established a company and have started generating revenue.

The graduating entrepreneurs have created a better climate for agribusinesses to prosper and have contributed to adding social value to the regions in which their businesses operate. As the first agribusiness incubator in Ethiopia, the entrepreneurs of ESAI have created employment opportunities for smallholders, increased productivity within the sub-sectors and have linked local products to the global market.

“These graduates are shining examples of the entrepreneurial spirit that is essential for Ethiopia to achieve its goals under the Growth and Transformation Plan,” said U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Patricia Haslach. “Projects like the Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator demonstrate the potential of Ethiopian entrepreneurs to transform communities and individual lives.”

Ireland’s development agency, Irish Aid, joined ESAI in July 2014, to launch the Dairy Innovation Fund with the goal of stimulating dairy agribusinesses by providing funds to entrepreneurs that are introducing new technology and innovative business models to add value to the dairy industry in Ethiopia. Through this Fund, the ESAI project today awarded grants to 18 recipients with innovative business models and technologies that demonstrate great potential for commercialization such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization services, distributing inputs to dairy farmers, producing and distributing animal feed, distributing veterinary care or creating long shelf life milk products such as cheese, butter, UHT and powdered milk.

Seán Sherlock T.D., Ireland’s Minister of State for Development, Trade Promotion and North-South Cooperation, spoke about continued support for Ethiopia’s private sector development. “Irish Aid is very proud to be part of this program in partnership with our friends at USAID and in the Ministry of Agriculture....By supporting firms with capital investment, I believe that aid can both leverage private sector funds for development and can encourage risk taking and innovation. Ireland is a leader in sustainable food and I hope that it is only a matter of time now before these entrepreneurs will be competing with us and challenging us to innovate further.”

Through collaboration with USAID, Irish Aid anticipates that the Dairy Innovation Fund will allow Ethiopian farmers and consumers to benefit from the latest techniques and technologies.

ESAI was established in 2012 under a cooperative agreement between USAID and Precise Consult International and part of the U.S. Government's [Feed the Future Initiative](#), to transform Ethiopian agriculture sector-by-sector by enhancing the competitiveness of entire value chains.

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Additional Information

The 14 graduating companies of ESAI are:

- Babichi Agroforestry PLC
- Damma Beekeeping Equipments PLC
- Dehana Amdework Foundation
- Dimma Beekeeping Development and Honey Processing PLC
- Emebet Commercial Beekeeping For Environment PLC
- Ethio-Feed PLC
- Izemen General Trading PLC
- Lactal Creamery PLC
- Mare Naturals LLC
- Matti Honey and Beeswax Trading PLC
- Sheka-Nordic Honey and Beeswax Development Industry
- SYE Agroindustry PLC
- Yerkisho Honey and Wax Trading PLC
- Yirgu Gossaye (Yeshi Mar)

The 18 Dairy Innovation Fund grantees are:

- Alemayehu Assaye Kassa - NASEBA Animal Nutrition
- Bruke Yemane - Ethio-Feed PLC
- Binyam Kassa - Lactal Creamery P. L. C.
- Bruke Sewnet - InFineth Solutions
- Dawit Welegne - DAWIAB Milk Products Processing PLC
- Dr. Tadesse and Mrs Georgia - Debay Tadesse Farms
- Dr. Edget Tilahun – Edget Business Services
- Dukale Lamisso – Dairy Production and Milk Processing PLC
- Engedu Legesse - Guts Agro Industry PLC
- Fetlework Teferi - Brundo International PLC
- Getachew Worku - Hiwot Dairy Farm
- Hirut Alemayehu – Hirut Dairy Products Distribution
- Kedir Yimama - Lina Farms
- Merin Mengesha Erdaw – Eco Feeds Processing
- Tegegne Tarekegn – Tiget Powdered Milk Processing
- Tsehay Redda - Ethiopia Dairy Business Development Service
- Zeratzion Woldelul - Sixty Eighty Engineering PLC
- Zenebe Tesfaye - Zenebe Tesfaye General Metal Works