

Press Release



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USAID Commercial Farm Service Program Opens Center in Shashemane

Shashemane FSC is the sixth Ethiopian-owned farm enterprise to open in Oromia Region

Shashemane, Oromia Region, Ethiopia, June 12, 2014 – The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), held a ribbon cutting ceremony today for the Shashemane Farm Service Center (FSC). It is the sixth such center to open in Oromia Region, joining FSCs in Ambo, Bishoftu, Dodola, Fiche and Nekemte. The FSCs provide a complete range of supplies such as quality seeds, fertilizers, plant protection products, and veterinary products; information; and marketing links for Ethiopian smallholders, allowing them to make the step from subsistence to commercial production.

Implemented by CNFA, formerly the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs, the Commercial Farm Service Program provides grants and training to rural entrepreneurs, both men and women, to create Ethiopian-owned retail farm supply and service centers. These private businesses will serve as innovative models in Ethiopia and throughout Africa.

“USAID and CNFA are pleased to bring these commercial farm service centers with quality supplies, reliable products and extension services to smallholder farmers at fair prices to assist them to increase their production and household income,” said USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller. “Shashemane is the sixth farm service center in Oromia and we expect it will fast become a center of support to farmers in surrounding areas.”

Following a competitive application process, each of the six Ethiopian-owned enterprises received a \$40,000 grant that requires a minimum of 1:1 match on behalf of the entrepreneur to ensure that the FSC owner is invested in the enterprise.

“The extended support and unreserved efforts of USAID will allow us to import supplies directly from abroad, to cut out the middle men and to sell products at a lower price,” remarked Adanech Zewdie, the owner and operator of the Shashemane FSC. “This is a big achievement and great news to smallholder farmers in Shashemane.”

The Commercial Farm Service Program is a two-year pilot activity of USAID supported by President Obama's Feed the Future Initiative. Through Feed the Future, USAID is helping vulnerable households participate in economic activities and generate demand for products. These activities bring jobs and income opportunities for rural households.

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