

Collaborative training on seed production, marketing and Cooperative management

A collaboration workshop on seed production, marketing and cooperative management was organized by the integrated seed sector development project Amhara unit, from September 19-20/ 2018 at Debretabor. The workshop was facilitated by the ISSD project and participants were drawn from Farta woreda BoA, cooperative office and kebeles, where product place collaboration between CASCAPE and ISSD projects in effect. Precisely, the workshop was attended by Farta Woreda agriculture office 8 SMS members, 4 DAS, 9 cooperative leaders, CASCAPE and ISSD staffs.

The following workshop objectives were introduced at the start:

- Enhance the capacity of cooperative committee members in potato and malt barely seed production, marketing and cooperative organization
- Enhance the capacity of SMs and DAs in seed production, marketing and business planning

On the first session, the participants were introduced to the overall ISSD's project vision, best experiences fetched in the region and objective of the trainings by Dr Dereje Ayalew, the ISSD Project Amhara unit scientific coordinator. Initially, the projects focus on seed producer's faith in making local seed producers autonomous through technically well equipped, well organized, market oriented and strategically linked and reason for organizing such training were refreshed . It was also mentioned that projects will terminated and they may not support all-time, so the seed producers expected to stand as independent through achieving visions by using such technical trainings to effect. In addition, he encouraged the participants to fully concentrate and participate in the workshop, urging them to ask whenever there need some clarifications. He also urged the presenters to equip the farmers and experts with all the seed production, cooperative management and business techniques.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

seed production: ; isolation distance and its importance; best time of planting seed ; crop cultivation; plant protection; weed control; rouging; harvesting; certification standards for maize; and seed inspection and testing.

In this session, recommended isolation distance in malt barley and potato, different type of isolations that are commonly used by farmers, general crop management like best time of planting, crop cultivation, plant protection, weed control and harvesting are very important in seed production. Other operations like rouging off types and seed processing are important in ensuring seed purity. In all these operations seed inspection is carried out to ensure that the laid down procedures and standards are strictly followed.

Seed marketing: basic seed marketing concepts (vision of the seed producers, controllable factors critical for success of a seed business; external factors influencing seed sector development; basic components in the management of a business; business governance; financial indicators; production capacity; marketing issues; personnel; government and institutional factors; market potential; production and processing; financial security), four ps of marketing (product, price, place and promotion) were presented in detail. In the product (types of products, product cycles, product strategies), price (price determining factors such as cost, demand and competitors) with example, place (distribution channels, choice of channels and alternative channels) and promotion (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relation) were presented.

Organization: vision of the cooperative, cooperative values, principles, organizational structures, importance of the seed producer cooperative was presented in this theme.

Discussions arising from the presentations

I. Importance of rouging and our farmers reluctant to do so

The participants were eager to discuss what happen if we didn't rouge, its importance in seed production and the loss behind rouging. It was explained that rouging is the removal/uprooting of off types or plants that are totally different from the seed crop so as to ensure that the seed crop is pure and true to type. During discussion, it was discovered that farmers in general do not like removing the off types because this reduces the yield to be obtained. This also commented by all experts to rough appropriately and accept what the extension workers brought new approaches.

II. Farmers resistance to keep isolation distance

In the discussion session, our farmers reluctant to keep isolation distances also refreshed. The participants raised their concern about land in-availability which can make it impossible to achieve the required as isolation. It was explained that to produce quality seed and get good price, keeping isolating distance and using cluster approach were the best way and recommends for high yield.

III. Competing with giant seed producers

Members of the seed producer felt that it will be very difficult for them to compete with giant seed companies .It was explained to them that these companies were profit-oriented and expected to have capital but the contribution from farmers side is very low. This indicated that still you all have not yet trusted the cooperative. The important thing in such kind of seed producers is capital and trust by members. If you all shift the money that you have in ACSI to the LSB's account you will become effective.

IV. Seed price determination

Woreda expertise frequently raised the margin/mark up price on top of the grain price. The margin which is 20% is still low price to cover the costs of production, operational costs and the expected profit of the seed producer. They have the intention to implement a free price determination without government interference.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- *The project staffs strongly advises the experts and executive committee members to become committed in changing the LSB's and think about issue of making LSBs autonomous and secure sustainability in case of project termination*
- *The reason for more emphasis and focus on collaboration activities specially in malt barley and potato production were dialogues*
- *They were also grateful to be chosen from a very long list of communities to attend the training, but for the future participants raised the incorporation of overall seed producers in a case of such technical trainings*
- *They then promised to put into practice what they learnt in order for the project to be successful. With the effort they will put, they hoped that the seed producer would one day become a big cooperative and compete favorably with big companies in the region.*
- *Long term and short term plans preparation and implementation(business plan and market strategy)*
- *Regarding the relationship between the SPC and the unions, the project have to organize a discussion forum to solve the problem*
- *Finally the woreda participants agreed to strengthen their support to the seed producer cooperative*



Ato Mare Ayele, chairman of Addisalem seed producer cooperative, noted that the training which was provided by the project is an essential for us. Even if we have got so many trainings on seed production, marketing and cooperative management in the last years, the existing workshop is such like comparing our status with what ISSD expected from seed producers. The overall conversed ideas are just evaluating the SPC. This initiates us to feel the gaps timely and become strong in the upcoming years.

In the closing of the training workshop, Ato Ahmed Yimam, program manager of integrated seed sector development project Amhara unit strongly stresses the executive committees and woreda experts active involvement at all levels to sustainably drill and bargain the possible way out of the challenges which frequently raised by seed producers. Moreover, he also discourses the hard commitment which is expected from the participants, specially issue of making the seed producer independent without the support of ISSD and their curiosity to overcome seed producer cooperative challenges self-reliantly.