

NEWS STORY

Project on Integrated Seed Sector Development in Ethiopia
ISSD Oromia (East) project unit

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Mini-seed marketing becoming a core channel for seed acquisition by farmers in marginal seed systems area of Hararghe

With the objective to enhance the marketing of quality seed three SPCs (Misoma Gudina, Abdi Gudina, and Jalela Bishan Babile) were conducted mini-seed marketing with the facilitation of Chercher OdaBultum Farmers' Cooperative Union (COBFCU) and BENEFIT-ISSD Project. The mini-seed market was conducted at Guba Koricha woreda, Bube Kebele on May 1, 2019.

More than 150 farmers (60 women's) representing SPCs, local farmers, development agents, woreda experts and heads from Guba Koricha woreda Bureau of Agriculture and Natural resource (BoANR) office, woreda Cooperative Promotion Agency (CPA), COBFCU, Mechara Agricultural Research Centre (McARC), and BENEFIT-ISSD project were participated.

The SPCs brought seeds of different kinds of crops and varieties filled in small plastic jar that accommodate 2 kg (kilo-gram). Accordingly, Misoma Gudina SPC displayed 300 plastic jar containing common bean (variety-Awash-1) and Sesame (variety-Adi); Abdi Gudina SPC displayed 50 plastic jar containing Chickpea (Arerty) and Tef (variety-Boset); and Bishan Babile SPC displayed 100 plastic jar containing maize (Melkasa-2). A total of 450 plastic Jar were displayed for selling at mini-market. The prices of these seed filled in 2 kg jar were set at 30, 40, 50, 50 and 40 for maize, tef, sesame, chick pea, and common bean, respectively.

Alongside plastic jar, small seed pack of more than 50 crop variety portfolios were organized in quantities of 0.5-1 kg, aimed at a promoting and convincing tool before mini-market took place. This small seed pack was organized by COBFCU, McARC and BENEFIT-ISSD project.

The programme included opening remark by Guba Koricha woreda BoANR heads and introduction sessions to mini-seed market by COBFCU; round small seed pack exhibition/show case session in a group of 15 farmers facilitated by SPCs, COBFCU and McARC, and cooperatives mini-seed market.

This time mini-seed market is completely very different from last year session we conducted. The farmers didn't wait for promotion session; they directly run to buy the seed. A intense competition created among buyers to buy seed. A single farmer started collecting three to five jars. Due to this competition, those farmers who were waiting for their round was broke the line and started competition to buy seed. The entire jar the SPCs brought to mini-market were sold with in less than 30 minute.



Surprisingly, the buyers' competition to purchase seed of maize (Melkasa-2) variety was skyrocketed. The supply cut short versus high demand. Many farmers were very disappointed to not get/buy Melksa-2 variety. However, agreement was reached among Misoma Gudina SPC and seed buyers to bring additional 30 Quintal (Qt) of Melkasa 2 in small quantities that meet the farmers' purchasing power and quantity required. Accordingly Melkasa-2 variety was supplied to farmers

In general, the high competition witnessed this year revealed two interesting finding and lessons: 1) the mini-seed market conducted on the third day of on-set of rainy season where farmers expressed the timely accessibility of seed by saying "yeroo kanatti sanyiin boraatii teenya ta'uu qabdi" roughly translated "at this juncture of time our pillow should have to be our seed". 2) The Guba Koricha woreda, where mini-seed market was conducted is either marginal woreda where crop failure is common trends and there is little access to quality seeds and extension services. This might create high motivation for farmers to replace their local varieties of these crops.

Finally, specific outcome acquired from mini-seed market include: Farmers get to know availability of seeds of different crop varieties, its desirable traits and sources; SPCs were able to understand farmers' needs and create market linkage; Government agencies (BoANR and CPA) appreciated the approach and committed to strengthen this kind of seed marketing through SPCs; research centers and unions clearly understood farmers need to use quality seeds and linkage created among seed value chain actors.

Testimonials

My name is Sadiya Mohammed Usman. I am a resident of Guba Koricha woreda. We used to grow local crops. But we know that by using quality seeds you can improve your harvest by two folds. However, access becomes a problem to get quality seed. Today, I am very much impressed to see and bought quality seed. The amount and time it delivered is very good. I bought two jar of Common bean with small amount of money which considers my purchasing capacity. If the cooperatives and union continue this activity and supply seed locally we will ensure our food security.



My name is Nure Hashim. I am a resident of Guba Koricha woreda. I bought seeds of maize and Tef crops. Seed was not supplied to us like this to my information. As a result we had been using local seed which give low yield and susceptible to stresses. But today, I was happy to buy seed in my village with small amount I could afford. I decided to buy three crops viz. maize, common bean and teff. However, maize was finished before I bought and this has to be improved by the suppliers.



My name is Aliyi Mohammed, chairperson of Jalela Bishan Babile SPC. I observed that, the need of farmers for quality seed was very high in this woreda especially in small pack size as of today. I was supplied Melkasa-2 for this mini-seed market. The competition among farmers to buy seed is very strong.

