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Grantee Equipment Handover

Remarks by USAID Acting Deputy Mission Director Gary Robbins

September 21, 2015

Bishoftu, Ethiopia

It gives me great pleasure to be here today to participate in this event to officially handover equipment to USAID grantees.

With approximately one cow for every two people in Ethiopia, including over 10 million dairy cattle, the livestock sector here has enormous potential to reduce extreme poverty and malnutrition.

Through the Livestock Market Development activity, which is funded through the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative—USAID is working with the Government of Ethiopia to help turn that 'potential' into concrete gains.

The activity develops the capacity of businesses engaged in the livestock sector in highland woredas of Ethiopia which boast the best conditions for successful livestock rearing. The goal is to foster growth, reduce poverty and improve competition in Ethiopia's dairy, meat and live animal value chains in order to increase incomes and improve nutrition for smallholder farmers.

The activity also spurs innovation and investment in the livestock sector through a six million dollar innovation grant fund. Each grant, ranging from 25,000 to 300,000 dollars, is used for innovations and technologies that address critical constraints along the route from farm to market.

So the main reason we are here today is to officially transfer approximately 336,000 dollars in grant-purchased equipment to eight grantees working in the dairy, meat and live animal sectors.

These grants will spur local entrepreneurship and innovation as well as unblock obstacles these grantees face in producing and marketing better or new products and, eventually, grow more jobs in livestock businesses.

The innovation grants issued today include a variety of businesses operating in the livestock sector which will bring benefits not just for the grantees directly but also for smallholder livestock farmers in their areas.

Today's grants cover four major areas:

- **Artificial insemination.** The grantee seeks to improve dairy breeds by delivering better quality insemination services, making use of high quality semen from the United States. These better breeds help smallholder farmers increase milk production at their farms. Naturally, this leads to more income for the farmer—and more opportunities for his or her family.
- **Feed processing industries.** The grant will promote the production and supply of innovative feed solutions by converting agricultural waste into quality feed. This will increase the availability of animal feed at an affordable price while creating jobs for youth and women using a franchised business model.
- **An abattoir** which will use grant funds to develop a modern slaughterhouse with a daily capacity of 75 cattle and 150 smaller ruminants like goats and sheep for the domestic meat market.
- **Dairy processing plants.** Combined, they will increase the milk processing capacity by thousands of liters per day in major urban centers, thus providing reliable milk throughout the year. Dairy grants will also support farmers with training on proper composition and use of available feed to increase milk production at their respective farms.

We want to congratulate each of the eight grantees here today for having been selected, and for their ambition to improve their productivity while significantly contributing to Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan.

Thank you all for joining us today.