

# Press Release



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## ***NEW FERTILIZER BLENDING FACILITY OPENS IN ETHIOPIA***

***Nekemte, Oromia, Ethiopia, June 7, 2015*** – The Ministry of Agriculture, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Oromia Bureau of Agriculture, and the Agricultural Transformation Agency, today joined the Gibe Dedesa Farmers’ Cooperative Union to inaugurate a warehouse and one of the first fertilizer blending facilities in Ethiopia. Together, the warehouse and blending facility will help the cooperative to meet farmer demand for better fertilizer that will improve soil conditions and transform crop production in Ethiopia.

For several decades, Ethiopian smallholder farmers applied two types of fertilizers that deliver nitrogen and phosphorus nutrients—DAP and urea. However, soil tests show that croplands lack other essential nutrients such as sulfur, boron, potassium, zinc and copper. Demonstrations with wheat, maize, barley, teff, chickpea and sesame showed that blended fertilizers can enhance productivity and quality of all crops with yield advantages of up to 80 percent.

“Improved inputs, such as fertilizer and seeds, are a proven factor in agricultural productivity, so USAID, through the U.S. Government’s [Feed the Future](#) initiative, awarded over \$4 million in grants for improved inputs to help transform Ethiopian agriculture and benefit smallholder farmers,” said USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller.

With the 50 metric tons (MT) per hour blending facility, the Gibe Dedesa Farmers’ Cooperative Union expects the demand for blended fertilizer to exceed 105,000 MT annually and benefit hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers. The newly constructed 5,000 MT warehouse will expand the ability of the cooperative to meet farmer demand. The cooperative has 31 full time employees, represents 130 primary cooperatives and 87,000 smallholder farmers.

Including this facility in Nekemte, USAID is collaborating with partners to support the management of five fertilizer blending facilities using international consultants that bring decades of experience to help the cooperative run the facilities efficiently. USAID’s \$230,000 grant to the cooperative to construct the warehouse and manage the fertilizer blending plant is part of an integrated package of support aimed at increasing the cooperative’s ability to access better markets for its products and increase members’ income.

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