

# Press Release



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## SESAME WAREHOUSES OPEN EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS IN AMHARA AND TIGRAY REGIONS

### Four New Warehouses to Benefit Over 41,000 Smallholder Farmers

*Dansha, Tigray, Ethiopia, March 27, 2014* – The U.S. Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), inaugurated a new sesame warehouse in Dansha today with the Ethiopian Federal Cooperative Agency. This is one of four new warehouses constructed over the last 18 months in Tigray and Amhara Regions.

USAID cooperated on the construction of two warehouses in Tigray with the Setit Humera and Dansha Aurora FCUs and two more warehouses in Amhara with the Metema and Selam Farmers' Cooperative Unions (FCUs). The 20,000 Metric Ton storage capacity in the four warehouses will allow the FCUs to purchase more sesame from their combined 41,713 member farmers. USAID's investment of \$1.4 million and assistance in facilitating \$611,605 in loans from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia—a financing first for the bank and FCUs—was instrumental in construction of the warehouses.

USAID's goal is to bring these four FCUs into the export market by delivering necessary support including providing technical assistance in good agricultural practices, post-harvest handling and quality inspection and grading. Increased sesame production and better storage of the crop in a well-managed warehouse will improve quality so that these FCUs will meet the international market demand.

“Sesame farmers lose anywhere from 15% to as much as 25% of their product due to lack of proper and adequate storage,” said USAID Ethiopia official Cullen Hughes at the inauguration. “We are confident that the new warehouses will help reduce such post-harvest losses, increase exports, and contribute to the improved livelihoods of the farmers.”

“The sesame warehouses are an excellent example of the achievements possible with strong partnership and cooperation across important stakeholders,” said Usman Surur Siraj, Federal Cooperative Agency director general. “The warehouses will be vital to capitalize on an excellent export opportunity for the benefit of Ethiopia, the farmers' cooperatives unions and the smallholder farmers.”

USAID will continue to invest in new technologies to benefit smallholder sesame farmers and expand agricultural export opportunities for Ethiopia including innovation grants to leading FCUs for sesame cleaning machines to enable entrance into U.S., EU and Japanese markets.

Developing the sesame value chain is an important part of USAID's Agricultural Growth Program-Agribusiness Market Development Project, known by its Amharic acronym *AMDe*, part of the U.S. [Feed the Future initiative](#).

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