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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Handover of Pregnant Heifers to Local Farmers

Remarks

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USAID Ethiopia

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I am pleased and honored to be present at today's event that will hand over pregnant heifers to local farmers. This event marks the beginning of a different way of tackling poverty at the household level.

On June 20 of this year, U.S. Ambassador Donald Booth proudly announced the award of a four-year, two million dollar USAID grant to Project Mercy. Part of this grant included the program we are celebrating today.

That day, the Ambassador said, "Improving the health and economic status of all Ethiopians requires a collaborative endeavor among government and non-governmental organizations, community leaders and the community members themselves. Our shared goal is to end crises, prevent disease and preventable deaths of mothers and children, ensure food security and nutrition, and promote sustainable progress in the communities where Project Mercy operates."

USAID's Livestock Market Development Project, led by CNFA, will work with Project Mercy to train households in the care of the animals, methods of increasing milk production, and improving the nutrition of their children. Each of these families will receive a pregnant heifer by Project Mercy. With the training and improved heifers, farmers will increase their milk

consumption and be able to sell the excess to dairy processors. Within a two-year period we expect to see an increase in both nutritional status of the family as well as an increase in incomes.

This activity will strengthen the success of Project Mercy's current efforts to crossbreed local dairy cows in order to improve milk production. At the Project Mercy 140 hectare dairy farm in Chacha, right here in the Amhara Region, stakeholders are being trained in proper livestock management techniques, including a grant for the production and development of forage.

Today, as we transfer these five pregnant heifers to Project Mercy beneficiaries, we refocus on this integral part of our assistance, under the capable facilitation and management of the Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development project. This first step toward an enhanced livelihood, improved health opportunities and a likely enriched financial future underscores the potential results and impacts arising from the exchange knowledge and technology