

“We can achieve change only by promoting innovative ways to learn, reflect, and work together”



A story of change from Ethiopia



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Introduction

“I see mindset shifts being promoted by CDAIS” says Gemechu Nemie, director of the Ethiopian Animal Feed Industry Association (EAFIA) and a key member of the livestock feed safety and quality innovation niche. And this is the sort of change that the CDAIS project is beginning to engender, as partners start to implement approaches that better promote innovation in agriculture, by inspiring small and simple personal revolutions... Ethiopia is one of eight CDAIS pilot countries, and within each, several ‘niches’ or ‘innovation partnerships’ have been selected. Here we see how one small step in one country is already making waves...

From challenges to solutions

Research findings on the contamination of feeds by aflatoxin published by International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) scientists in 2015, prompted professionals and the feed industry to look more closely at the causes and control methods. Consequently, CDAIS partners helped to establish the ‘feed safety and quality innovation niche’ under the auspices of a task force of the Veterinary Drug and Feed Administration and Control Authority (VDFACA). This would lead the overcoming of identified problems and ensure feed safety and quality along supply chains, with members including a wide range of stakeholders representing government ministries and authorities (including VDFACA), farmers, traders, the Ethiopian Animal Feed Industry Association and Ethiopian Poultry Producers and Processors Association, amongst others.

CDAIS capacity needs assessment

The ‘capacity needs assessment’ for the livestock feed safety and quality innovation niche took place over three days, on 28-30 March 2017. It involved the active and intense input of 15 key stakeholders, including farmers and dairy producers, feed traders, associations, and policy makers. It introduced new concepts and tools such as the ‘problem and solution tree’, the ‘net-map’, and the ‘visioning’, opening participants’ eyes to different ways of seeing issues and identifying the most effective ways forward.



Participants at the CDAIS capacity needs assessment workshop.



Use of new tools and work together to prioritise problems, clearly identify possible solutions and understand the relationships of actors (problem tree, solution tree, and net-map results).

CDAIS capacity needs assessment...

After three days of intense discussion, solutions were identified and proposed that would overcome challenges to meeting the safety and quality of livestock feed. This innovation niche together agreed to develop legal framework and guidelines on feed risk assessments, risk management and risk communication. Thanks to the use of new tools introduced, they also proposed a plan of action that would lead to definite impacts in the short to medium term.

A farmer reflects...

“The CDAIS training helped me to gain new knowledge on feed safety and quality issues,” the dairy farmer Tsegay Teklemariam pointed out, five months after attending the capacity needs assessment. He spoke from his milk parlour on how those few days had changed his way of thinking: “We all talked together about the history of the problem, the impacts of poor feed safety and quality, aflatoxin concerns, possible solutions, and new global issues regarding feed safety and quality”.



“I believe that we can, and will, make an impact”.
Tsegay Teklemariam, dairy farmer, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

And thanks to the training, I came to understand the concept and benefits of agricultural innovation systems by using new ideas, how to identify challenges and solutions, and how to reach an actual action plan through working with others”. Tsegay explained that “The visioning tool was especially educational. I tried to implement it in my own activities, and envisioned going into the milk and feed processing business in the future. It helped to give me a clear direction.” Thanks to CDAIS, change is happening.



“There is much to do...”
Tsegay Teklemariam, dairy farmer, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The bigger picture

A key stakeholder, the Ethiopian Animal Feed Industry Association (EAFIA), was established by feed factory owners, private dairy farmers and feed manufacturing cooperatives in 2008. From the vantage point that the EAFIA offers, its director Gemechu Nemie adds that the capacity need assessment workshop and the coaching plan and monitoring evaluation learning workshop that followed also had many other positive impacts.

The bigger picture...



“I have a dream that other members of EAFIA can benefit like me”.

Gemechu Nemie, director of the Ethiopian Animal Feed Industry Association (EAFIA)

“Above and beyond, I have realized the importance of the new tools we learnt, and how they stimulated thinking on how best to approach feed safety and quality issues. I drew essential lessons from this, and feel that I have new skills. Thanks to CDAIS for enabling joint learning, new uses of knowledge and for creating an enabling environment for interaction. This has also inspired other members to develop legal frameworks and guidelines for risk assessment, risk management and risk communication to build a vibrant legal feed safety and assurance system. The intended legal framework will assist Ethiopia to meet international requirements, ensure human health, build consumer confidence in animal product, and legalize the often informal animal feed business.”

“CDAIS is playing a paramount role in addressing the lacking legal framework for risk assessment, risk management and risk communication in the country”.

Gemechu Nemie, director of the Ethiopian Animal Feed Industry Association (EAFIA)

What does the future hold?

The CDAIS workshops had important impacts on my thinking. I recognised marked changes” say Gemechu Nemie, “and particularly in how to innovate. Using skills gained from CDAIS, Gemechu is planning to conduct a similar capacity needs assessment survey of his own organisation to support the preparation of a five-year action plan. “I want to share knowledge and the skills gained from CDAIS”. To do so, he wants that the project offers well documented tools and best practices, along with experiences from the many different workshops, as “these could help convince others to follow the ‘agricultural innovation systems’ as the obvious way forward”.

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Feed safety and quality is one of five innovation niches in Ethiopia being developed as part of the CDAIS project. For more information, visit <http://cdais.net/home/pilots-countries/ethiopia/>

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