LOW INPUT SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN THE RIFT VALLEY, ETHIOPIA

A partnership project of;

- ***University of Saskatchewan and***
- ***Awassa College of Agriculture, Southern Region University***
- ***Awassa Agricultural Research Center***
- ***National Soil Research Laboratory***
- ***Addis Ababa University***

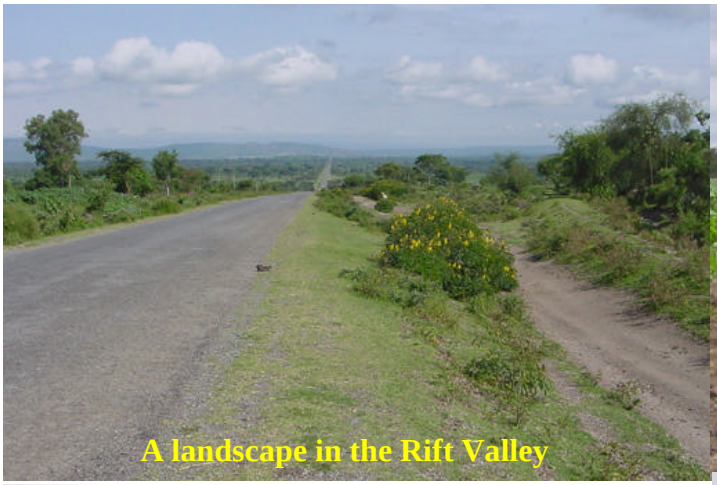
Sponsored by the University Partnership in Cooperation and Development (UPCD) Tier 2 of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Year 2001 No. 4

Project Activities in 2001

Project field work and extension in South Central Rift Valley, Ethiopia.

Dr. M. Grevers was in Ethiopia between May 27 and June 10/2001. He visited all the three cooperating Ethiopian Institutions, CIDA Support Unit, Canadian Embassy, Agricultural Research Centers in Debra



A landscape in the Rift Valley

Experimental site at Alaba with nitrogen-fixing plants

Plant protection operation

Growing maize with different treatments

Outputs:

- **New ideas proposed to develop future strategies for international collaboration in Ethiopia. The first draft of a proposal involved by Ethiopian collaborating organizations was put forward.**
- **Canadian Faculty interacted with Ethiopian graduate students and Staffs in Ethiopia.**
- **Recognition of the current LISA Project by other Ethiopian Agricultural teaching, research, and service organizations, as well as at the U of S.**
- **Project extension within the framework of the project mid term evaluation.**

a) GRADUATE TRAINING:

Ms. Martha Dawit and Mr. Bereket Assefa, two Ethiopian graduate students are nearing the completion of their M.Sc degrees, both had permission to write. Two new students have arrived in Saskatoon (Mr. Takele and Mr. Fikre). They completed their first year of a M. Sc. Program at the U of S. Their Advisory Committee, research topics, and graduate classes were established. In May, both students have engaged in the field and lab programs. The graduate students turned out to be among the best graduate students in the Department. Credit goes to those who spent time and efforts to select them, both in Ethiopia and Canada.

b) TRAINING OF FARMERS:

Experimental work was continued in the selected farmer's field with their participation. The low input sustainable agriculture technology was also demonstrated to other farmers in the reporting year.

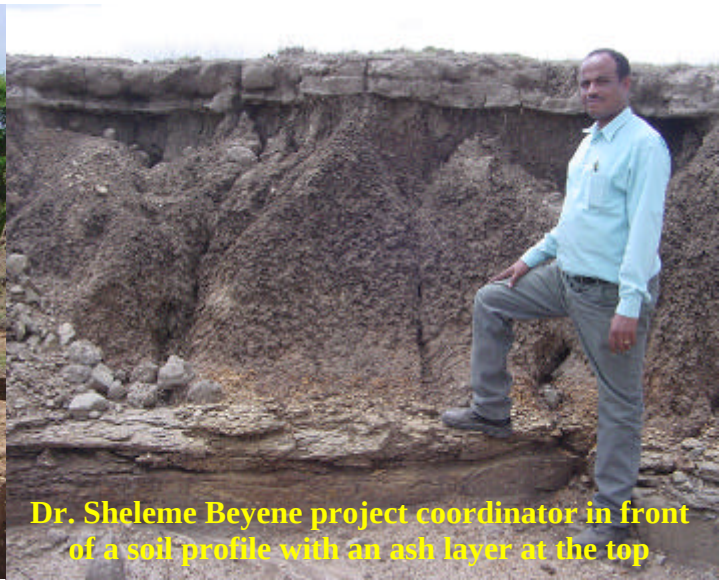
Outputs:

- **Two new excellent graduate students spent a year in Saskatoon. The earlier two students completed their research and are writing their thesis.**
- **Recognition of the Ethiopian graduate students in the College of Graduate Studies Research**
- **Training of farmers continued.**

Ethiopian grad student in his field experiment

Water infiltration experiment

A Polygenetic soil profile with volcanic ash layer at the top



Dr. Sheleme Beyene project coordinator in front of a soil profile with an ash layer at the top

CONTRIBUTION TO POVERTY REDUCTION

Ethiopia had chronic shortage in food supply. Improved soil management strategies are of direct benefit to farmers and increased food production. One of the main objectives of the project is to increase the capacity of Ethiopia to deal with land degradation and development of appropriate technologies for improved food security, which is essential for Ethiopia in the next decades.

PARTICIPATION OF TARGET POPULATION

Staff members of other projects supported by Canadian Government in Ethiopia (mainly CIDA), Diplomatic missions (Canadian and Ethiopian Embassies), local NGOs, Government Research and Development organizations, and most importantly farmers were contacted. The aim was to build strong partnership and helping people to help themselves and make sure the best is attempted.

VISIBILITY OF RESULTS

The field activities of the year 2001 were started very well. Neighboring farmers worked as laborer and observed the activities. The current project has become a highly visible one in Ethiopia. It may become one of the target areas for the College of Agriculture at the U. of S. There is a strong collective desire by several Faculties and Staff members interested in international development program.

Highly eroded clay soil landscape

Despite erosion biomass production is high in areas with sufficient rainfall

Soil sampling from a profile

Young farmers at the Sodo experiment site

Study of a soil profile and sampling

A typical landscape in Sodo agriculture region

HOW THE PROJECT IS ADDRESSING CIDA'S BASIC PRINCIPLES:

Women in Ethiopia are disadvantaged and lack employment opportunities. The three co-operating Institutions are well aware of gender equality. Ms. Martha Dawit from the Awassa College of Agriculture and Ms. Kidist Babosha from the Southern Agricultural Bureau are therefore, added to the Ethiopian Co-ordination Committee. Ms. Martha Dawit is currently in Saskatoon and is about to complete her graduate studies.

The project addresses Soil Degradation for the protection of environment, sustainable land development and crop production.

UPDATE ON CRITICAL RISK FACTORS

Natural droughts may influence the crop production. The national Soil Research Laboratory has provided cars for fieldwork and we also benefited from the CIDA unit in Addis Ababa. Erosion on Canadian currency and increased travel expenses is now becoming a great concern. However in general project is in good shape.

OUTCOME/BENEFITS OF THE COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

- **Enhancement of the capacity and capability of the faculty. Four staff members trained for M.Sc. Degree.**
- **Laboratories are equipped.**
- **One vehicle is purchased for field research, practical training and other project activities.**
- **The staff members share international experience through short-term training, professional visits, and international workshop.**
- **Improvement of the capacity of Ethiopian collaborating Institutions' libraries improved.**
- **Development of international communication and networking.**
- **Appropriate technologies generated for sustainable crop production.**
- **Individual farmers are motivated and trained to adopt management strategies recommended through research.**
- **The Canadian scientists enrich their experience in tropical agriculture and resource management.**
- **7 computers, LCD, digital camera, digital videotape purchased and used in the post graduate program and research activities.**
- **Strong linkage encouraged among the partner institutions (U of S, ACA, AARC, and NSRC).**
- **Improved soil management strategies for direct benefits to farmers and increase food production.**
- **Contribution to ecologically sound and sustainable agriculture on degraded fragile lands in the Rift Valley.**
- **ACA tried to disseminate findings of the college to farmers by extension activities.**

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