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## Large Scale – Small Scale Collaboration: Successful Outreach with Vegetables in an Irrigation Scheme - Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

Small scale farmers with approx. 0.5 ha mainly produce for subsistence. Irrigation schemes offer opportunities for up to three harvests to produce a surplus for the market. No access to quality input suppliers, Low production quality, lack of access to knowledge and mechanisation, underdeveloped markets, and transportation facilities as well as high rates of the middlemen, hinder an economically feasible access to the markets and the use of the advantage being situated in an irrigation scheme. An international investor in the KOGA irrigation scheme South of Bahar Dar / Ethiopia is confronted with an increasing demand of vegetables from the national and international market and therefore started an outreach programme with 131 farmers in the first phase. Farmers were introduced into resetting their cropping system to keep the soils healthy from leguminous diseases, optimising their tillage system and seed bed preparation, have been introduced how to avoid fertiliser losses in a trench irrigation system, how to optimise irrigation water and how to apply the mineral fertiliser efficiently as well as an application of pesticides fulfilling international GLOBAL G.A.P. standards including issues like workers health, safety and welfare, environment protection and pesticides residues. Professional agronomists from the company guide the whole management. Harvest is directly transferred to the local post-harvest facility, and then transferred to local, national and international markets. In the first year farmers have been able to increase their income with approx. 1.500 Euros, which is approx. a plus of 100% of the total annual farm income. Next step is to integrate more farmers, to optimise the crop rotation (forage legumes), integrating organic matter management (farm yard manure; alley cropping) with the long-term objective to come close to, or even fulfil organic farming standards and developing the regional and national organic market. Main challenge of this approach is proper organic fertiliser management, pest and disease management and certification.

**Keywords:** Income generation, organic farming, outreach, small scale farmers