



Tropentag, September 15-17, 2021, hybrid conference

“Towards shifting paradigms in agriculture
for a healthy and sustainable future”

Improvement of Linkages Between Research-producers in Tef Vc in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Tef (*Eragrostis tef*) is the most important cereal crops in Ethiopia in terms of food and feed (straw), medicine, cash and foreign currency earnings. In a country of nearly 114.9 million people, Tef is staple food over 77 % Ethiopian population (114.9 million). Tef covered 3.1 million hectares (30 % of cereals (10.5 Million ha)), over 7.1 million households grow tef and its production is 5.7 million tons (20 % of cereals 29.7 MT) annually (CSA, 2020). Tef is nutritional & healthy crops. Importantly, tef is also gluten-free so it is well-suited to address growing global gluten-free demand. It is considered as the “latest super food of the 21st century. However, it has been historically neglected compared to other staple grain crops, yields are relatively low (1.85 t/ha compared to 6 t/ha at research plot), and long and complex value chain, limited number of traders and market outlets, lack of access to improved seed, poor availability of farm implements, poor extension linkage and export of tef grain is banned due to low production and volatility of the price of tef. In addition, while wholesale prices for tef are relatively high making the crop attractive to some producers as a cash crop, the production costs are also high as reflected by the high fertiliser prices and the labour intensity of cultivation, weeding, harvesting, and threshing. Knowledge sharing, training, follows up of tef value interventions, and actors linkages contribute to improve the skill and knowledge of value chain actors and service providers, including women. Availability of improved technologies (varieties and farm implements) results in expansion of tef production areas. Farmers’ group seed enterprise can multiply and be source of improved varieties for smallholder farmers. Farmer to farmer exchange, strengthen existing cooperatives and farmer groups can make up the market for improved different option can be used depending on the stage of development. Thus, the aim of the project is to improve tef productivity, profitability, and sustainability by improving research- producers’ linkage and implementing actionable value chain interventions.

Keywords: Research- producer linkage, tef, Value chain