# Interviews on non- farming by females in Kormargefia, North Shewa

## Cash crop trading

### Most important cash crop sold by a ‘middlewoman’ trader

There is no trader who gathers crops at harvest time for sale to a larger trader.

### Middlewoman trader’s activity

There is no individual who gathers crops at harvest time for sale to a larger trader. As the large town market, Debre Berhan, is near to the kebele nobody wants to lose the profit that he/she could make by bringing their own grain to the market.

### Small trader’s activity

None

### Self-trader’s activity

 She usually brings her crop to the market in the harvesting season, December and January. In addition, as she pointed out, sometimes she sells crops in the cropping season to identify and buy crops of the same grain which could have good quality to be used as seed. And, if some amounts of crop remain after sowing, she will bring it to the market because it is a good time to sell crops at expensive prices.

She has been trading crops for the last eight years, the year when she moved to the kebele. As she explained, she had been living in the neighbouring wereda forming her independent household. After she got divorced, she moved to the kebele where she was born and grew up.

She said that there is around a 100% increment in the price of gains and pulses. And, there is high demand in the market where many large traders and consumers used to purchase. However, she mentioned that it seems that there is a decline in the production of grain such as barley and wheat as well as pulses as the supply at the market in Debre Berhan is low.

There is better access to transport service compared to the past. Sometimes, when she wants to take a crop more than 100kg, she uses pack animals for transportation because the unit cost of transportation tends to increase with the amount of the crop.

As she said, it is impossible to know the amount of the profit on what she produced by herself. In reality, it is generally impossible to find a farmer on subsistence level who can value his labour on his plot of land to produce a specific crop. Nevertheless, she mentioned the selling price of three types of crops and a pulse in the last harvesting season. i.e. A kilogram of Barley, wheat, ‘Sinar’ and linseed was sold for 5, 8, 3 and 12 birr respectively.

There is no tax for self-traders.

There is no problem in trading these crops and pulse, as she explained. She clearly mentioned that the crops could not be described as cash crops as the lion’s share of the produce will be used for consumption in the household. So problems in relation to trading have a minimal impact on the household.

## Livestock trading

### Shoats

She bought two sheep, but not for sale. However, she realized that the sheep are not in a position to give birth and she was forced to sell them. In addition, she sold four more sheep from the stock she owned.

All were local breeds. Two of them were females while the remainder are males. The selling price of the two females were 1300 and 600 birr and for the males it was 1500, 600, 600, and 500 Birr.

She mentioned that the trading of sheep is an occasional activity for the household. She tried to fatten them for two to three months and sell them in time of holidays such as New Year, Christmas and Easter. Beside this, sometimes she may sell to finance urgent basic needs such as school and health cost of children. She usually buys sheep from ‘Debre Berhan’ town market.

She usually sells at Chacha town, Angolela and Tera wereda. As she explained, there is a difference in value of sheep between Debre Berhan and Chacha town. It is better at Chacha town.

 She said that there are two groups who are buying sheep in the market; owners of hotels and wholesale traders. Owners of hotels in the town prefer fattened sheep as they are good for consumption. On the contrary, traders do not give much emphasis to the size of the sheep; they buy sheep in all size ranges. They do not care about their quality, perhaps because they are going to trade them at wholesale prices.

The respondent said that she fixed the price based on her judgement. There is no culture of skimming the market price. As she said, everybody fixes the price independently and tries to trade at that price. However, the ability to sell at the fixed price is dependent on the bargaining power of the buyer. Usually, as she described, self-traders will not sell their livestock at the price that they fix before taking them to the market.

There is seasonal variation in the market value of shoats. The price of shoats increases around holidays such as New Year, Christmas, Easter, the birth of Saint Mary (Ginbot 1), Saint George in October, and July.

She made 200 and 300 Birr profit, in sum 500 Birr from selling the two female sheep. However, she does not know the amount of profit from the others as they were born and reared in the household.

She paid three Birr for each sheep.

She does not trade shoats in large scale. She uses the money that she gets from selling milk. As she said, from July to October, she produces around 5 litres of milk per day. And, when the price became dearer, the production of milk declined because of lack of fodder. Currently, the selling price of a litre of milk is 7 birr and 30 cents.

As she explained, she cannot afford to purchase shoats as she needs. She has to balance her expenses in such a way to enable her to save some money and purchase shoats. She does not have a business licence.

She conducts her business by herself. Sometimes, her children may help them in herding and taking them to the market place, Chacha.

The respondent said that she is a divorced woman living with her three children. As a household head, she tries to generate income for the household. She owns ½ hectare of farmland on which her brothers work for her benefit. Besides this, she has two cows as well as chickens from which she makes livestock product for the market. Collecting wood and making dung cakes for the market are also sources of income in which she has been involved for the past years. Above all, she purchases eucalyptus tree in the field and she separate the wood and the leaves for market which is profitable.

She is not a student. And, she got informal education in the derg regime.

She has been trading shoats for the last eight years i.e. since she got divorced and formed an independent household.

As she said, animal diseases are affecting her livestock trading. Recently, many sheep died because of diseases inside their stomach; “their stomach stores water”. Beside this, there is no change in the number of shoats traded each year as she is doing it occasionally. She proposed access to a better vet service and improved breeds.

## Livestock products

### Women traders in livestock products

There is no middleman in trading livestock product in the kebele. However, the woman who collects milk from the kebele may be a middle woman to other daily farming.

## Micro, small and medium enterprises

###  Skilled production

There are about five men carpenters in the community. They work in their part-time. The ones who are more experienced build corrugated iron sheet houses; they make the base of the house with stone. In addition, they build ‘underground + 1’ houses; the underground has a wall made from stone while the rest will have a wall made from mud. They make the doors and windows by using timbers.

Besides this, all carpenters make beds, a box which functions as a cupboard, chairs as well as ‘Agdami’, kitchen cupboards, ‘kursi’ (a small sized agdami for an individual), material to put on cups in time of coffee ceremony ‘sini maqirebiya’, tables and so on in different size and quality.

There is no potter in the kebele. Similarly, there is no blacksmith, block maker, wool product maker or tanner in the kebele. Basket making by women and females i.e. ‘sifet’ is very common in the community. However, almost all make and use them in the household. A basket maker, who is still making and selling baskets in the market, described that in the past there were many females who make ‘sifet’ for the market. At the present time, according to her perception, they stopped it and left the community because they knew that they could make a lot of money with less effort in towns and cities by becoming daily labourers on different on-going constructions as well as domestic servants. Thereafter, they look for other job opportunities in Arab states as she mentioned.

Currently, she, the respondent, is the only woman who makes ‘sifet’ of all kinds in different designs and colours for a market. She said that the length of time she spends making ‘sifet’ differs between the types and the design she uses. She starts making it early in the morning (6:00AM to 7:00 AM) and continues after she does other domestic works, including herding at 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Sometimes she may extend it to 9:00PM depending on the burden of domestic work in that specific day. Using the above mentioned time table, she makes ‘Enqib’(relatively large size material to store a grain temporarily), ‘Gebeta’ (material used to serve food), ‘sefed’ (flat material used to winnow and clean grain), ‘Yenjera mesob’ (material used to store baked injera), ‘yedabo Mesob’ (material used to store baked bread), ‘Eribo’ (material used to serve bread, roasted grain and the like), ‘Gurzign’ (larger sized material to store agricultural products such as grain and pulses), ‘mesobe work’ (material used to store jewelleries, money, documents, pictures and the like) within a month, a month, 10 days, two months, a month, a day, a week and 15 days and selling price 140, 160-170, 30-40, 350-360, 200-250, 10-12, 60-70,and 150-100 Birr respectively.

She sells the products in Debre Berhan market, where she believes there is better selling price as it is more urbanized than other towns such as Checha.

Spinning is a skill which was used to evaluate a woman especially in times of marriage. It was said that a woman has to be able to spin cotton that has an amount at least to make a ‘gabi’ for her husband when he needs to have a new one. Therefore, almost all married women have the skill of spinning. However, no one is producing it for sale.

There is no enterprise established by these skilled workers. Similarly, there is no small building enterprise in the community.

### Livestock and products production

There is no person who buys cattle and shoats to distribute to other people to fatten.

There is no cooperative involved in the commercial production of livestock products. However, there are households who produce milk in traditional ways and provide it to a large milk trader in the community. It seems milk is becoming a highly commercialized livestock product which can be seen in the decline in the willingness of households to consume milk or to engage in traditional processing which was very common in the past years.

The change in this commercialization is that several years ago a famous dairy farm in Ethiopia named ‘Sholla Wetet’ had been collecting milk from the community directly. There was no involvement of middlemen in the trading. Beside this, though it seems unstable, there is a general increase in the selling price of milk.

### Local drinks and food production

The respondent said that there are around 15 women who engaged in the production of Areki for the market in a large scale. There are also women who buy areki from their neighbours in the kebele as well as from Debre Berhan market and have an open areki house in their living home.

There is a woman who makes tella once a week on Sunday for market. In addition, she sells areki (she does not produce it), Beer, Soft drinks and bread all days in the week. She is the only person who sells Tella, Beer, Soft drink and bread in the community. Therefore, there is no market competition for the aforementioned food and drinks.

There are few people who engaged in petty production of ‘Areki’. In most cases, people produce areki not only for the benefit that they get from selling and drinking it but for its residue. The residue is in great demand as a fodder. They said that those cows accessing this residue are in a better position to produce a lot of milk.

### More detail on areki production

All women who produce areki do not do so throughout the year. Most of them do not produce in the rainy season because of the lack of fuel as well as lack of sun heat to dry up the malt. however, there is no seasonal variation in the selling price of Areki.

She said that she produces 50 litres of Areki in a month and started producing in 2010. She produces it each 15 days. Most of the women sell it in Debre Berhan market where a specific place for Areki Production is found. Similarly, she provides her Areki to the same market at least twice a month. She does not sell in her home or to neighbours who do not produce it but sell it by opening a ‘bar’ in their home.

There is no one who has a licence in production and trading of Areki in the community.

As the respondent explained, most of them buy the inputs such as barley, wheat, maize, sorghum and Hops from Debre Berhan market. They pay for inputs from the profit they made as well as from income from other sources such as selling dungcakes and wood. Nevertheless, sometimes they may use grain from household consumption, especially when they start the production. In general, if they produce Areki with good quality, they will not have a problem to cover the cost of inputs.

The respondent mentioned that there is no big variation in the price of Areki in the market. The fixers of the price are wholesale traders who provide it to Addis Ababa, Sheno, and other towns and cities. She also said that there is no seasonal variation in its price except in the rainy season when the price increases because of shortage of supply for the aforementioned reasons.

She estimated that she makes 100 to 200 birr profit in a month. According to her explanation the input cost to produce 25 litre of Areki is as follows; Hops cost 50 Birr, wheat costs 160 Birr, Maize costs 130 Birr, and sorghum 126 Birr. The sum of the total cost of input, except labour, which is difficult to estimate, is 466 Birr. The selling price of 25 litres of Areki ranges from 560 to 600. The profit per 25 litre ranges from 94 Birr to 134 Birr. Generally she makes a profit which ranges from 188 Birr to 268 Birr in a month, which does not take the cost of labour in other inputs, such as water, into account. From the beginning to the final distillation stage, she uses around 120 litres of water.

 She does most of the work herself. However, she gets support from her oldest daughter ; she makes a powder of Hops using a traditional grinder, takes the grain to the grain mill, and bakes the bread, which is the major input for Areki production. As she said, if she faces health problems, she will even do the distillation. Besides this, she does not have a hired employee.

She said that the main problem she faces in the production of Areki is related to the method of distillation. As she said, its distillation is very sensitive so that a mistake in a single step will lower the quality and strength of it. Sometimes, it may change its natural flavour.

### Non-farm women producer co-operatives

There is no non-farm co-operative in the kebele.

### Natural resource sale

Selling wood is very common in the community. All days of the week, they take wood as well as dungcakes to the market. And it seems these are the main natural resources to get cash. However, there are 24 households providing wood in large scale. The type of wood they sell is not a wood for fuel but for building houses. The type of the wood is eucalyptus and it takes around 5 years to grow big enough for the market. Wholesale traders of wood come to the community with cars and take the wood from households who own a large amount.

The households get the wood from their own land. Currently, there is a high interest among the community to plant eucalyptus which is perceived as a source of cash as well as climate regulator. There is no legal production of charcoal in the community.

There are a few people who make charcoal and use it in the home. Few people send it to their children who moved to towns like Debre Berhan and Tebase for education. And, the rest of them sell it in the Debre Berhan market.

The kebele administration was following up the making of charcoal. Finally, they found that the people were using their own wood, specifically, the root of old eucalyptus tree, to make it.

Similarly to Dungcakes and wood, most people sell grass including straw. They cut grass from their own land, not from the communal land. There is no government action to stop it.

There is plenty of access to stone in the community. Recently, there is stone exploitation from the community by investors who been given legal permission by the wereda. There is no payment for the kebele. However, if they take it from a farmer’s farmland, they will pay 50 birr to the owner of the land.

### Petty production

There is no petty production in the community.

### Service enterprises

NA

### Food-processing services

Currently, there is only one grain mill in the community and it uses electricity as a source of energy. There was another grain mill which was using kerosene as a source of energy. It stopped working three years ago because of the high cost of kerosene. People preferred going to the grain mill which uses electricity because it is cheaper. The grain mill is located in ‘Kabiy Gizaw ‘sub kebele , nearer to the main external road.

Grain mill is the only food processing service in the community.

### Hospitality services

There is no medium or smaller sized hotel or restaurants in the kebele. All bars, Areki houses, are in the owners’ living room. No one has built a separate house for the business. There are around 10 ‘Areki houses’ in the community. There are not more than five people who open their ‘bars’ all the days in a week.

There is a woman who sell tella(local beer), beer, Areki, Soft drinks as well as bread.

There is no competition in the price of Areki. All sellers of Areki sell one single glass for 1 Birr and 50 cents. They all do the business by themselves; there is no employee for this purpose.

### Health services

There is no clinic or pharmacy in the kebele. There are two traditional medical practitioners in the community. One of them is a bone setter. He is an individual who has been treating bone disorders by using traditional methods. For instance, he uses raw butter, different kinds of leaves and herbs that are believed to make the skin softer in such way as to make the bone settling easier. The other gives medicine made from different plant leaves and roots for diseases like skin allergies.

There is no shop for veterinary services. The wereda has assigned one veterinarian to three kebeles including Kormargefia. The person brings medicines and vaccinations with him when he comes each week. If suddenly any other diseases occur the DA (livestock specialist) will inform him to come with the medicine.

### Shops

There is a mini-shop in the kebele, opened in this year. The owner of the shop is a grade 6 student. He sells goods such as biscuits, soaps, pen, and so on. This is the first shop to be opened in the community.

### Leisure services

There is one table tennis table in one of the primary school rooms for grade 0 to 6. There is no table football, play stations or billiards game to rent in the community. The kebele chairman has a TV but he does not charge people who want to watch television programs.

There are grounds maintained for hand ball at three schools in the community. And also, football grounds are available for students in all schools.

### Petty services

There is no provision of petty services in the community at all.

### Transport services

There is no provision of transportation service. People use their own pack animals to transport materials as well as people.

## Government support for non-farm activities

There is no government support for non-farm activities. The government does not provide credit, land, inputs and so on. However, they try to give advice on non-farm business when there is a meeting held for different purpose like conferences of ‘Ginibar Qedem’ farmers.

There is no government tax or demand that people get business licenses for non-farm activities.

There are individuals who are using electricity in the kebele. The kebele chairman, the owner of the grain mill, as well as a church (Saint Gabriel) have been using electricity for many years. There were two more households using electricity. However, they stopped using the service because there was a disagreement on the service payment and they were tired of the neighbours who wanted to charge their mobile phones in their home.

The kebele chairman uses electricity for lighting, mobile charge, and for TV. He also gives a mobile charge service for other farmers for free.

## Non-farm employment

There are around 10 people who work in Debre Berhan blanket factory. There are four men employed as guards for the school, health post and kebele office, which are located in the same place. One of them paid 200 birr a month while the others get 120 birr. There are 6 people working in the Amhara region Agricultural research institute, located in Faji. There are 3 people working in the investment site (milking and guard), located in Kormargefia sub-kebele, Kabi Gizaw ‘got’.

There are more than 80 people from the kebele employed further away. This figure is an estimate by respondents working in the kebele office. There is no NGO job in the community. There is no local industry.

There are no jobs available for traders or productive service enterprises. There are no domestic servants in houses or small businesses. However, a business woman hires people on a contract base.

There is casual non-farm work in the Amhara Region Agricultural Research institute. In addition, the on-going ‘Habesha’ beer factory has new casual work opportunities at its beginning stage. Farmers were hired to dig a place to bury tubes for water provision to the coming Beer factory. For a metre length tube, they were paid 10 Birr. A farmer who is strong was getting from 80 to 100 birr per day.