# Interviews on farming in Ude, East Shewa

## Place

### Altitude and terrain

The climate in Sirba is Woinadega (moderate) which is suitable for production of teff, wheat, chickpeas and peas. There are improved seeds and seedlings available of teff, wheat, lentils, chickpeas and peas are distributed and are suitable to the temperature. Very rarely, shortage of rain occurs; although it has not caused severe problems.

### Soil

There are three types of soils which are locally known as *Koticha* (Black), *Gumbure* (red) and *ashewama* (Sandy). Koticha is very suitable for teff and wheat while gumbure is suitable to produce chickpeas and peas. These two types of soil are suitable and productive when there is good rain and when they get fertilizer. Five years ago, fertilizer was given on credit because most people were not able to afford it in cash. At the present time, as the community has appreciated its benefit and as it is believed that the financial capacity of most people has grown sufficiently so that they are able afford the price, it is available only in cash. The respondents feel that the credit system would benefit most because there can be people (although few) who can’t afford to buy fertilizer in cash at once. Inequality is created by the capacity to afford the price of fertilizer in cash at once because only those who have enough money would buy it and consequently would produce more than those who do not use enough fertilizer to their land because of financial constraints. Hence, the later ones would produce less.

Fertilizer is very commonly used mainly for Koticha type of soil and it is less used for the gumbere type of soil. The community members also use compost; but only for the land at near their backyard. This is because it needs to be prepared near to their residence and it becomes difficult to carry it to the farm land. Not all people use compost because it requires lot of animals’ dung and intensive labour work.

Improved seeds of chickpeas and lentils were introduced by the DAs some three years ago and are suitable for the soil. There are also pesticides which can be bought from Debrezeit or from the kebele agriculture office. All farmers who produce chickpeas use pesticides.

### Ecosystem

Three years ago, some plots of land in the village were reserved for growing trees, and this is starting to look like ‘emerging forest’. This is supposed to help to protect against soil erosion, to attract wild animals, bring rain and prevent drought.

There is no communal grazing land. Cattle eat grass when there is no farming and when the crops are collected. People send their cattle to their own farmland only. Otherwise, they keep them at home and feed them.

There are some hyenas which also come in to the community during the night time; but they are not dangerous. There are some monkeys, snakes and apes. But there are no other wild animals as the forest is not good enough to attract them.

Farmers watch the rain season and start to prepare their land for production. They plough, sow seeds, weed, use anti-weed medicines, pesticides and collect their crop on time. Most farmers use crop rotating system. They also use fertilizer and compost. During the 2004EC rain season, the rain came early and stopped early. This caused some dryness and some farmlands were cracked due to the dry wind that followed the rain. This caused a reduction in the amount of teff and wheat production. There was no explanation by the DAs about this change. May people think that it was caused by the ‘*wa*g’ which was occurred during the rain time.

Last year, there was a livestock disease which gave some cattle and chickens intestinal diseases. This disease, however, was controlled soon by the kebele vet. For three years, there has been no livestock disease because the livestock are timely vaccinated and are treated soon in the Vet clinic at Udie if infected. People now can afford the health cost which is 5birr- 300birr for medicine or medical treatment of their livestock. There has been no report of new livestock diseases. There, however, was some kind of crop disease which had affected the all types of crops grown in Koticha type of soil. There were also some weeds but they are not new. These weeds were controlled by the public work in the form of campaign.

Shoats die due to different diseases especially intestinal parasites. However, the disease has always been controlled before it kills many animals. The poultry disease occurs almost every rainy season or right after the rain stops. Many chickens die due to cold or typhoid like infections. This occurs 3-4 times a year and discourages people to keep poultry as it kills them all at one time. The breed chickens are also reported to be vulnerable for these diseases. Despite this, medicines and treatments are available at the veterinary clinic.

There is no report about diseases that attack bees.

The main source of water for farming is rain and there is only one rain-season in a year.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | How good/bad was the rain? |
| 2008 | *Belg* |  |
| *Meher* | It was good rain season when the production was also good |
| 2009 | *Belg* |  |
| *Meher* | It was good rain season when the production was also good |
| 2010 | *Belg* |  |
| *Meher* | The rain season was normal which started early June and stopped late September. This was good for most of the crops and vegetables. |
| 2011 | *Belg* |  |
| *Meher* | The rain season was normal which started early June and stopped late September. This was good for the production most crops and vegetables. |
| 2012 | *Belg* |  |
| *Meher* | There was some change in the amount of rain when it reduced. It was started in May and stopped early in August. This caused reduction of production ad increase of crop prices. |

Flooding is not a problem at this time due to the terracing constructed by public works. Although it was not severe, some kind of frost and very cold weather occurs every December. But it causes no harm to the crops as most crops are already collected at that time. During the winter season, it is not common to produce crops because there is a lack of water and the climate gets hot.

## Climate change

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Belg rain | Meher rain | Unexpected rain | Heat | Frost | Wind *describe* |
| 2001EC | NA | There was normal range of rainfall | NO | NO | NO | NO |
| 2002EC | NA | There was normal range of rainfall | NO | Some heat in Winter | NO | NO |
| 2003EC | There was some rain in April but it was not expected to stay long. It is not used to produce crop because it stops soon. | There was normal range of rainfall | NO | Some heat in Winter | Frost exists in December | NO |
| 2004EC | There was some rain in April but it was not expected to stay long. It is not used to produce crop because it stops soon. | There was less amount of rainfall which reduced the amount of crop production | No | Some heat in Winter, mainly in early May | Frost existed in December | There was windy air which affected mainly taff and Wheat. |
| 2005EC | There was some rain in April but it was not expected to stay long. It is not used to produce crop because it stops soon. | The rain season is expected to start early June |  | There temperature since last March in higher than ever had I the past | Frost existed in December |  |

The kebele has not been affected by any longer term climate change. Although there is increasing heat when compared to the past, it has not affected the health of people and didn’t affect the production of crop. It also has not affected the livestock production. There has been no longer-term change in the availability of ground water.

## Land

### Land for smallholder farming

The largest size of farming land is 10 *Kert* (2.5 hectare) and the smallest is 2 *kert* (0.5 hectare). Most of the community members own 5-6kert of land. Those who own small land sizes are those who can’t plough it due to illness, those who are retired and lack support to plough. Those who can’t afford the labour wage sharecrop it out or they rent it. The land size has not been changed since the past five years.

### Access to land

Most of the youth and newly married couples have no access to land. There has been no land redistribution for more than 25 years so many people are landless. Children get land only from their parents.

## Crops

### All crops

Teff is the most important crop produced in the kebele. It is used for enjera, kita and tella. The remained production is sold to traders who come to the kebele. Some farmers sell it to the markets in Mojo and Debrezeit.

Wheat is the second most important crop and is mainly used to bake bread, enjera, tella as well as kolo. It is also used as an ingredient (bikil) for tella. Besides, wheat is also an important cash crop with good sale price.

Most farmers are now using improved seeds. Some farmers allocated some 2-3kert of their farmland for producing improved seed only (which can be used as improved seed later).

### New crops

No new crops were introduced.

### Declining crops

Red teff is not used as much as it was in the past because most farmers are now focusing in production of white teff.

### Subsistence crops

Teff, wheat and chickpeas were important subsistence crops in 2003 and they are still the ones which are important crops. In 2003, the magna taff (first level) was important for subsistence crop; but at this time this type of taff is mainly produced for cash crop and the *sergegna* (second level of taff) is used for subsistence crop in this time.

## Cash crops

### Change

In 2003, Taff, chickpeas and beans were important cash crops in 2003. This time, taff has continued to be the most important cash crop but beans are likely to be replaced by chickpeas and lentils. These crops have high market value at this time than in 2003.

### White Teff

#### White Teff production

Large amount of (about 70-80%) the land is allocated for white taff. Then, the remained plot of land is used for chickpeas and lentils consecutively. This is when the land is Koticha type (Black soil). When the land is Gumbere (red soil), about 50% is used for lentils, beans and peas.

#### White Teff inputs

The main sources of seed are the kebele agriculture office, Debrezeit Agriculture Research institution and some farmers in the kebele as well as in Debrezeit. The improved seeds are bought from the kebele agriculture office in the form of credit. But they are bought from other sources in cash. There has been increasing demand for improved seeds in the community so the supply has also increased when compared to that of ten years back.

The problem with regards to the improved seeds is that it may not be supplied in time when it is from the kebele agriculture office because of some bureaucracy. And most people may not afford the price when they go to the Debrezeit market or the farmers in the Kebele because they demand the payment to be in cash.

The main sources of fertilizer are also the kebele agriculture office and Debrezeit Agriculture research institution. The number of fertilizer users has increased when compared to that of five years back because the community have now understood the need to use fertilizer for better productivity of their land. The problem, however is that fertilizer must now be bought in cash which might have been a problem for some of the community members who are unable to afford it at once. Five years ago it was supplied from the kebele Agriculture office in the form of credit.

Farmers use pesticides either from the kebele agriculture office or from the market. When the supply by the agriculture office is delayed, farmers go to Debrezeit and buy the pesticides. There has been no credit system to buy pesticides.

In Sirba, there is no debt problem at this time resulting from borrowing for crops because most people pay their debt as soon as they collected their harvest. This is because the DAs closely follow up to make sure all have returned their debt and because the farmers want to get credit for the coming harvest season too. They know that they can get more improved seeds on credit only if they have paid back the previous debt.

The kebele DAs closely follow up to identify the crop or input demands of the farmers and then they work on providing a sufficient supply of the demands. The crop DA supervises on the farmlands, providing information about ploughing systems such as planting in lines, directing farmers on how to use fertilizer and when, etc. The wereda Agriculture office provides trainings to the DAs who in-turn would transfer the knowledge to the community.

Five years ago, farmers were not much aware about sowing taff in lines although they had the knowledge to sow other crops in lines. At this time, it was introduced by the crop DA and many of the farmers sow their taff in line.

#### White Teff sales

All harvests are sold in the local markets (Udie and Denkaka) and in Debrezeit. These are the markets since five years and before. But the change is that there are now more traders within the community who buy the crops from individual farmers and they sell it in Debrezeit market (as whole sellers).

### Chickpeas

#### Chickpea production

Chickpea has been increasingly used as a second cash crop following taff. At least 10% of the farmland is used for chickpeas. It is now more dominant than beans, which were more common ten years back than chickpeas. Some farmers said that this is because beans are easily attacked by pesticides than chickpeas and because chickpeas have more market value than beans at this time.

#### Chickpea inputs

The main sources of seed for chickpeas are the kebele agriculture office. Some farmers inside the community and the Debrezeit Agriculture research institution. At this time the kebele agriculture office, in collaboration with other organizations such as (JICA), train model farmers to prepare improved seeds so that they can sell to the local community. The main source of fertilizer is the kebele agriculture office. It provides fertilizer to the farmers in cash but it provides improved seed of chickpeas by credit The farmers who produce chickpeas use fertilizer as well as pesticides.

The crop Das supervises and provides important information to the farmers. Most farmers use plant in lines.

#### Chickpea sales

Chickpeas are sold in local markets to whole sellers, in Udie and Kumbersa and in Debrezeit Market. Most of the harvest is sold in Debrezeit as its value and demand increases there than in the local markets.

### Lentils

#### Lentil production

Lentils are the third most important cash crop but they are not produced by some of the farmers who have small plots of land because these farmers prefer to give large plots of land to produce taff and chickpeas. There has been no report of any unique risk to this crop.

#### Lentil inputs

Its input is fertilizer and improved seeds which mainly are supplied by the kebele agriculture office. Improved seed is supplied in the form of credit while fertilizer is supplied in cash.

#### Lentil sales

This crop like other cash crops is sold in the local markets well as in Debrezeit market.

## Livestock production

### Cattle production and fattening

#### Cattle production

There are less cattle than they were in 10 years ago because the community is now focussing on the quality and not quantity of the cattle. Most of them are traditional cattle and only a few households keep breed/ better quality of cattle. Most farmers fatten oxen at the same time they use them for ploughing. The main problem in keeping cattle is to have secure place to keep them. They need to have a separate place where they stay. The other big challenge is the high cost of the animals’ feed. It is expensive for most of the farmers who consequently prefer to keep fewer cattle than they would. This is the same problem to keep the breed cattle too. All types of cattle would require sufficient food.

#### Cattle inputs

The main sources of inputs are the kebele agriculture office, Debrezeit and Melkassa agriculture research institutions. During the last ten years, the cost of the food has increased.

#### Cattle sales

There are cattle sales although at small scale. Individuals sell cattle, sheep and goats at annual feasts. They sell their cattle at the local market (Udie), Mojo as well as Debrezeit markets. Most of the cattle are sold in this local market; but few may end up in the Addis Ababa-Akaki market. Prices increase during holidays and decrease during the fasting season.

### Shoat production and fattening

#### Shoat production

There were more shoats in the past than at this time because people now want to reduce the quantity and focus on the quality of their livestock. The main problem in rearing shoats is the increasing price of fodder and labour. There are a few farmers that keep hybrid shoats; but majority are of traditional type.

#### Shoat inputs

The main sources of inputs are the kebele agriculture office, Debrezeit and Melkassa agriculture research institutions. During the last ten years, the cost of the food has increased.

The livestock DA and the Vet usually assess any epidemics and symptoms of diseases and provide vaccination services. The farmers also take their shoats to the vet clinic for vaccination and medical treatment. But there has been no report if farmers use fattening medicine.

The kebele agriculture office and Passion Connection supply shoats by credit when there is demand from the farmers.

#### Shoat sales

They are sold at the local markets, Debrezeit, Mojo and Addis Ababa markets. There is no different market for fattened and non-fattened shoats.

### Chickens

#### Chicken production

There are chickens which are likely to be fewer than ten years ago because of the poultry diseases and high cost of their feed. Chicken production requires daily labour and close follow up. Besides, there should be medical follow-up to prevent diseases.

#### Chicken inputs

High breed chickens are found in the community and they are provided by the kebele agriculture office. They are also available at the Debrezeit agriculture research institution.

#### Chicken sales

Very few households keep poultry for sale. Most farmers who keep poultry have them to sell their eggs. When the chicken stops laying eggs, they are used for household food or they are sold. They are sold at the local market in Udie.

### Bees

#### Bee production

There is no forest and no appropriate place to attract bees. There were some efforts made by the DAs to sensitize the community about the advantages of keeping beehives; but it has not yet been productive.

#### Bee inputs

There are no local markets or institutions which provide queen bees.

#### Bee sales

No farmer in the village sells bees

## Livestock products

### Cattle

#### Cattle products

Hides/skin, meat and milk are cattle products sold at the local markets. However, the hide/skin and meat are sold mostly during the feasts; whereas milk is sold almost on a daily basis. There are about 500 HHs who supply milk to the Ada’a milk processing industry.

#### Inputs for cattle products

There is a need to have financial capacity to afford the cost of breed cattle, the cost for their food and labour. Besides, medical follow up is also important. Overall, there should be enough space to keep them. It is also important to have some knowledge about keeping cattle.

#### Sale of cattle products

Individuals sell meat, milk and skin at the local market.

### Shoats

#### Shoat products

There was no shoat product production

#### Inputs for shoat products

The inputs are fodder bought from the markets or the straw and grass from the farmland.

#### Sale of shoat products

There was no report of any shoat product sale

### Chickens

#### Egg production

There is egg selling in the local markets as well as in Debrezeit. The households that keep hybrid chickens make profits by selling their eggs. Most households, however, use eggs for household food consumption.

#### Inputs for egg production

Enough space to keep breed chicken, food, labour and medicine.

#### Sale of eggs

Egg is sold at the local market

### Bees

#### Honey production

N/A

#### Inputs for making honey

N/A

#### Sale of honey

N/A

## Farm labour

### Smallholder farm labour

In most households, family members are engaged in the labour work of the family’s farm. Children help their parents when it is time to weed and collect crops. Many rich households also hire daily farm labourers. The wage of daily labourers ten years ago was 10birr/ day and it is 50birr/day at this time. This is the rate for men; and the rate for women was 6birr/day ten years ago and now 40birr/day. There are households who have permanent farming labourers who are paid and are provided with shelter and food. Poor households do the farm work by themselves.

### Customary work exchanges

Customary work exchanges such are *debo*, crop sharing, ox sharing and reciprocal labour exchange still exist. However, hiring daily labourers who come from other places is dominant and these customary work exchanges are reducing. Intimate neighbours may exchange oxen and have reciprocal work.

## Diversification

### Combining farm with non-farm activities

There are a lot of families who depend on farming for their livelihood. Wives in the rich households also help in the farming activities. However, they are mostly engaged in selling cash crops and doing domestic activities. Their children are sent to school and help their parents only when they have extra time. Unlike this, women and young girls of the middle and the poor households are too busy in domestic as well as farming activities. They also work in factories and flower farms during their summer vacation when the girls from rich family stay at home.

Boys and men from middle and poor families work in paid labour or industries to help their parents financially. They also participate in the farming activities of their families.

## Research officer additions (if any)

### Title 1

### Title 2