# Interviews on farming in Somodo, Jimma

## Place

### Altitude and terrain

The altitude of the area is favourable for farming activities and the area is more or less flat with some slopes and is not affected by serious erosion. The nearby kebele (Babala kossa) is mountainous and highly affected by erosion while in our kebele there is no serious problem. The improved crop varieties such as maize BH660, potatoes etc are suitable for the temperature in the area. Other new improved crop varieties (ex. Soybean, teff) were also first demonstrated before it is distributed. Hence, the improved crops are suitable for the agro-climatic zone of the area.

### Soil

There is one type of soil in the area which is clay loam. It is favourable for many types of cereal crops including local and improved ones. Crops such as maize, teff, sorghum, coffee and chat are best grown. However, the fertility has been declining over time which is reflected in terms of the decline in productivity and requirements for a larger quantity of fertilizer than before. For instance, two years ago we used 1q/hectare but now we increase the quantity to 1.5 q/hectare. Moreover, the colour also changed from a kind of black to reddish. There are only two types of fertilizers in the area DAP and Urea. They are all suitable for the crops grown in the area.

### Ecosystem

We get advantage from the forest because we usually plant coffee under trees/shade which increases the soil fertility, maintains the soil moisture and controls the temperature of the area. There are wild animals such as monkey, ape, ‘boye’ and ‘karkaro’ which eat crops and also wild animals such as hyena and rarely tiger which eat livestock in the area. The farmers usually watch after those wild animals constructing temporary huts on their farm.

Last year there was a problem of teff disease locally called ‘Gari’; this is a kind of worm that cut the upper part of the teff plant and is usually caused by prolonged absence of rain. It rarely occurrs in the area. Farmers used pesticide given by the DAs to control the disease incidence and it later stopped when the rain came.

No new disease and pests affecting crops, livestock, shoat and poultry occurred in the area except the ‘geri’ for teff. There was not a problem of disease and pests in the last season. There is a disease for livestock attacking mouth and feet. It is not new but it occurs rarely with variation in its extent at different times. According to the community drying of the air is one of the factors that cause and/or aggravate it.

In the area the common source of water for farming is rain on which almost all farmers depend. However, there is a start in irrigation using Abayi River. Since the river is large anybody who wants to use the river can use it for irrigation and there is no problem with it. Those who started to use it also use it without any shortage of water. The farmers expect the rain to come from early April and extend to September. However, last year the rain was late to come and started in the month of May.

In the area there is no problem of regular flooding which affect crops but it is very common in Babala Kossa (the adjacent kebele). This is because in Somodo kebele there are trees and the forest that can prevent the problem. Moreover, there is no problem of wind and hot sun or frost that affects farming in the kebele, even though it is common in Babala Kossa.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | How good/bad was the rain? |
| 2008 | *Belg* | Good |
| *Meher* | Good |
| 2009 | *Belg* | Good |
| *Meher* | Good |
| 2010 | *Belg* | Good |
| *Meher* | Good |
| 2011 | *Belg* | Good |
| *Meher* | Good but did not come on time |
| 2012 | *Belg* | Good |
| *Meher* | Good rain but very late to come |

## Climate change

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Belg rain | Meher rain | Unexpected rain | Heat | Frost | Wind *describe* |
| 2001EC | good | Good | No such rain | Average | Average | Average (no problem of wind) |
| 2002EC | good | Good | No such rain | Average | Average | Average (no problem of wind) |
| 2003EC | good | Good | No such rain | Average | Average | Average (no problem of wind) |
| 2004EC | good | Good (the rain period was disturbed) | No such rain | Average | Average | Average (no problem of wind) |
| 2005EC | good | - | No such rain | Average | Average | Average (no problem of wind) |

## Land

### Land for smallholder farming

The kebele has 3, 503 hectares. From this 2,661 hectare of land is cultivable. From this 1,658 hectare of land is devoted to smallholding farming/cultivated. Comparing with the amount cultivated five years ago this has a bit increased. The rest of the land is devoted to public buildings such as 3 schools, kebele office, FTC, churches and mosques, burial place etc. There is a no pressure on the land from other demands.

The largest, average, and smallest land sizes are 4, 1.5 and.75 hectare respectively. In the past five years there has been no major change in these land sizes. The land used for farming by outside investors is 12.5 Fechasa (3.125 hectare), as mentioned in M3.7, and about 3 hectare of land is used for stone excavation by youth co-operatives.

### Access to land

Participants mentioned that the proportion of landless in the community is very low, which is about 0.2 percent (by estimation). There has not been any redistribution of smallholder land. As to most participants there has not been allocation of communal land for smallholdings but one respondent stated that in 1998 EC about 7 landless households, who stayed in the area for a long time were allocated some communal grazing land as smallholdings. In the past six years from the communal land about 3 hectare has given for landless unemployed landless youth to work on it. These youths in group formed cooperatives and started to produce stone for sale. To nourish the land Jimma agricultural research institute has been providing lime for some farm land affected by erosion.

It is possible to access land through long-term leases. Commonly the shortest lease is for one year. Where the average and longest lease are for three or five years respectively, which are mostly used by the people. The outside investor who got 12.5 Fechasa (3.125 hectare) as he was not successful leased out the land for 3 years for outsiders, who in turn together started to produce vegetable. The land leased is used to plant grain and vegetables only. It is not allowed to plant permanent crops as the leaser has to use the land only for the lease period and the cash/permanent crops gives product after some years.

Some female headed householders who do not have someone to work on their farmland use to share crop out. Very few individuals who engage in trading also share crop out their farmland. Poor farmers are the ones who share crop in this land and used to support their life by the crop they share in.

## Crops

### All crops

The following are lists of crops according to their importance for community of Somodo

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of crops | Cultivated area during the last cropping season /hectare | remark |
| coffee | 574 |  |
| maize | 517.45 |  |
| teff | 470 |  |
| Avocado | - | No data recorded but assumed to be important in written order here |
| Barely | 100 |  |
| Sorghum | 50 |  |
| Horse bean | 27 |  |
| Others (kale seed, flax and others) | 5.25 |  |

In addition to the above, crops such as enset and vegetables such as tomato, potato carrot, beetroot and very rarely sweet potato are grown and irrigation started and is only used for vegetable production.

Of the crops about 400 hectare of maize is covered with improved maize (BH660) and almost all potato grown is improved variety. Moreover, improved coffee seedlings are planted in the area.

The farmers usually use coffee; avocado, enset and chat for cash and sell it to Somodo and nearby markets (Yebu, Bilida and Jimma) following the price of the market. Only a few sell other cereals if they get a surplus.

The agriculture extension workers usually advise on different techniques to grow crops, distribute new varieties of crops and provide fertilizer and other inputs. Moreover, Jimma Agriculture research institute also plays a significant role in supporting the growth of different crops in the area. They demonstrate new crop varieties on the farm land of farmers, distribute new crop varieties and transfer knowhow on how to cultivate them.

### New crops

Since three years new and improved coffee seeds were introduced in the kebele by Jimma agriculture research centre. The earlier coffee variety was not resistant to diseases and dropped the berry easily before maturity. But the new one is resistant and do not drop the berry during its maturation. The DAs also regularly provide advice and follow up how farmers make coffee land preparation and on picking and quality-related issues. All of the coffee crop is sold on the market. The main problem is that there is a shortage of provision of improved coffee seed. For instance, the kebele requested 30kg but we only got half of it i.e., 15kg. Moreover, the price of the seedlings is getting expensive from birr 130 to 150 birr per kg. In addition, there is fluctuation of market price that the farmers can’t control. Since the last years the price has declined and this discourages many farmers.

The problem with the new coffee crops is that they do not have a long life. They stop being productive within a few years. The earlier used variety had a long life span and were able to produce for many years. However, the plant has no negative effect on other crops or soil.

### Declining crops

The importance of Haricot bean has declined over time and they are now no more produced by farmers. This decline typically started following the villagization of the Dergue period. The plant was planted in home garden in order to protect it from animals. However, when people moved for villagization leaving their home garden they couldn’t find space to plant haricot bean in their new garden. Since then its importance has been declined.

### Subsistence crops

Maize, teff and sorghum are three important subsistence crops respectively in 2003 and 2013. Enset is another important root crops which usually serves for consumption from the month of June. This plant is grown in the home garden not only for consumption but also serves as wind break.

## Cash crops

### Change

In 2003 coffee and chat (in small quantity) were the two most important cash crops in order of importance. In 2013 this is the same: coffee and chat are the leading most important cash crops. The change is that the people start to grow chat crop in larger quantity than 2003.

### Coffee

#### Coffee production

The coffee production is expanding more than ever before. Previously there were individuals who did not have coffee plants and those who planted coffee also were not using coffee land effectively. Now people have started to produce the crop intensively including on marginal land.

The lion share of the coffee produced is exported out of the community for the international market. Only an insignificant portion is locally consumed. Planting shade trees for the coffee plants is the main problem in the coffee production. In order to grow coffee plants one is expected first to grow shade trees which may take a long period till it is well established.

For the production of coffee the community use family labour but during slashing of coffee farm, land preparation and picking up the cherry it is common to look for daily labourers.

#### Coffee inputs

An improved variety of coffee seed is provided through DAs in the kebele. About 50 percent is improved seed the use of which has increased over the last ten years. There is no problem with the improved seeds but the plant from the improved seeds does not have long life span. The farmers do not use fertilizer for coffee production. Rather they use compost and the leaves dropping from the plant that decompose and serve as soil nutrient.

There were no major crop pests or disease in the last five years. However, it is common that some coffee dries out each year, which is usually replaced by new seedlings. In order to avoid the problem, the DAs recommend farmers to uproot dried plants and burn or bury it rather than using pesticides so as to avoid/minimize the spreading of diseases all over the farm. The farmers do not get credit access for fertilizer or other inputs from DAs or cooperative. However, those who are interested can be organized and get credit from the Oromia Saving and Credit Association. There is a shortage of improved coffee seedlings and it is very expensive which prevents farmers from taking the variety as they would wish. The DAs regular assist the farmer in advice as well as providing technical support including provision of inputs from the woreda. The Woreda officals also arrange different trainings in collaboration with kebele officals so as to create awareness for the community about its production system, harvesting, and storing.

There is no new and improved farming equipment such as tractor etc. that are available in the area. The farmers farm traditionally as it was five years ago.

#### Coffee sales

The farmers sell the coffee beans directly to local traders who buy on behalf of large investors. During the harvest season there are official collection points where many local traders and farmers are allowed to exchange (buy and sell the fresh coffee beans) every day. Then on the same day the investors come to collect the fresh coffee beans to take them to the processing plant (washing). This process works for fresh coffee berry which may last till the harvest is over (it is about 2-2 ½ month). However, farmers sell dry coffee throughout the year to Bilida market and for some traders in Somodo.

All the harvest is sold to local traders then to investors who own processing plants and then export to national and international market.

The increase in production of coffee does not affect the subsistence crops so far as the farmers simultaneously produce both.

### Chat

#### Chat production

The Chat production is expanding more than ever before. Previously some individuals grew very few for their own consumption in their home garden. Now people have started to produce the crop intensively in their home garden.

The lion share of the crops is exported out of the community to the nearby town for market and also a portion is consumed. There is no main risk that hinders the growing of this plant.

#### Chat inputs

The seedling is accessed from natural reproduction of the plants. All chat grown in the area is a local variety. The farmers also do not use fertilizers, instead they use compost. To grow chat the farmers are not encouraged and do not get support from DAs and other officials in any aspect. However, the community cultivate traditionally and expand it for the purpose of cash income and its increased demand on the market.

#### Chat sales

The farmers mainly sell the chat at the farm gate to local traders who knock at different farm gates to sell out in the nearby towns (usually Limu Geneti town). The lion share of the chat harvest is sold in nearby towns. It is not commonly sold in the kebele as many of the dwellers easily access chat for their consumption from their own farm.

Many farmers simultaneously grow subsistence crop such as maize through intercropping. Hence, so far the expansion of chat crop did not affect the production of subsistence crops.

## Livestock production

### Cattle production and fattening

There are 7355 cattle (2025 cows, 2830 oxen, 1700 heifers and 800 calf bulls), 2362 sheep, 812 goats, 350 horses, 61 mules, 145 donkeys, 1850 traditional, 61 modern and 24 transitional bee hives, and 4960 local varieties of chickens.

#### Cattle production

The number of cattle has been declining over the last ten years because of the shortage of grazing land. The commune grazing land that was available ten years ago has been given for landless youths for farming. Hence, the grazing land and the availability of pasture on it are declining which affects the production of cattle in the kebele. However, the quality of production has improved in terms of cattle care system. Previously, all community members let their cattle graze on the common grazing land and did not give much care. However, now people have a limited number of cattle and have started to take better care of them, using enclosure of land which brings an improvement in the cattle care system. There is no risk in rearing cattle but the lack of pasture is a major bottleneck for cattle production in the area.

Moreover, there is lack of awareness in the community about improving cattle breed using AI. Since the technology is very new in the community people are not as much willing to accept the system because 1. In order to use AI the cattle should get good care and pasture which is usually meagre in the area. 2. The womb of the local cattle breed doesn’t carry the foetus that will develop though AI and consequently the cattle will face problem upon delivery.

More than 50 percent of the labour needed for cattle production is carried out by children and the rest is covered by husbands and wives. It is not common to hire agricultural labourers for cattle-related work.

#### Cattle inputs

The source of fodder is natural grazing system. However, there is a slight change within the system in that in earlier time the community let their cattle to graze on common grazing land. However, following the shortage of that land many in the community have started to practice enclosing pasture grassland and feed cattle at home.

There is also access to Borena cattle breed through the DAs and AI in the area if anyone needs it. However, it is not widely used as it is new. The farmers can directly buy the Borena breed from the woreda with the assistance of DAs, and access to AI is free.

The community are interested to vaccinate their cattle. Vaccination services are regularly provided by DAs in the kebele. Moreover, there are some farmers who use medicine for fattening and medicine for diseases using their cash, buying it from the vet office which is found in Somodo kebele. There has not been any major epidemic disease over the last five years (see above for the livestock disease attacking foot and mouth).

In the kebele there are no agriculture inputs including inputs for cattle production that is given on a credit basis. The farmers are expected to buy in cash. However, they can get access to credit from the Oromia Saving and Credit Association to buy inputs.

The DAs and vet officers assist the community to use improved cattle breed and AI, select the good and highly productive cattle (including from the traditional breed), and encourage the community to practice animal fattening following the market demand. In general, the DAs and Vet officers assist the community in advising the farmers and providing them available and new inputs. However, the existing DAs and vet officers can’t visit throughout the kebele as the kebele is large and not manageable with a personal of four people.

#### Cattle sales

Both fattened and non-fattened cattle are sold in Bilida market except a few which are sold in the abattoir enterprise in Jimma town for slaughtering. Exporting cattle outside of the community for sale is not common. The price of cattle varies in different months of the year. The price is high during the ‘Arafa’ and Christian Easter holidays, and lower in the fasting period.

The price of cattle has changed since 2008 following market inflation. For instance, in 2008 a good bull was sold for Birr 3000 but now it is more than Birr 6000.

### Shoat production and fattening

#### Shoat production

There is no change regarding shoat production. However, some people who have goats start to cull them because goats often damage seedlings of neighbours which is ground for disagreements. In terms of quality there is improvement as some have started to fatten shoat with better care. There is no risk and no infrastructure needed for the production of shoat. The family provides the labour needed for the production.

#### Shoat inputs

There are 2362 sheep and goats in the community. The farmers use natural grazing system and a fw who are near grain mills use residues of flour from the mills. There is no change in production of shoat and no improved breeds and AI. The community use the local breeds.

The community use vaccination from the vet office in the kebele and also use fattening medicine and medicine against diseases either from the vet office or from a drug shop in Jimma. There has not been any epidemic disease over the last five years (see above for the recurring livestock disease). The community is able to get credit services for any agricultural inputs including shoat production from the Oromia Saving and Credit Association. There are no inputs for production of shoats except advice and vet service provided by DAs.

#### Shoat sales

Both non fatted and fattened shoat are sold in Bilida market. The farmers are directly selling their own shoat. However, no shoat is exported for sale out of the community. The price of shoat is usually higher during holiday. Moreover, the price of shoat increased following market inflation, particularly since 2008.

### Chickens

#### Chicken production

There is no change in number of chicken over the last ten years. However, there is improvement in quality as some people have started to keep new breed of chicken which is usually distributed from Jimma research centre. Wild animals and birds create problems in chicken production. Many people keep the chicken in their home and do not make a separate hut. The labour required for production comes from the family.

#### Chicken inputs

There are new chicken breeds such as Rod Island and Egyptian breeds in rare cases in which the farmers got access directly through buying from other farmers. The DAs also provide advice and technical support including encouragement to have separate house for chicken, provision of new varieties in collaboration with the woreda and Jimma agriculture research organization.

#### Chicken sales

There are some farmers, particularly the model farmers, who produce chickens for sale. They sell in Billida directly for consumers.

### Bees

#### Bee production

The number of bees in the community has been increasing over time and some people have started to use modern beehives which improve the quality of honey. However, the modern beehives are expense and many cannot access them. They cost about birr 1000 per hive. The community use modern, transitional and traditional beehives. However, many of the community members use the traditional ones due to their lower price. All kinds of beehives are hanged in the garden or put in the garden in a separate house. The production is carried out solely with family members particularly the husband.

#### Bee inputs

The farmers collect the queen bees from the forest and they extract the honey traditionally. The hives (traditional, modern and transition) are put in the garden in a separate house (usually for modern and transition hives) and hung in the trees available in the garden. The DAs in the kebele provide advice for the farmers to use modern beehives and provide technical support how to produce honey. Moreover, the woreda also provides inputs necessary for honey production such as modern beehives and its accessories (such as smoker, safety cloths and knob)

#### Bee sales

The selling of bees is not practiced by the farmers in the area.

## Livestock products

### Cattle

#### Cattle products

Cattle products are not commonly sold on the market. Usually the milk is used for home consumption and rarely, a few sell butter on the market. The number of dairy cattle has decreased over time due to shortage of grazing land and meagre pasture. However, there is improvement in system of cattle management as the community have started to use enclosure of grassland and zero grazing system which contributes to better quality. Moreover, people have started to keep fewer but the most productive cattle among the local variety.

There is no main risk in keeping dairy cows except the scarcity of grazing land. The farmers still keep traditional dairy cows and are not yet familiarized with improved breeds and AI. The labour required is covered by the family members.

#### Inputs for cattle products

There is no new equipment for production of milk. The community use the traditional system and equipment to produce milk, butter and cheese. The livestock DAs and Vet officer assist the community in providing advice, encouraging the farmers to use improved breeds, use AI and providing vaccination and solving other health related problem. The woreda also provide resources including improved breed when requested and other medicine for the kebele vet.

#### Sale of cattle products

Those farmers who have extra butter sell it on the market of Bilida and rarely on Somodo market directly to the consumers. However, milk is not commonly sold in the market.

### Shoats

#### Shoat products

NA

#### Inputs for shoat products

NA

#### Sale of shoat products

NA

### Chickens

#### Egg production

The people who have chickens usually consume for the family but in rare cases and to cover family expenses they sell eggs on Bilida market.

#### Inputs for egg production

The egg layers need protein content food like wheat more than other types of chicken. However, there are no special inputs. Regarding the production of eggs the woreda and DAs do not give special advice or provide inputs but they give advice like other agricultural activities to diversify production. It is Jimma agriculture research centre which provides improved chicken breed for selected farmers.

#### Sale of eggs

The eggs are sold on Billida market usually directly to consumers

### Bees

#### Honey production

The honey is traditionally prepared for the market. The farmers mainly produce pure honey and rarely wax for market. There is seasonal variation of honey production. In the months of November, March and June honey is produced and the price is usually lower. In the rest of the year the price is slightly higher as there is no production. The livestock DAs provide advice and technical support about how to produce good honey and wax from it. The woreda also provide materials such as modern beehives and its accessories through the kebele DAS

#### Inputs for making honey

There is a need for honey extractor and moulder in the kebele. However this material is not available in the kebele. There is only one moulder at the woreda level let alone at the kebele level.

#### Sale of honey

There is no constant place for sale of honey. However, the majority of farmers sell at the farm gate while others take it to Jimma town and sell it for shop owners.

## Farm labour

### Smallholder farm labour

About 90 % of the farm labour is covered by the family members and it is only during coffee harvest that many households both rich and middle wealth hire in-migrant labourers. In rare cases the rich households have agricultural servants and other households also hire as temporary employees local daily labourers especially for coffee land preparation and cultivation of chat. There has been a slight increase in demand for local daily labour, in-migrant labour and agriculture servant work over the last ten years. This is because the farmers have started to diversify their productivity better than before so they cannot cover all the activities with family labour only; and the parents send children for schooling and cannot access child labour as they used to do which brings labour shortage in the family. However, it is difficult to get local daily labourers due to high payment in construction works in Jimma, which in addition increases overtime. In Jimma’s construction centre the labourers are paid birr 25-30 per day but the farmers only pay an average Birr 10-12 per day covering the food.

In fact, the payment varies based on the effectiveness of the work. Usually children are preferred in coffee picking as they are effective and can easily climb on coffee trees.

The daily rate has changed over time. For instance two years ago the daily rate was birr 10 but last year it was birr 15.

The in-migrants come from SNNP (usually Yem and Kullo), some come Dido (an area in Jimma zone where there is no production of coffee). They usually come and work from November to January when the coffee berry is picked.

The poor households usually cover all the labour needs by family members and do not need paid labourers as they do not have large coffee plantations or other.

### Customary work exchanges

The large working parties locally called ‘Debo’ have declined over time. It used to serve for house construction, collecting grass for hut construction, ploughing new farmland. However nowadays, all people construct corrugated iron sheet houses which make the collection of grass for hut un-important. Moreover, there is no new farmland to plough, as farmers have started to repeatedly farm the same land which is usually covered by family members living very closely to each other.

The reciprocal labour exchange locally called ‘Dado’ is still working without any change. Two or more closely linked farmers come together and reciprocally assist each other in farming activities including weeding from the coffee plantation so as to let free air movement between plants, land preparation etc.

There is a change in share cropping. In earlier time the land was cultivated without fertilizer and with less expense. Now the land is no more productive without application of fertilizer. This is very expensive and is expected to be covered by the sharecropper. Due to these high costs undermining the advantages, farmers are no longer willing to enter into sharecropping arrangements.

Share rearing has also declined. Previously, there were two ways of share rearing: ‘Kaya’ whereby the ones who share a cow only share milk equally, and the cow and calves are for the owners, and ‘masago’ whereby the ones who share a cow have equal share of milk and of the newly born calves. However, since two-three years people do not need to give their animals for others for sharing.

Ox sharing locally called ‘karo’ is practiced as it was.

## Diversification

### Combining farm with non-farm activities

Almost all households in the community are making a living from farming. The wives of middle and rich households usually work on their own farm. However the poor ones usually work for others as agricultural daily labourers or any other activities to survive and fulfil their family needs.

The young men and boys from rich and middle households usually work on their families’ land and when they get married they get a good share of land and plant coffee trees. However, young men and boys from the poor households always suffer from working on others’ land whether in form of sharing or as agriculture daily labourer. They do not have a share that they expect from their parents at the time of their marriage.

The young women and girls from rich households and rarely from middle families usually go to Saudi Arabia in legal ways without any problems. However, the poor and in some cases the middle ones are usually forced to migrate illegally to Sudan where the income is very low as there is no and/or little economic activities available for women and girls from all household categories.

## Research officer additions (if any)

### Title 1

### Title 2

And so on if necessary