

Feeds and Forages Technology Parks – Legacy of Africa RISING Ethiopian Highlands Project

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1. Introduction

Africa RISING has been validating and scaling various feed and forage technologies at four sites in the Ethiopian Highlands. However, the technologies are scattered at individual farms. Establishing technology parks at strategic and visible locations such as University campuses and Farmers Training Centers (FTCs) is important for continued follow up and initiate further research and extension programs.

2. Objectives

The objectives of establishing the technology parks:

- Expose students with different feed and forages technological options.
- Serve as a source of basic planting material for University researchers and development workers.
- Serve as a learning centers for farmers and other stakeholders to speed up further scaling of the technologies.

5. Conclusion/messages

- Academic institutions could be one of the best springboards for research and development partnerships if continued development is intended
- The exposure of college students to technologies and their management is vital for sustainable technology adoption
- Technology parks can serve as live legacy of a project if planned and managed well.
- Technology parks can continue bridging institutional partnerships when existing projects phase out.
- Technology parks can be sources of planting material for further multiplication.

6. Acknowledgement

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3. Methods/approaches

- Partners' interested to establish technology parks at their own land and who can manage and use the parks were identified. Accordingly, Wachemo University at Lemo, SNNPR and Sinana Woreda Livestock and Fisheries Development Office in Oromia have shown great interest.
- Terms of Reference (ToR) on roles of ILRI and partners were prepared and signed.
- Tech park of forage varieties including 9 grasses, 7 legumes, 1 fodder beet and 3 grass-legume mixtures were established on small plots of 12 m² each at both sites: Wachemo University campus, at Lemo and FTC at Sinana (Photos).

4. Findings

- High interest of the partners right from the beginning.
- University students and researchers were very attentive and active participants during the planting period.
- University staff requesting for additional technical trainings in order to better manage the plots and collect seeds for multiplication of the varieties.
- University management is requesting for establishment of such parks in other locations where the University has community services activities.
- Research topic and opportunities created for graduate students and university instructors.
- Visual assessments re-confirm that most planted forage species performed very well in the tech parks.
- University staff want to grow the forages until seed maturity for further multiplication. Two university staff are currently attending training with ILRI on forage seed production and management.

