Field Visit Report on Hawasssa University and Yirgalem Integrated Agro-industrial Park

By

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1. **Introduction**

The staff members of Food Science and Nutrition Directorate of the Ethiopian Institute of agricultural research visited Hawasa University and Yirgalem Integrated Agro Industrial Park having the following objectives;

* To expand the network of the researchers with the scientific community as well as industrial peoples
* To establish and maintain the collaborations between our institute and Hawassa University and Yirgalem Integrated Agro Industrial Park
* To experience and learn about the problem faced by the industrial park and search for solution
* To learn more about the directorates research area interest and gain new skills

1. **Lesson Learned** 
   1. **Hawassa Universi*t*y (mention the department)**

* Visit date and time:
* Contacted person(s):
* About them:

Here you can mention whatever they informed to us

* Visited facilities:
* Discussion points:
* Strength we should learn from:
* Weakness we can learn from:
* Identified collaboration options:

The work visit for Hawasa University was fruitful opportunity to interact with food science and nutrition researchers and professor at the university. The group directly contacted to the Dr. Taddesse Fikire the head for school of food science and nutrition. While visiting the university, the head of the school explained their research areas, and we have learned that their research mainly is focused on Ethiopian traditional foods and beverages. We have also learned that apart from providing education, the school also working on research and development particularly focusing on functionalization, mechanization, and increasing the quality of food as well as standardization of Ethiopian indigenous food and beverage items through research and innovation.

After getting introduced to the school, we have also visited the laboratory facilities they have. The available scientific instruments includes; Uv-Visible spectroscopy, Incubators, Colony counter, fluidized base drier, churner, slicer, stomacher, chopper, extruder, Gerber centrifuge, Water activity analyser, Atomic Absorption spectroscopy, and Amino acid analyser. However, the amino acid analyser and Atomic Absorption spectroscopy are not functional at the moment.

The group then agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding between the university and our institute, which will allow the researcher to: 1) interact with researchers who have expertise in a needed area of the future proposed investigation, 2) gain access to needed resources such as databases, equipment, staff, and study populations, and 3) gain credibility by gaining name recognition from prominent researchers, departments, or institutions. Furthermore, resources that are in short supply at one institution can often be shared with collaborating institutions and vice versa.

* 1. **Yirgalem Integrated Agro-industrial Park**

After vesting the Hawassa University the group also visited the Yirgalem Integrated Agro-Industrial Park located at the southern part of the sideman region. The huge capacity which will probably change the livelihood of the surrounding community after it is going to be fully operational creating a direct linkage between the industrial companies and farmers. The industry park's potential value chain, which spans 294.5 hectares, comprises fruits and vegetables, dairy, meat, poultry, coffee, cereals, and pulses, with food from local farmers serving as input. The CEO of the Yirgalem Integrated Agro-Industrial Park noted that hundreds of thousands of the farmers are now befitting from the very fresh start. Yirgalem Integrated Agro-Industrial Park now houses five companies that produce avocado oil, honey, milk and coffee. He also added that the Yirgalem Integrated Agro-Industrial Park has shades that can serve up to 150 manufacturing companies, with all necessary infrastructure fulfilled.

While visiting the Agro industrial park, we have also learned that Jojo agro processing company was staked processing the milk product they were doing due to aflatoxin. Even though this huge problem needs clarity where the toxin was found and intervention in the animal feed stopped the processing of the milk. This is a researchable subject, and our institute will contribute by developing a guideline to ensure the safety of their product for farmers and manufacturers.

After getting informative explanation from the CEO of the industrial park, we have visited the "Sevando Manufacturing” an Avocado Oil Processing Facility. This industrial facility produces only crude avocado oil which will farther be refined by the company located in the Netherlands. The company is not using the by-products it. This is also a researchable subject our institute will play its part. Maturity of the avocado affects the yield of the oil however avocado have difficulty of maturity indices another researchable areas our institute will take part of the solutions.

1. **Conclusion**

The visit of by the staff members of Food Science and Nutrition Directorate of the Ethiopian Institute of agricultural research to Hawasa University and Yirgalem Integrated Agro Industrial Park was successful. These visits help the researches to be connected with new researcher networks and identify researchable issues physically from problem areas. The memorandum of understanding which will be signed by the Hawassa University and our Institute will boost our capacities of getting funds from donors apart from technical and profession leverage.