



2010 AWARD Fellow Missa Demissie

Position:	Senior agronomist
Institution:	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Country:	Ethiopia
BSc:	Plant Science, Haramaya University, 2008
Mentored by:	Getachew Agegnehu Senior Researcher and Coordinator National Soil Fertility Research Project Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research

Research Area: Improving knowledge and uptake of high-yielding quality seeds through training and education of extension agents who work closely with smallholder farmers, private seed producers, agro-industries, consumers, and exporters.

Missa Demissie recently joined the Animal and Plant Health Regulatory Directorate of Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. She serves on the variety release and registration team that evaluates the performance of newly released and introduced seed varieties developed for Ethiopian farmers and other users.

"I worked at the grassroots level for many years and I understand the challenges that farmers face," says Demissie. "I want to help them increase their productivity and yield so they can have a better life. This is what gives me the greatest satisfaction in my work."

As much as she enjoys research, Demissie wants to work closely with farmers again and plans to develop training courses that will take her to the field more often.

Demissie is committed to continuing education, having obtained her bachelor's degree in 2008. She was recently accepted at Northwestern University in South Africa to do a master's degree in Crop Science (Biofuels), but has deferred enrolment until she has served two years in her new job with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. "I'm very interested in studying biofuels," she says.

As an AWARD Fellow, Demissie hopes to strengthen her research skills and develop more self-confidence. "I've never had an opportunity like this before, and I know it will make a real difference in my career as an agronomist."

Demissie is one of 180 African woman scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science, empowering them to contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, visit www.awardfellowships.org