



2013 AWARD Fellow
Rehrahie Mesfin Gebrehiwot

Position	Senior Researcher
Institution	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), Holetta Research Center
Country	Ethiopia
MSc	Livestock, Sustainable Tropical Livestock Systems, Animal Nutrition and Management Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 2001
Mentor	Tadesse Bekele Lutta, Senior Researcher, EIAR

Research area: Development of improved dairy cattle feed and management technologies to enhance productivity of dairy cattle.

Rehrahie Mesfin Gebrehiwot grew up in Tigray, Axum, Ethiopia in a family of eight, with hard-working parents who supported their family by making a living as farmers, which inspired her to pursue a career in agriculture.

“Ethiopians’ livelihoods are based on agriculture—it is our way of life,” says Gebrehiwot. “I’m interested in helping marginalized people, especially poor farmers, to improve their livelihoods.” To this end, she pursued a BSc in Agriculture with a specialization in Animal Sciences at Alemaya University of Agriculture, followed by an MSc in Agriculture in Sustainable Tropical Livestock Systems in Uppsala, Sweden. Her master’s research was focused on improving the feeding value of poor quality crop residues by applying urea-molasses treatment as dairy cattle feed. She is currently a researcher at EIAR as a member of the Dairy Cattle Improvement Research Program in Ruminant case team.

With 85 percent of the population involved in agriculture and livestock production, there is great potential for increasing livestock production in Ethiopia. With this in mind, Gebrehiwot is interested in improving dairy cattle feeding and management, thereby improving the milk production and productivity of dairy animals at on-station and at on-farm level.

Through her involvement in dairy cattle productivity improvement research project, Gebrehiwot works with women and men farmers who are involved in dairy cattle feeding and management. “I train different target groups, including smallholder farmers, extension and development agents, cooperatives, and other vulnerable groups who are engaged in dairy production, transferring the technologies I have developed,” she notes. “Training is the most important task of dairy-cattle research, because it transfers knowledge, information, and experience to the end user, the farmer.”

Gebrehiwot believes that improvement in the sector will only come through research. “In Ethiopia and Africa, the agricultural sector is not developed. Human population is increasing and the demand for food is not being met” she says. “Research helps to resolve this problem by discovering new technologies to

improve productivity of livestock. My vision is to contribute and deliver what I can to the efforts being undertaken to increase productivity and decrease poverty in Ethiopia and Africa.”

Her vision is to see the agricultural sector in Ethiopia and Africa enhanced and promoted through the efficient involvement and contribution of skilled women agricultural scientists. She aims to pursue a PhD with the goal of developing participatory research approaches that involve female and male farmers, and she is confident that the AWARD Fellowship will help her develop the skills that she needs to pursue that vision.

“I need to be a better researcher, manager and leader.” she says. “AWARD will help me upgrade my science, leadership, and management skills so that I can compete in writing publications, and winning funding proposals to ultimately generate improved technology that can benefit and bring change in livelihoods of female and male smallholder farmers.”

Gebrehiwot is one of a growing number of African women agricultural scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a career-development program that equips top women agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate agricultural gains by strengthening their research and leadership skills through tailored fellowships. AWARD is a catalyst for innovations with high potential to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of African smallholder farmers, most of whom are women.

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