



Executive Corner

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Learning from Ups and Downs

Performing agricultural activity in a remote rural area where there is no sufficient rainfall, no infrastructure, and with almost no trained local manpower requires not only money but it also needs an investor who has honest heart, optimistic view, and courageous leadership. Our president has all these qualities that have lead him to be part of the solution for one of the country's major challenges. That is why Paul dedicated himself to eradicate the scarcity of food by introducing drought resistant wheat, other cereal varieties, and introducing of modern technologies, agricultural equipment, and implements. In addition, to meet his objectives, MAI (Paul) has hired US and Ethiopian professionals, and all employees are contributing to the achievement of MAI goals.

Though the performance of MAI farming wheat was not as expected in our Alyssa (Beltu) Farm, the progress shown in our School Farms and Farmers Training Center (FTC), and especially in the neighboring farmers land, is promising and encouraging. This indicates that MAI will achieve its farsighted objective of "Sowing Hope and Prosperity" in short period of time.

One of the major components for a successful business is to have the right leaders and employees at the right time and at the right place. MAI, after some ups and downs, has now started to run on the right track in personnel selection and assignment and management practices, considering both local and national cultures. I want to extend my appreciation for top management leaders who have shown us their courage in making the best use of their management leadership.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to request all Morrell Agro Industries employees to contribute their best, not only to the success of their department where they work as one and as a single part of an entity, but also to the achievement of the big picture - MAI - by performing tasks in a coordinated and responsible way. I believe the upcoming 2012 year will be prosperous and productive to MAI and its wonderful employees.

Wishing you all the best,

Yared Debebe
Director of Finance

Beltu Farm

Dennis Strong, Beltu Farm Project Director

Green Manure

The green manure plots worked out well. Staff on the Beltu Farm planted mustard, millet, and sorghum in different areas of the farm. They have just completed disking in about 800 hectares of green manure that will add organic material to the soil and help break the disease cycle that is affecting the wheat. The next planting season will start next year after the remaining wheat and safflower crops are harvested.



Wheat Crop

On the farm 200 hectares of wheat will be ready to harvest in early December.



Research

Experts from four different Agricultural Research Centers visited the farm on November 1st and analyzed the fields and crops, and they have published their findings in a report. This information will be added to MAI's research results to come up with a plan to guide the next planting cycle. Tony Richards and the Agronomy Department completed 22 soil test pits so that the soil properties can be analyzed all across the farm. Samples will be sent to a lab in Addis for further data collection.

Silos

Staff are down to the last few items on the silo project. Mark Brown and the construction team have added the finishing touches to the second tower leg and to the last two silos. They are being checked for leaks, and the final inspections are being made.



Green manure disking.

Soil test pit.

Community Schools Project

The community school project stalled after excavating the foundation, but a new committee has been formed with government and village leaders providing oversight. MAI visited the site recently and met with the local elders and the school director. They are negotiating a new contract and expect the project to be complete in about 60 days. The school children are very excited about their new school rooms.



Additional Community Projects

The other two current community projects are to build four roto tank towers, which will provide 10,000 liters of rain water harvested from the roofs of the community buildings in four neighboring kebeles, and to purchase new student desks for five local village schools.



Farm Construction

A new project just began to improve the food services at the camp by removing the tarp and tin shacks that have been serving as the "restaurant". Staff will build a new facility with a kitchen and dining hall.



School foundation.

Tearing down tent "restaurant".

Kokosa Dairy Farm

Abera Chala, Kokosa Project Director

Monthly Progress

- The performance of the farm’s bulls, calves, and cows was evaluated. Almost all of the local cattle breeds had better body condition than the exotic cattle breeds. This was particularly true this week as there was a heavy rain, and the cattle were shocked by the cold; what they ate they used for cold resistance. The local breeds were able to resist the harsh environment.
- The animals were transported to an Addis slaughterhouse to be sold at the Addis supermarket.
- The heart girth of 53 bulls and heifers, both exotic and local breeds, was measured before they were started to be given concentrated feed. Concentrate feed was purchased from the Kalit Animal Feed Processing Factory and was mixed with alfalfa and green feed.
- At this time, the oats mixed with vetch is ready for harvesting. Daily laborers will be hired within one week before the crop has fully flowered.
- The farm’s Napier grass was invaded by weeds. The weeds need to be removed from the Napier land in order to reduce competition for nutrients and free air circulation.
- The Jefferson wheat special plots one and four are in good condition. Those two plots are fully ready for harvesting. Jefferson wheat has adapted well to the Kokosa environment, and it is possible to use it in large scale projects, rather than just demonstrations.
- Bulls, calves, and cows were treated with oxyteracycline 20% and ivermectine.

Future Plans

- We will continue selling RWAB bulls.
- We will follow up on the performance of calves, bulls, and cows.
- We will harvest grass and oats.



Facilities and Logistics

Mamayenesh Teshome

The Logistics Department has continued to facilitate the work in all MAI departments. However, the most work is done in the four departments currently under the supervision of the Logistics Head. Most of the departments have finalized work routines.

The Facilities Department has continued to facilitate the everyday work in the main office. It made the routine maintenance checks in all the departments and guest houses and fixed any problems accordingly. The reception area was temporarily relocated back to its original location on the ground floor next to the main entrance. The department also prepared a JS and is following up on the process of hiring of a new security guard. One side of the ground floor, that used to be a store, is now in the market for new tenants. Interest was shown from different organizations, and the selection is under process.

The guest houses continue to accommodate the international personnel and other guests. A welcome package awaited the seven staff members and guests this month. The department is re-negotiating and working on an expired contract for one of the guest houses. The guest house is still functional and is accommodating guests until contracts and payments are settled.

The Transportation Department has continued to endeavor in making sure timely deliveries of goods are made to different locations, particularly to the Beltu Farm, by the company owned Dodge trucks. The department’s daily activities include issuing fuel coupons and assigning rented small vehicles to working staff members. Besides managing rental car contracts, the de-

partment follows up on the maintenance and repair of vehicles. In order to manage the cost of rental cars, the Transportation Department is currently looking into purchasing a small vehicle for office use.

The Special Operations Department has recently started to collect data on 180cm diameter pipes, fabricated in Ethiopia, that will be used to support testing irrigation scenarios. It has also been working on getting a ripper shank fabricated in an Ethiopia metal factory. The warehouse located in Mekanisa has been fulfilling its purpose in storing materials. The department has also been monitoring the storage of materials, making sure everything is in the right place, controlled and managed, and that the container is locked.

Additionally, the Special Ops Department conducted a pumice soil check and submitted it to a soil testing company that has the exact minerals of the pumice needed for the soil. The results will be ready in the coming week. The Special Ops Department is doing the soil testing along with the Procurement Department. They are currently working on finding the necessary equipment for soil water infiltration for use in irrigation.

The Procurement Department has established a small store that currently serves as both a store for stationary, spare parts, and equipment, and as site for the inspection of supplies and the correct use of materials. In addition to this, the Procurement Department buys food supplies, spare parts, cleaning material, oils, and lubricants, as well as other kinds of equipment, to ensure the effective use of the MAI materials.



New car taken into consideration



Space for rent