

According to the head, the research is being conducted on sugarcane varieties cultivated in Metehara area.

The research will enable the centre to select drought and disease resistant as well as environmental friendly varieties of sugarcane.

Sugar development project is underway in Wolkayit Woreda of West Tigray Zone as part of Ethiopia's five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

Over 40,000 hectares will be covered with sugarcane plantation while 10,000 hectares will be used for construction of a sugar factory and residential

purpose. There is plan to construct 10 sugar factories throughout the country during the GTP period at a cost of 4.6 billion US dollars.

The sugar factories are currently being constructed in Beles in Amhara, Wolkayit in Tigray, Kesem in Afar and Omo Kuraz sugar factories in SNNP states.

Out of the 10 factories, three are expected to start crushing sugar cane by 2013/14, another five factories are to become operational by 2014/15, while the remaining two are expected to become operational by 2015/16.

The construction of the sugar factories will help Ethiopia become one of the world's top ten sugar

The government is aggressively working to maximize per capita sugar consumption to over 11 kg after five years.

In an effort to meet its ever-growing sugar demand, the country imported 150,000 metric tons of sugar last year.

The government aims to become self-sufficient in sugar production by the end of 2013 and increase production almost eightfold to 2.3 million tonnes by mid-2015, leaving a surplus for export of 1.25 million tonnes.

At present, there are only three sugar factories in the country namely, the Metahara, Finchaa, and Wenchi sugar factories.

## Workshop outlines demand-driven research challenges

SHUSHAY ADANE

ADDIS ABABA - Stakeholders who attended a national workshop on 'Demand-Driven Research for Sustainable Development' at the Jimma University last Saturday indicated that scholars in higher educational institution have faced various challenges in conducting demand-driven research.

According to the participants absence of a concerned body to coordinate universities' research efforts at a national level, lack central research data base, and collaboration among the university themselves as well as equipped workshops and laboratories, systematic way of financing for research projects, loose linkage with the local communities, lack of research knowledge and skill, absence of centers of excellence and information release protocol, lack of harmonization of the thematic areas of the universities, bureaucracy, weak linkage with

sector ministries and other stakeholders are the major challenges in conducting demand-driven research.

The researches currently done by universities said are mostly donor driven and are not multidisciplinary.

Population Health and Environment (PHE) Ethiopia Consortium Executive Director Negash Teklu on the occasion said that the objective of the meeting was to bring all core stakeholders such as the government, line ministries, universities and NGOs together to discuss the issue of demand-driven research.

The Director said that the workshop organized by PHE attracted 12 universities across the country to draw lesson from the Jimma University which is undertaking significant demand-driven researches in tackling gully erosion, malaria, siltation affecting the Ghibe hydro electric dam among others.

Negash said, "If the universities engage in demand-driven research like the Jimma

University, I think it will be very strategic to meeting our Growth and Transformation Plan and the Millennium Development Goals."

Minister of Water and Energy Alemayehu Tegenu also said in a message that research is one of the dominant factors that are critical to the development of the country. He said: "Ethiopia can achieve its development plan through community oriented demand-driven and problem solving researches in all spheres of life."

Professor Zerihun Woldu from the Addis Ababa University indicated that as demand-driven research needs local context and knowledge the government should give due attention to involve scholars in the country to do researches.

The participants finally agreed to establish a research council at the national level to coordinate research activities by universities. They elected a six-member task force drawn from all stakeholders to facilitate council establishment.

Domestic benefit from animal fattening