

Lemma Gizachew Seifegebreal - Research and Development Practitioner

Personal Profile



I was born and grew up in a small town named Bore, presently in the Guji Zone of Oromia Region, where the environment is so conducive for crop and livestock farming. In my teen years, I particularly got inspired by the crop demo plots run by my uncle working for Extension and Project Implementation Department (EPID) of the Ministry of Agriculture. Most likely that early experience sparked my interest in agriculture and influenced my subsequent college study path.

My educational background is within the domain of Animal Sciences: B.Sc. in Animal Sciences, Alemaya College of Agriculture, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; M.Sc. in Tropical Agriculture, Wye College, University of London, UK; and PhD in Grasslands Sciences, University of the Free State, South Africa. I am among the '1985 Alemayans' that joined the National Agricultural Systems (NARS) upon graduation. My first duty-station was Bako Research Centre where I started my career as Junior Researcher, promoted to Associate Researcher II and then Head of Animal Feeds and Nutrition Research Division until transferred to Addis Ababa to serve as a Director of Livestock and Fisheries Research Directorate of Oromia Agricultural Research Institute. While in the NARS, my main tasks were research, outreach and coordination. With the core aim of disseminating research findings to a wider audience and career development, I have published over 60 articles in various print media including journals, book chapters, workshop proceedings, research bulletins and professional newsletters.

I left the NARS in mid-2007 and joined the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Ethiopia. My work in FAO remains within the livestock sphere but covers wider areas including livestock emergency relief and recovery schemes, promotion of good livestock practices (GLP), and strategy and policy development. While working for NARS and FAO-Ethiopia, I have participated in several leadership positions. Posts held include member of the executive committee of Ethiopian Society of Animal Production and many technical networks, and a founder and chairperson of Pasture and Rangeland Forum in Ethiopia. Presently, I am working as livestock development specialist in FAO supporting the Republic of South Sudan in the introduction and dissemination of GLPs, and livestock policy and strategy development.

In my last 40 years' journey, I have experienced so many good and bad times. Periods that I achieved important milestones in my professional career and personal life were the most fulfilling moments. These were occasions that my modest attempt in an action-oriented research and outreach program got the recognition of the top management and earned me certificates of appreciation, accelerated promotion. The birth of our three children, two daughters and one son, and the blessings that came with it are the other exciting and happiest occasions. This journey, however, is not all roses and rainbows. There were so many bad and distressing moments in between. The worst of such painful moments were the untimely deaths of loved ones- family members and close friends. Work in humanitarian and development organizations like that of FAO will take you to different places, especially to places affected by natural and manmade disasters. To this day, I recall with a heavy heart the devastating droughts of 2008-10 in Afar, Somali and Borena. Given the sheer volume of the need, no amount of resources are sufficient to save the lives of animals on the verge of dying. So, I stand there helplessly, watching hundreds of thousands of livestock die of starvation and dehydration. That was the gloomiest and the most challenging period in my professional life.