

# Pilot of new wheat variety improves yield for Ethiopian farmers

**I**n 2021, The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) launched a project called 'Adaption, Demonstration, and Piloting of Wheat Technologies for Irrigated Lowlands of Ethiopia' (ADAPT-Wheat) in 2021.

Eight farmers were selected from the Melke Yegna Tesfa Association, a membership group of 83 smallholder farmers, nearly half of which is female. It has been a year since the project began and the results are extremely positive.

Participants were given a new variety of wheat to plant in their smallholdings called Kingbird seeds. With support from the project they were given advice on smart soil management, water management, plant protection, agronomic packages and were also helped with capacity building.

"I am happy with this wheat variety and all the support from the project. It is a lot of money that I will earn as a

female farmer in my life." says Agere Worku, one of the female farmers from the project.

Six hectares of land were prepared, with 1.1 tonnes of Kingbird seed sowed. Other varieties were also sowed adjacent to the Kingbird seed, such as Danda'a, and the difference in yields were incredibly visible, along with the quality, maturity and disease tolerance.

In 2018, the Ethiopian Government set a policy to achieve wheat national self-sufficiency by 2023. With the assistance of CIMMYT, they are working to replace obsolete wheat varieties in Ethiopia with better and newer varieties of wheat like Kingbird seed.

"I produced 3.7 tonnes on 0.75 hectares. Interestingly, I earned around 132,000 Ethiopian Birr (US\$2500) from this yield. I plan to build a new house for my mother in my village and will be blessed by her at her old age," says Buzayehu Getahun, a farmer in Jeju, in the Oromia region.