



Partnering for Innovation

Meet Ato

Ato is expanding his poultry business with help from EthioChicken's rural sales agents, allowing him to increase his income and send his children to school.



Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation

In Ethiopia, chickens provide an important source of protein and have the potential to improve household nutrition and farmer incomes. Although most rural families keep chickens, the dominant indigenous poultry breeds have low weight gain and egg-laying productivity, and are highly susceptible to disease. While poultry is an important meat product in the country, people who live in rural communities consume two-thirds less chicken than people who live in urban areas. In addition, most smallholders do not raise the improved, more productive chicken breeds. Because of low productivity and high demand, farmers have been missing this opportunity to improve nutrition and generate income. However, one Ethiopian poultry company is determined to change all that.

EthioChicken is one of Ethiopia's main chicken suppliers. It recognized that for farmers in Ethiopia to take advantage of poultry's income generating potential, more productive breeds of chicken needed to be available to rural farmers. To address this need, EthioChicken partnered with Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation, a USAID-funded program that helps commercialize agricultural innovations in smallholder markets, to introduce and commercialize improved chicken breeds into Ethiopia and expand its network of sales agents to reach more farmers in rural areas. The poultry breeds that EthioChicken is introducing into Ethiopia grow 150 percent larger in the first three months and produce four times as many eggs as local breeds.

Ato Aweke is a farmer living in Alemnber. He earns money by tilling other farmers' land and sharing the yield with the land owners, but he receives little money for his hard work. This is why he decided to buy 20 chickens from a local EthioChicken sales agent and start selling chickens and eggs. After raising and selling chickens for seven months, he saw how much income he could make from a small poultry business and is now planning to buy more chickens and expand his business. With this additional income, Ato was able to send his children to high school in a nearby city, ensuring their continued education. Across Ethiopia, smallholder farmers like Ato are building small poultry businesses that are becoming an important part of their livelihoods.