

## PRESS RELEASE

### New Malt Barley Varieties Perk up Farmers and Malting Industry in Ethiopia

**May 26, 2016, Addis Ababa.** Two new malt barley varieties with the potential to triple average yield in Ethiopia have been released by the Holetta Agricultural Research Center as a result of decades of research collaboration with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). The two varieties, *HB1963* and *HB1964*, can yield up to 6 tonnes per hectare (t/ha) as opposed to the average yield of 2 t/ha in Ethiopia. The varieties also offer excellent malting quality, making them attractive buys for the malting and brewery industry, thus allowing smallholders to use the new malt barley as a cash crop and generate income from it.

In Ethiopia, the gap between malt barley production and demand is high. In late 2015, brewing factories, such as the Assela Malt factory had to scale down their production due to the chronic shortages of malt barley in the market.

“With the release of new malt barley varieties and robust scaling out of the technologies, there is an opportunity not only to meet local demand but also to export in the long term,” said Dr. Zewdie Bishaw of ICARDA, who is leading the USAID-supported project on scaling out of malt barley technologies in Ethiopia.

“Public-private partnership involving research, seed suppliers, malt factories, breweries and farmers could be a game changer for the livelihoods of smallholder farmers,” said Dr. Berhane Lakew, senior barley breeder at the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR).

In 2015, malt barley supply in Ethiopia met only 35% of the demand, with the remaining 65% (63,526 tonnes of malt) imported at a cost of \$38 million. While malt barley production covers only about 150,000 ha, barley (for food and feed uses) is widely grown in the Ethiopian Highlands. In 2014-2015, some 4.1 million smallholder farmers cultivated barley over close to 1 million ha of land, producing 1,953,385 tonnes. The favorable agroecology for barley in the Highlands represents a huge opportunity to increase domestic malt barley production and bridge the supply and demand gap. Modern business models, such as contract farming, warehouse receipt systems and private sector investment in post-harvest processing, could set up a brand new equation between malt factories, breweries and farmers – a scenario that could be game changing for the smallholder farmers, particularly in the high altitudes, where barley is one of the few crops that continue to yield well, being resilient to climate change.

The newly released malt barley varieties will be promoted for wider adoption among the farming communities under the ongoing scaling out project supported by USAID and implemented by ICARDA. A major thrust is toward producing sufficient quantity of early generation seed to adequately meet the demand from seed suppliers and the processing industries.

ICARDA has been partnering with the Ethiopian National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) for over three decades to develop improved crop technologies that can make the livelihoods of smallholder farmers more profitable and resilient to climate change.

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**Photos:** <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lba4dsfg02imvqf/AAAiblbSVEViE6PJUOz74vfka?dl=0>

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### **About ICARDA**

The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), a member of the CGIAR Consortium, is the global agricultural research organization working with countries in the world's dry and marginal areas to deliver sustainable systems solutions that increase productivity, improve rural nutrition, and strengthen national food security. [www.icarda.org](http://www.icarda.org)

### **About EIAR**

The Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) is responsible for the running of federal research centers and is charged with the responsibility for providing the overall coordination of agricultural research countrywide, and advising government on agricultural research policy formulation. [www.eiar.gov.et/](http://www.eiar.gov.et/)