

## IPM CRSP Trip Report

**Country Visited:** Ethiopia

**Dates of Travel:** December 12, 2012 to December 30, 2012

**Travelers Names and Affiliations:** Wondi Mersie, Parthenium Project Coordinator

**Purpose of Trip:** To implement the Parthenium Project in Ethiopia

**Sites Visited:** Addis Ababa, Ambo, Willinchitti, Haramaya Univeristy, Ethiopia

### Description of Activities/Observations:

#### Friday December 14, 2012

Dr. Wondi Mersie met with Dr. Kassahun Zewide (Coordinator of Parthenium Project at Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) and Mr. Million Abebe, VSU's Parthenium Project Coordinator in Ethiopia. The three discussed the tasks ahead in the implementation of parthenium project in Ethiopia.

#### Saturday December 15, 2012

Dr. Mersie met with Dr. Samuel Assefa from Oromiya Bureau of Agriculture. He has been assigned by the Bureau to participate in the parthenium management activities. The discussion focused on how to secure support from Oromiya Agricultural Office at Willinchiti for the rearing and release of *Zygogramma*. The role of the local agricultural bureau at Willinchiti in managing and securing the site was discussed in detail. Dr. Samuel agreed to continue to facilitate the establishment and operation of the rearing site at Willinchiti.

#### Sunday December 16, 2012

Dr. Wondi Mersie, Dr. Kassahun Zewdie and Mr. Million Abebe traveled from Addis Ababa to Willinchiti to work on the establishment of the rearing site. On Sunday, they met with Mr. Immana Guidessa, an agronomist with local Agricultural Bureau. Mr. Immana will coordinate the selection of the fields where *Zygogramma* will be released.

#### Monday December 17, 2012

On Monday a meeting was held at Willinchiti Agricultural Office to discuss the initiation of the work at rearing site. The participants of the meeting included Dr. Wondi Mersie, Dr. Kassahun Zewdie and Ato Million Abebe from the Parthenium Project side while the Willinchiti Ag Bureau was represented by Mr. Ali Jara the area Ag Bureau deputy head and Mr. Kassahun Getahun, the plant protection coordinator for the Ag Office. Topics covered at the meeting included security at the rearing site, assistance from Ag Office, management of the site and

coordination with the Farmers' Ag Cooperative who own the land. The Ag Bureau officials expressed support for the establishment of the rearing site and promised to play a positive role in its management.

A meeting was also held with officers of the Farmers Cooperative about the establishment and operation of the rearing site. The Cooperative donated the land and agreed to provide security as well as maintenance of the compound.

#### **Tuesday December 18, 2012**

Dr. Mersie and Mr. Million Abebe visited with various vendors who carry items that can be used at the Willinchiti rearing site and at the Ambo Quarantine facility.

#### **Tuesday December 19, 2012**

Dr. Wondi Mersie, Dr. Kassahun Zewdie and Mr. Million Abebe traveled from Addis Ababa to Ambo to visit the quarantine facility. There they met the staff who work in the facility and received report about the on-going work. Dr. Mersie delivered supplies brought from U.S. for the facility primarily protective clothings. A long discussion was held on the challenges of maintaining the *Zygogramma* and *Listronotus* cultures under quarantine conditions. It is evident that the *Zygogramma* culture has been weakened by the in-breeding that has been occurring for the last two years. A discussion was also held on the resources needed to maintain the physical facility. It was agreed that resources are needed to conduct timely repair to the various components of the facility. The team returned to Addis from Ambo in the afternoon.

#### **Thursday December 20, 2012**

Dr. Mersie met with Mr. Dubale Admassu, Pastoralist and Livestock Programs Coordinator at the USAID Mission in Addis Ababa. Dr. Mersie briefed Mr. Dubale Admassu on the progress of the Parthenium Project and provided him documents that describe the accomplishments and the current status of the project. Mr. Dubale Admassu in his part reiterated the importance of developing practices to control parthenium in crops as well as in pasture fields in Ethiopia. He indicated his support for the project and expressed his desire that *Zygogramma* will be released to control parthenium in the coming months. Dr. Mersie promised to keep Mr. Dubale informed about the project. It was a useful and fruitful discussion.

#### **Friday December 21, 2012**

Dr. Mersie traveled by air to Harar to visit with partners at Haramaya University.

#### **Saturday December 22, 2012**

Dr. Mersie met with Dr. Lisanework Nigatu, a faculty at Haramaya University. He is the collaborator on the Parthenium Project from Haramaya University. The two discussed about recruiting additional M.S. students to work on parthenium and the topics that need to be

addressed by their thesis research. Dr. Mersie and Dr. Lisanework Nigatu visited fields that are infested with parthenium and discussed plans for the coming year.

#### **Sunday December 23, 2012**

Dr. Mersie returned to Addis Ababa.

#### **Wednesday December 26, 2012**

Dr. Mersie met with Mr. Fikre Markos, Deputy Director, Animal & Plant Health Regulatory Directorate at Federal Ministry of Agriculture. Dr. Mersie briefed Mr. Fikre Markos on the progress made by the parthenium project. In addition, issues about the project including impending release of *Zygogramma*, the need for new *Zygogramma* culture, submission of a permit application to release *Listronotus* and permission to import new agents for host-range evaluation at the quarantine facility at Ambo were discussed. Mr. Fikre Markos indicated that he will continue to support the implementation of the project and will facilitate the permit application for the release of *Listronotus*.

#### **Thursday December 27, 2012**

Dr. Mersie made a second trip to Willinchiti to confer with Ag Bureau officials and see the progress made in clearing the site to install the screen houses that will be used to rear *Zygogramma*. The site preparation is now complete and the frames will be installed soon. The plan calls for installation of a nursery to raise parthenium and four rearing cages for the bioagent.

The Willinchiti Ag Bureau has also assigned one of its staff, Ms. Genet Seifu to manage the site. She has an office at the rearing site and will oversee the daily activities. She will also supervise temporary staff who will work at the site. She will be trained at Ambo Research Center before she starts working at the rearing site. Dr. Mersie returned back to Addis Ababa late in the afternoon

#### **Friday December 28, 2012**

Dr. Mersie met with EIAR and Parthenium Project staff to discuss the tasks that need to be accomplished in the coming months. The immediate focus will be to establish and operate the rearing site at Willinchiti. This will require installing the nursery and the rearing cages as well as growing plenty of parthenium in pots for *Zygogramma*. Maintaining the Ambo Quarantine Facility was also discussed. In addition, the application to release *Listronotus* will be submitted to the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture in the coming weeks.

#### **Saturday December 29, 2012**

Dr. Mersie returned to U.S.