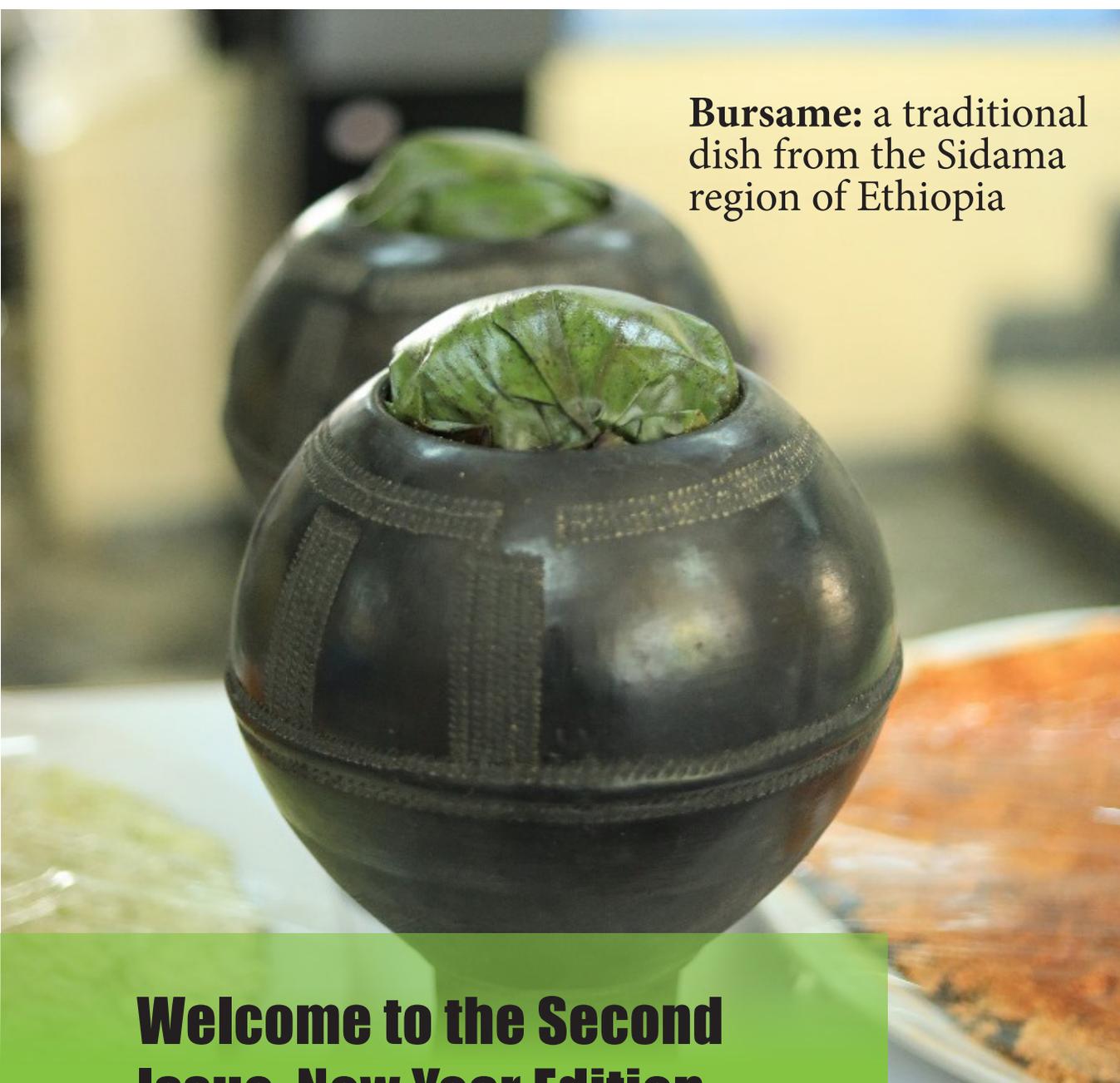


# Bimonthly Updates

Ethiopian Sustainable Food Systems and Agroecology Consortium Bimonthly Newsletter



**Bursame:** a traditional dish from the Sidama region of Ethiopia

## Welcome to the Second Issue, New Year Edition, 2025!

### About our newsletter: ESFSAC Insights

Welcome to the second edition of the Ethiopian Sustainable Food Systems and Agroecology Consortium (ESFSAC) bimonthly Newsletter. This newsletter will share updates on key initiatives, events, and Ethiopia's role in sustainable agriculture and agroecology, with a focus on youth empowerment and global climate discussions. Stay tuned for insights into our progress and upcoming opportunities to get involved.



Ethiopian Sustainable Food  
Systems and Agroecology  
Consortium (ESFSAC)

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“We are  
what  
we eat!”



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*“Strengthening land governance is not just a technical or policy matter; it is about ensuring dignity and equity for all citizens. Our collective efforts today will define a more sustainable and just future for Ethiopia.” - Dr. Melesse Damtie*



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*“For the first time, the CAADP strategy and action plan directly prioritises nutrition security, a development that recognises the urgency of tackling malnutrition in all its forms across Africa.” - Kefilwe Moalosi*



## Support for Ethiopian Youth in Agroecology

*“Courage fuels persistence, and persistence redefines limits. In agriculture, as in life, with vision and determination, we can turn challenges into opportunities and create a sustainable future for generations to come.”  
- Frezer Fikiru*



# Message from **ESFSAC's** Executive Director



On behalf of ESFSAC, I am pleased to present the second edition of our bimonthly update newsletter. This platform offers valuable updates on Agroecology, food systems, and related topics, including highlights from our activities, a follow-up on the 1000 Africa Youth Summit, and regional events. Food plays vital role on individual's health and well-being as careful dietary choices are crucial to staying healthy and avoiding non-communicable diseases. From nutritional point of view, we are what we eat. As urban consumers shift toward ultra-processed foods, we must educate on healthy, diverse, locally-produced, and environmentally-friendly diets, particularly among the youth who are essential in building a healthy future generation.

Our Consortium is committed to promoting Agroecology and sustainable food systems. We are leading the continent-wide "My Food Is African" campaign, supported in 47 African countries, emphasizing local resources and community empowerment for food sovereignty. Sustainable food production, rooted in environmental care, ensures reliable harvests that benefit both people and the planet.

Given the challenges of climate change, land degradation, and youth unemployment, it's essential to transform agricultural practices. Agroecology provides a sustainable alternative, restoring soil health, boosting productivity, and preserving biodiversity. Addressing the entire food system, from seed quality to distribution, is critical in tackling public health issues linked to non-communicable diseases. Let's join hands to create a healthier, more sustainable future. We, hereby, invite partners and organizations to share upcoming events or news for our readers in subsequent issues.

**Wishing you the best in your endeavors for the New Year 2025!**

**“**  
**We are  
what  
we eat!**

## **A Successful Seed and Food Fair Celebrates Enset & Root Crops in Hawassa!**



*Participants of the event enjoying traditional foods*

## **Event Highlights**

The second National Seed and Food Fair, held on December 23rd, 2024, in Hawassa, was organized by PELUM Ethiopia in partnership with CCRDA, EEC-MY, DASSC, EOSA, and Agri Service Ethiopia, which brought together over 200 participants, including farmers, government officials, and NGOs. The event focused on indigenous crops mainly Enset and root crops, featuring vibrant displays of seeds, traditional foods, and cultural dishes. Key highlights included speeches from Dr. Mellese Mariyo and Dr. Regassa Feyissa on the importance of local resources, as well as recognition for Arbaminch University and Sidama Region for their contributions to Enset promotion and community seed banking initiatives. Discussions emphasized the need for policy support and collaboration for the sustainable growth of these crops in Ethiopia.

## Consultative Stakeholder Meeting and Advocacy Event on Healthy Eating



Anchole traditional Ethiopian food served at the event

On December 12, 2024, ESFSAC held a Consultative Stakeholder Meeting at Addis Ababa University with 47 participants from various sectors. Discussions focused on promoting healthy food systems, government nutrition initiatives, non-communicable diseases, and the health risks of agrochemicals and gene technologies. The event highlighted the importance of traditional Ethiopian foods as healthy alternatives to ultra-processed products, emphasizing the need to preserve local food traditions for better health and sustainability.

## Dialogue on Biosafety: the Prospects, merits and demerits of gene editing in indigenous crops – the case of teff



Director of the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute making keynote speech and panelists

On December 30th, 2024, ESFSAC, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute and MELCA Ethiopia, organized a dialogue in Addis Ababa on gene editing of teff. The event, attended by 40 participants, discussed the potential benefits of gene editing for small-scale farmers, alongside concerns about its impact on food sovereignty and biodiversity. Key topics included the 2015 amendments to Ethiopia's Biosafety Protocol and the country's non-ratification of the Nagoya-Kualalumpur Supplementary Protocol on liability and redress. The FDRE Parliamentarians who attended the event emphasized the need for collaboration of stakeholders to inform policymakers, expressing willingness to revise biotechnology policies based on evidence-based recommendations. The event aimed to ensure informed decision-making on gene editing and food security in Ethiopia's agricultural sector.

## Celebrating the 2nd Ethiopian Land Day

On December 26, 2024, Land for Life Ethiopia hosted the 2nd Ethiopian Land Day in Addis Ababa, bringing together policymakers, academics, researchers, farmer representatives, and civil society organizations along with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss the future of land governance in Ethiopia. The event highlighted the need for resilient land management systems to promote sustainable development and equitable growth.

The day addressed critical issues such as land tenure insecurity and the integration of climate resilience into land management strategies. Participants explored how inclusive land governance can enhance livelihoods while protecting the environment for future generations.

**Why does this matter?** Effective land governance is key to Ethiopia's long-term development, ensuring land resources are used sustainably and equitably.



Group photo of event participants



*“Strengthening land governance is not just a technical or policy matter; it is about ensuring dignity and equity for all citizens. Our collective efforts today will define a more sustainable and just future for Ethiopia.” - Dr. Melesse Damtie*

# KAMPALA DECLARATION MARKS A TURNING POINT: NUTRITION NOW CORE TO AFRICA'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



Participants of the CAADP meeting in Kampala, Uganda

In January 2025, the African Union adopted a historic agricultural strategy during the Extraordinary Summit held in Kampala, Uganda. The Kampala Declaration and the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035) officially recognized nutrition as a central priority within Africa's food systems. This marks a strategic shift towards nutrition-sensitive agriculture, addressing the continent's challenges of food insecurity, malnutrition, and climate impact.

## ADDIS DECLARATION: FIRST THOUSAND YOUTH SUMMIT ON FOOD SYSTEMS AND AGROECOLOGY

In the last issue, we highlighted the First Thousand Youth Summit on Food Systems and Agroecology, where young leaders from across Africa came together to shape the future of our food systems. In this follow-up, we dive deeper into the commitments made at the summit, as outlined in the Addis Declaration, underscoring the urgent need for agroecology to lead the transformation of Africa's food systems.

At the First Thousand African Youth Summit on Food Systems and Agroecology, held in Addis Ababa in October 2024, over 300 youth leaders from 47 countries declared their commitment to transforming Africa's food systems. The declaration emphasizes key points such as:

**Commitment to Agroecology:** Advocating for agroecology as a sustainable solution to Africa's food system challenges, including climate change, health crises, and biodiversity loss.

**Youth Empowerment:** Harnessing the energy of youth to promote agroecology, drive innovation, and create youth-driven agroecological entrepreneurship.

**Cultural and Traditional Knowledge:** Acknowledging the importance of preserving indigenous food traditions, ecological knowledge, and seeking the wisdom of African elders.

**Inclusive and Equitable Access:** Demanding equitable access to resources like land, water, and technology for youth, women, and marginalized groups.

The SUN Movement, working alongside the African Union, aims to create domestic investment targets for nutrition, driving effective programs aligned with CAADP. Key figures such as H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko and Dr. David Nabarro highlighted the transformative potential of this shift during the summit.

This renewed focus on nutrition acknowledges its importance in addressing stunting, wasting, underweight and obesity, while driving agricultural productivity. Africa's agricultural development must meet the nutritional needs of all its populations to ensure sustainable, holistic growth. For more information read the full articles on ReliefWeb & devex.com: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/kampala-declaration-marks-turning-point-nutrition-now-core-africas-agricultural-development-agenda>

AF SA

ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA



For the first time, the CAADP strategy and action plan directly prioritises nutrition security, a development that recognises the urgency of tackling malnutrition in all its forms across Africa.

Kefilwe Moalosi  
AUDA-NEPAD,  
SUN Movement Executive  
Committee member



Scaling Up  
NUTRITION  
ENGAGE • INSPIRE • INVEST

**Investment in Agroecology:** Calling for increased investment in agroecology to support small-scale farmers and promote sustainable food systems.

**Climate and Social Justice:** Advocating for agroecology as a climate action solution and supporting social justice movements to address hunger, conflict, and inequality.

The youth also emphasized intergenerational learning, gender equality, and farmer-managed seed systems, and called on governments and businesses to join them in taking bold action for shaping the future of Africa's food systems.



## An Ethiopian Gebeta Delight: A Feast for the Eyes and Health

Every bite of “**Sineg/ ከንግ**” bursts with flavor, from the green chili to the red tomatoes and white onions and garlic, making it a visual and tasty delight. This dish isn’t just about taste, it is appetizing and a healthy celebration of fresh veggies that sparks the appetite and leaves you wanting more. It’s a perfect balance of spice, color, and nutrition, bringing both beauty and well-being to your dish supplying essential vitamins.

Got a healthy local dish to share ? We’d love to feature it in our upcoming issue! Reach us at <[senagetahun@gmail.com](mailto:senagetahun@gmail.com)> or WhatsApp +251966999339. Tell us about your nutritious, indigenous food!



# SUPPORT FOR ETHIOPIAN YOUTH IN AGROECOLOGY

An Interview with Frezer



**ESFSAC:** Frezer, thank you for willing to do this interview with ESFSAC bimonthly Newsletter. Can you start by telling us a bit about yourself and the agricultural initiatives you're working on?

**Frezer:** Thank you for having me. I'm Frezer Fikiru, co-founded and CEO of Agrisphere. Our goal is to revolutionize the agricultural supply chain using digital tools, from seed access to produce marketing. Our mission is to help farmers by making agriculture more efficient, sustainable, and profitable, which benefits everyone involved in the supply chain.

**ESFSAC:** What inspired you to become an agripreneur, and what drives your passion for this field?

**Frezer:** My inspiration comes from my grandparents, who are farmers in rural Ethiopia. Growing up, I spent a lot of time on their farm and saw the challenges they faced—everything from crop management to market access. Those experiences inspired me to find ways to make farming easier, attractive, and more sustainable. My drive comes from wanting to help smallholder farmers, like my grandparents, improve their livelihoods and adopt more efficient and sustainable practices.

**Meet Frezer Fikiru**, a passionate agripreneur and the co-founder and CEO of Agrisphere. Frezer is dedicated to transforming the agricultural supply chain through digital solutions that empower farmers and create a more sustainable, efficient, and profitable industry. In this interview, we sat down with him to hear more about his journey and the impact of his work in the agricultural sector.

**“Courage fuels persistence, and persistence redefines limits. In agriculture, as in life, with vision and determination, we can turn challenges into opportunities and create a sustainable future for generations to come.”**

**– Frezer Fikiru**

**ESFSAC:** How do your projects align with agroecology principles and sustainable agricultural practices?

**Frezer:** At Agrisphere, sustainability is central to what we do. We focus on agroecology principles, such as reducing waste, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting local communities. By using digital tools, we can help farmers reduce their carbon footprint, improve soil health, and adopt better resource management practices. We align with all 13 principles of agroecology, making sure that we work in a way that benefits both farmers and the environment.

**ESFSAC:** On a lighter note, do you have a fun fact about yourself that people might not know?

**Frezer:** Well, I have a pretty bad sense of fashion! I'm not really into shopping and rarely buy clothes for myself. My family, especially my wife, dad, and siblings, help me pick out my clothes. They keep me looking presentable, and I'm very thankful for that!

**ESFSAC:** Finally, is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

**Frezer:** Yes, I'd like to say that we all have the power to make a positive impact, especially in agriculture. Let's work together for peace, self-sufficiency, and sustainability, so that future generations can thrive. The work we do today can shape a better world for tomorrow. Thanks for the opportunity to share my story!



12th Ye Bego Sew Award 2024, Dr. Bayush Tsegaye

ESFSAC is thrilled to announce that our Executive Director, **Dr. Bayush Tsegaye**, has received a prestigious national award - **12th Ye Bego Sew Award 2024** - in the field of science and technology. This recognition highlights her contributions in research and development work for the past three decades in promoting community agrobiodiversity management and conservation, her unwavering commitment to advancing the betterment of her community and advocating for Farmers' Rights. Her research works are published in peer-reviewed international journals. As a contribution towards recognition of Farmers' Rights, she wrote a book on tef titled **"The Amazing Tef Crop of Ethiopia"** published in Amharic.

Having multidisciplinary training with strong agricultural background, Dr. Bayush gained rich experience working at different capacities with various government organizations as well as local and international development NGOs. She provides technical support to different partner organizations locally and abroad with focus on community seed banking, seed and food security, participatory crop improvement, natural resource management, gender equality, community climate change adaptation, youth engagement and women empowerment initiatives targeted towards livelihood diversification and building community capacity for resilience.

Now leading the Consortium, Dr. Bayush has proved to be a motivated leader, setting a remarkable example inspiring the youth, the future generations. The esteemed award honours awardees as the **Good Person of the Year** and the certificate acknowledges her impactful contributions for the communities and the nation of Ethiopia.

## UPCOMING EVENT

Get ready for a series of exciting upcoming events that will bring together experts, policy makers, and stakeholders to advance sustainable food systems in Ethiopia.

- **Event Title:** A Validation workshop on a study conducted to assess the contribution of agroecology in conflict areas of Ethiopia Highlands  
**Date of Event:** February 06, 2025 , at Vibes Hotel and Spa, Addis Ababa  
**Organizer:** PELUM Ethiopia in collaboration with the ProSilience project of GIZ
- **Event Title:** International Confrence on Irrigation and Climate Resilient Production 2025  
**Date of Event:** February 12 - 14, 2025 , at Adwa Victory Memorial Museum, Addis Ababa  
**Organizer:** Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands

This event will create opportunities to discuss and collaborate on shaping the future of Ethiopia's food system.

We are excited to invite you to be featured in our upcoming issue of ESFSAC Insights, coming in March 2025. If you have any projects, achievements, or announcements you'd like to share, please send us your content by mid-March. This is a wonderful opportunity to start the year by showcasing your work. For submissions or inquiries, feel free to contact us or email your content to: [tsegayebayush14@gmail.com](mailto:tsegayebayush14@gmail.com) / [senagetahun@gmail.com](mailto:senagetahun@gmail.com) / [lensagirma146@gmail.com](mailto:lensagirma146@gmail.com) . We look forward to featuring your highlights in our March issue!

## Ethiopian Sustainable Food Systems and Agroecology Consortium (ESFSAC)

### Ethiopia Founding Members

- MELCA Ethiopia
- Land for Life Ethiopia
- PELUM Ethiopia
- Enhanced Rural Self-Help Association
- Pesticide Action Nexus Ethiopia
- Agri Service Ethiopia
- CST Ethiopia

### General Assembly Members

- Home Grown Vision
- PHE Ethiopia
- Ethio-Organic Seed Action
- Green Flower Foundation

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