

# **Farmers' Cropping Pattern in Sidama and Gedeo Zones, Southern Ethiopia**

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## **SUMMARY**

In an effort to survey the cropping pattern in Sidama and Gedeo zones, five-km drive stops were made starting from Awassa tobacco monopoly to Yirgalem-Dilla-Yirgacheffa and Cheleleketu. The dominant food and horticultural crops and their association in the field were determined in the four localities. The objectives of the study was to describe the existing farmers' indigenous knowledge of cropping patterns and thus provide baseline information for future researcher and development interventions that would help to optimize resources at a farm level and ensure maximum productivity in the highly populated Sidama and Gedeo areas. The results reveal that coffee is the often-leading crop in the study areas, which was mixed-cropped with other perennial and annual crops in different combinations through out the cropping seasons. Coffee, cereals, *enset*, fruits, vegetables, pulses, chat, root crops, and sugarcane combination dominated in all localities. The farmers grew almost all crops for the purpose to ensure family food supply and as cash sources. This is confirmed by developing a frequency of crop "matrix". Farmers possessed small farm size and they practice multiple spatial and temporal cropping. Accordingly, the commonest mixed intercropping was two and three crop combinations. Sole crop and mixed intercropping of five and six crop combinations were low. In general, there is a shift in the crop types and crop combinations at each site, largely indicating the influence of climate and soil factors and the long standing farmers' experience to identify suitable crop types and crop husbandry practices.