

NEWSLETTER

EFDA



VOICE



EFDA VISION

To be a center of excellence in food and health products regulation in Africa.

EFDA MISSION

To protect and promote public health by ensuring the safety, effectiveness, quality and proper use of regulated products through licensing, inspection, registration, laboratory testing, post-marketing surveillance, community participation, and provision of up-to-date regulatory information.

EFDA OBJECTIVE

To protect and promote public health through realization of the following objectives:

1. Protect the public from unsafe food
2. Safeguard the public from falsified, substandard and ineffective health products
3. Protect the public from tobacco and alcohol related health risks
4. Attain public confidence on food and health product regulation.

WHO Maturity Level 3 Achievement Hailed by Industry Minister

His Excellency Ato Melaku Alebel, Minister of Industry of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, stated that the EFDA success in achieving World Health Organization (WHO) Maturity Level 3 (ML3) in medicine regulation is a significant testament to the nation's commitment to building a strong regulatory institution. During a visit to the EFDA Medicine Laboratory today, the Minister was briefed on the achievement by Minister of Health H.E. Dr. Mekdes Daba and EFDA Director General Heran Gerba.

Minister Melaku praised the EFDA's progress toward gaining international recognition not only in pharmaceuticals but also in other regulated inputs, emphasizing that strategic planning will lead to further success. He also stressed the need for collaborative work with stakeholders to ensure food control promotes international standards for domestic producers and safeguards public health. H.E. Dr. Mekdes Daba confirmed that the ML3 status was earned following the assessment of

domestic medicine manufacturers' compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and affirmed that efforts to build the capacity of remaining local producers will be a key focus, alongside scaling up research and dissemination to sustain and broaden international recognition.

In response, EFDA Director General Heran Gerba highlighted that the ML3 recognition will stimulate local medicine manufacturers by enhancing their global competitiveness and attracting investment, thereby contributing significantly to national prosperity. She requested the Ministry of Industry's support for effective food control regulation.



Joint Inspection Essential to Ensure Food Safety and Quality

October 31, 2025 the Authority has conducted a capacity-building training session for regional and branch food inspectors aimed at strengthening the nation's food safety and quality systems.

Wosenyeleh Ambaw, Lead Executive for Food Quality Inspection at the Authority, emphasized that efforts by inspectors at all levels must be intensified to guarantee food safety. He called for a stronger partnership between regional and federal regulatory bodies, noting that integrated joint inspections are crucial for safeguarding public health.

The Authority launched a vital capacity-building program for regional and branch inspectors to bolster the nation's food safety and quality standards. A central pillar of the training was Ethiopia's National Food Fortification Strategy, which saw participants diving deep into technical regulations, national

quality standards, and registration procedures for fortified products.

To ensure these policies translate into real-world results, the program featured hands-on sessions where inspectors practiced precise sampling techniques and used "iCheck" devices to measure Vitamin A levels. The session concluded with a collective commitment to scale up these collaborative efforts, ensuring that food safety is not just a regulatory goal, but a guaranteed reality for all citizens.



Media Called to Action: Drive Behavioral Change for Safer Milk in Ethiopia

December 1, 2025 — Media professionals were strongly urged to utilize their platforms to effect positive behavioural change among the public, a crucial step in ensuring the safety of milk and dairy products across Ethiopia.

The call was made during a specialized training session focused on "The Role of Media Professionals in Milk Quality and Safety Control." The training was organized by the Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority (EFDA) in collaboration with SNV Ethiopia, and brought together social media journalists and public relations heads from various organizations.

Ato Negash Simie, the EFDA's Deputy Director General for the Food Sector, delivered the opening address, stressing the dual nature of milk. "Milk is a product of high nutritional value and is vital for our community," he stated. "However, it is also highly perishable and, if not handled meticulously, presents a significant risk to public health."

Ato Negash emphasized that ensuring milk safety requires a comprehensive, end-to-end control process—from the animal's feed through to the final consumption stage.



He tasked media professionals with the responsibility of transmitting information in a manner that builds public trust and actively drives essential behavioral modifications within the community.

Ato Abera Deneke, the Authority's Executive Officer for Public Relations and Communication, explained that the training was strategically designed to foster a proper understanding of the EFDA's mandate among media practitioners.

Ethiopia Unveils Five-Year National Strategy to Combat Substandard and Falsified Medicines



The Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority (EFDA) has officially inaugurated a comprehensive five-year National Strategy designed to prevent, detect, and respond to the circulation of Substandard and Falsified (SF) medicines.

The launch ceremony was attended by high-level officials, including H.E. Dr. Mekdes Daba, Minister of Health; H.E. Ms. Frehiwot Abebe, State Minister of Health; and H.E. Heran Gerba, Director General of the EFDA, alongside other distinguished guests.

In her opening remarks, Health Minister Dr. Mekdes Daba highlighted the gravity of the issue, referencing World Health Organization (WHO) studies which indicate that approximately 10% of medicines globally are substandard or falsified. She emphasized that this global challenge poses a significant health risk within Ethiopia as well.

The Minister hailed Ethiopia's recent achievement of WHO Maturity Level 3 (ML3).

in medicine regulation as a major milestone and announced that preparations are already underway to elevate the country's regulatory status to the next tier, Maturity Level 4 (ML4). "In a country where over 63 million citizens are now beneficiaries of health insurance, ensuring the supply of quality, proven, and effective medicines is a primary goal of our policy," Dr. Mekdes stated.

Heran Gerba, Director General of the Authority, outlined the institution's broader vision during her welcome address. She noted that the EFDA is working to become an African Center of Excellence in regulation by focusing on three core reform agendas:

- Revising and strengthening legal frameworks.
- Modernizing organizational structures.
- Digitalizing regulatory operations.

She explained that the newly launched strategy is vital for increasing public confidence in the regulatory.

Ethiopia Wins International Award for Combatting Tobacco Industry Interference



January 13, 2026 -Ethiopia has received an international award in recognition of its robust efforts to prevent unlawful interference from the tobacco industry.

During a workshop organized to release the 2025 Tobacco Industry Interference Index study, H.E. Dr. Dereje Duguma, State Minister of Health, highlighted that the government's collaborative regulatory efforts over the past few years have yielded significant results.

The State Minister noted that Ethiopia's performance in implementing tobacco control policies is reflected in various metrics. He congratulated the nation, stating that Ethiopia is now cited as a global and continental role model for resisting industry interference. He further urged stakeholders to remain focused on sustaining these achievements.

Heran Gerba, Director General of the Authority pointed out that tobacco industry interference remains one of the greatest threats to effective tobacco control. She remarked:

"Despite having strong policies in place, the industry continues to attempt to influence

decision-making and weaken public health protections through both direct and indirect means.

"She attributed the national recognition to the government's firm commitment and the strong coordination maintained with various stakeholders to block such interference.

Ethiopia received this international recognition during a World Health Organization meeting held in Geneva. The award was presented by Good Governance for Tobacco Control, an international non-governmental organization.

The workshop, where the study conducted by the Health Development and Anti-Malaria Association (HDAMA) was officially released, concluded by honoring various institutions and individuals who contributed significantly to this success.

The Authority announced that it will provide all necessary support for the 3rd International Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Manufacturers Trade Exhibition and Conference to be held in Addis Ababa.



Director General of the Authority, Heran Gerba, shared this commitment during a meeting on January 22, 2026, with organizing committee members representing the Federation of African Pharmaceutical Associations and the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical and Medical Supplies Manufacturers Association. She stated that the African Health Manufacturing Trade, Exhibition and conference is a significant opportunity for the country that will revitalize local pharmaceutical manufacturers, and pledged the Authority's full cooperation to ensure the event's success.

The Director General further noted that the Authority provides essential support and monitoring for local manufacturers, starting from the initial factory design stage. She added that the Authority will provide supportive supervision to a few local pharmaceutical factories that have not yet met Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards to help them fulfill the necessary requirements within a short timeframe.

It was also highlighted that the international conference will create market opportunities for African pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers, allowing them to enhance their competitiveness through quality and increasing their chances of connecting with potential lenders.

More than 600 pharmaceutical manufacturers, government policymakers, heads of regulatory bodies, pharmaceutical buyers, and donor organizations are expected to participate in the conference, which is scheduled to take place in October 6-8/2026.



We encourage you to connect with the Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority (EFDA) through our official social media channels for the most accurate and verified information:

LinkedIn: (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ethiopian-food-and-drug-authority>) for insights into our regulatory initiatives and professional updates.

Facebook: (<https://www.facebook.com/share/18c8cP82g17>) to receive current news, events, and information about our community outreach efforts.

Telegram: (<http://t.me/ethiopianfoodanddrugauthority>) for timely updates and important announcements regarding food and drug safety.

Please be advised that any information not disseminated through these official channels has not been verified by EFDA. We emphasize the importance of relying on our official communications to ensure the reliability and integrity of the information you receive. Together, let us promote public health and safety in Ethiopia effectively!

World Bank Delegation Evaluates Project Performance at Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority



WORLD BANK DELEGATION EVALUATES PROJECT PERFORMANCE AT EFDA

January 22/2026- A high-level delegation representing the World Bank, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) met with the leadership of the Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority (EFDA) to review progress on key collaborative health projects.

Heran Gerba, Director General of the EFDA, received the officials to discuss the performance of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Project (HEPRRP). The discussions focused on the project's achievements during its first two years and outlined strategic priorities for the next phase.

During the meeting, Director General Heran Gerba expressed her gratitude for the World Bank's comprehensive support. She highlighted a major milestone: the EFDA's recent attainment of WHO Maturity Level 3 (ML3).

"Achieving WHO Maturity Level 3 confirms that our regulatory system is globally credible," Director General Heran stated. "With this achievement, Ethiopia ranks 9th in Africa, 3rd in East Africa, and 1st in the IGAD region."

She attributed this success to the World Bank's support in: Modernizing laboratory infrastructure, Building human resource capacity, Integrating work processes, Securing ISO accreditation for 48 laboratory testing parameters. Furthermore, the Director General announced that the Authority is expanding its reach by increasing the number of branch offices to 11 to ensure more accessible regulatory services.

Mr. Tseganeh Hamsalu, Senior Health Specialist, Health, Nutrition and Population Global Practice at the World Bank, expressed the Bank's pride in the Authority's "historic success." He emphasized the need to maintain this momentum by optimizing resource utilization and ensuring that all remaining project activities are completed within the designated timelines.

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to regional integration. The delegates pledged to work together to modernize regulatory systems across the region and to share Ethiopia's successful experiences with neighboring countries.



In this special edition, we are honored to be joined by the Authority's top leadership to reflect on the landscape of product regulation. Our distinguished guests include the Director General, the Deputy Director for the Medicine Sector, and the Deputy Director for the Food Sector. Throughout the session, these high-level officials provide an expert overview of the significant milestones and successes achieved in the regulatory sector over the past few years. Beyond celebrating progress, the discussion candidly addresses the complex challenges encountered along the way, offering a comprehensive look at how the Authority is navigating obstacles to ensure the safety and quality of food and medicine for the public.



Heran Gerba
Director General of the Authority

EFDA VOICE: *Could you tell us about the successes your authority has achieved regarding the regulation of food and health products?*

HERAN : *When examining the successes and main activities of the regulatory sector, the foremost achievement is at the international level, where the various successes are often interconnected. Most recently, the Ethiopian medicine regulatory system exceeded the World Health Organization's measurement criteria to reach "Maturity Level 3". This level signifies a system that properly performs its verified work through a coordinated and integrated regulatory framework, ensuring that the community receives medicines proven for their quality, safety, and efficacy. While higher levels exist, the institution plans to implement them in future phases. Parallel to this, as part of the institution's reform agenda to establish quality infrastructure, 48 regulatory and quality*

inspection laboratory parameters have fulfilled ISO standards, including the recently obtained ISO 17025 and ISO 17020 certifications.

In terms of economic and health benefits, achieving Maturity Level 3 has fostered trust and confidence within the community and enhanced the market competitiveness of local industries. Because the sector is directly linked to human health and involves international quality competition, safety and quality standards remain non-negotiable. Significant progress has also been made in infrastructure, including the improvement of existing laboratories and the construction of a major Center of Excellence and training hub in Kality. This facility will serve as a long-term asset, providing the capacity to inspect the quality of all products. Furthermore, the sector is undergoing digitization to increase transparency and efficiency through systems like the Electronic Regulatory Information System (ERIS), which allows remote applications and tracking, and the upcoming Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).

Legal and organizational reforms have also yielded substantial results, particularly through the issuance of Proclamation 1112/2011. A 2024 study indicates that tobacco use has decreased compared to 2016 levels, and alcohol consumption has been reduced by half. Additionally, transitioning the institution to a product-focused or FDA-style structure has allowed for a greater focus on core activities. Efforts to organize branch offices have also made regulatory services more accessible across various regions. While these milestones represent a strong beginning, the institution acknowledges that significant work remains to be done in the future.

EFDA VOICE : What are the current gaps and challenges within the regulatory framework?

HERAN : when we look at the general regulatory sector as a country, much remains to be done regarding having full regulatory professionals deployed in this sector in terms of professional mix, numbers, and competence. Especially when we descend to the lower structures, there is a very large gap in terms of assigning appropriate professionals with relevant experience and knowledge, and professionals who are suitable for the work in both number and type in all locations. This is an issue that needs a lot of work in the future. Furthermore, the general regulatory organizational structure is not uniform. Some regions are organized independently at the authority level, while others are organized as a single work unit or a single business process within a Health Bureau. Many studies have been conducted regarding this; our transition from EFMHCA to EFDA was also based on research, and there are many studies conducted by both national and international experts. There are also proposals and recommendations given at the national level, including for the regions. Within the framework of the civil service reform currently being implemented—which includes institutions accountable to the Ministry of Health and the regions—and as we have now moved into the implementation phase, this issue must be looked at very deeply and resolved in the future. This is because the organization of human resources is a major issue.

Additionally, the law enforcement capacity in this sector must be strengthened. There are limitations in terms of being uniform; therefore, this capacity must continue to be strengthened, as it is one of the gaps observed. Another area is the regulatory work at entry and exit points. We have opened offices and stationed professionals at 15 entry and exit checkpoints; however, Ethiopia's border is very wide. Some of the countries we border do not yet have well-established regulatory systems or are not yet measured by international standards. The illegality seen in those areas requires working in high coordination with other bodies because the border at the entry and exit points is very vast. We are present only at the entry and exit points where legal declarations are made. Therefore, it must be possible to work in a very strengthened manner with the Customs Commission, Federal Police, and other justice bodies, especially since the nature of illegality is constantly changing.

Another priority is strengthening collaborative work. This work is like a relay; to be effective, it must be based on the roles of many sectors. It is multi-sectoral. Therefore, we must clearly identify the ways to strengthen this collaborative work, sign Memorandums of Understanding, and prepare strategic frameworks to reinforce this matter. By the way, when we speak of collaborative work, it is not only within the country; it is also at the continental level. Regarding the border problems I mentioned earlier, we are working through IGAD, of which we are a member state, to strengthen the regulatory system together with other neighboring countries. As the African Medicines Agency (AMA) is now becoming operational, Ethiopia's role within it must be prominent. We must also participate in other cooperation frameworks to strengthen the overall regulatory work. Products are transboundary; we cannot say they do not cross borders. We receive products from abroad, and there are products we export; in this trade system, great coordination is required. Therefore, we must strengthen such efforts not only among national institutions but also continentally.

Furthermore, there is the issue of accessibility. This includes the laboratory capacity, inspection capacity, and post-market surveillance mentioned earlier—properly controlling the market and performing regulatory work after products reach the community. While maintaining prevention-based work, we must also properly strengthen our ability to quickly identify and respond when incidents occur. When we mention laboratory capacity, we use it as an example; it requires large investment. There are significant limitations regarding budget and resources. Therefore, this capacity needs to be strengthened. Large laboratory investments and problems with the supply of inputs are seen as gaps. Consequently, these must be resolved together in the future. Finally, illegality has become more sophisticated over time. When one way is closed, there are illegalities that emerge by changing their characteristics in another way. In particular, illegal transactions are being carried out over the internet using social media. Therefore, it must be possible to establish a regulatory system equipped with technology. Developing technology is one major task, and cultivating the culture of using that technology is another. Since these things are interconnected and illegal activity is one of the biggest gaps, this must be solved in various ways in the future.

EFDA VOICE: What strategic reforms are planned to strengthen national regulatory capacity?

As I was describing most of the gaps earlier in one way or another, I have also included the solutions as there is a good opportunity ahead: we are currently preparing a three-to-four-year development and growth plan. Therefore, most of these solutions will be included within that. As I said earlier, since the vision of the general regulatory work sector is to transition toward excellence, we will continue to strongly strengthen our work of becoming a center of excellence in all sectors—in infrastructure, human resources, and all other areas. Additionally, it was after much labor and effort that we reached Maturity Level 3; this must be sustained. This must be able to become a culture. Therefore, not only this, but we must also work toward Maturity Level 4 and other levels in vaccines, medical devices, and medicines. We cannot stop here; because of the economic growth, we have been transitioning toward industry, and within the industrial transition, the manufacturing sector is given very high attention. Within manufacturing, pharmaceutical manufacturing and agro-processing issues are given great attention. Therefore, since this strengthens our work of replacing and substituting imported products with home-grown products, we will continue to strengthen this; the issue of collaborative work is another matter.

Furthermore, we must establish a data-driven regulatory system. Information is great power and strength. Therefore, in terms of the community giving us information and the community's ownership being strengthened—and also

as we perform our regulatory tasks for the community with great efficiency and effectiveness—making it data-driven and science-based will be the work we do by designing it as a strategy for the future. Regarding strengthening technology, one of the things that can protect the entire supply chain from medicines that are substandard, unsafe, or falsified is the implementation of "track and trace" traceability technology. This will be a task we perform with special attention in the future. We can fight this illegality only when we strengthen our capacity to control and use technology by following the product's footprint from the manufacturer to the consumer. Therefore, this will be one of the tasks we focus on in a special way. Coincidentally, a national strategy will be launched tomorrow through which we can control substandard and falsified medicines—or medicines that are below standard and fraudulent.

That strategy contains all the things I mentioned to you earlier. Especially since it is a matter that strengthens collaborative work, when it is launched at the national level, we will all take our respective shares and they will be tasks we perform together in coordination. When we see these things linked together, the main issue at the end is that the community's level of trust in us must be able to grow. For this, making the community the owner of the regulation (community ownership) is a very, very, very major issue. In the work we do, the community must trust us, believing they have better protection. One of our four strategic goals, and the one we see as a major priority, is this issue. They must have confidence in us; this happens when we perform a better and stronger regulatory task. If the community places its trust in us, it will be the main strategy we follow in terms of the community reporting illegal actors and ensuring that this overall illegal practice continues to decrease.



Seyoum Wolde
Deputy Director General of the Medicine Sector

EFDA VOICE : What measures is the Authority taking to combat substandard and counterfeit medicines?

SEYOUM : The regulatory authority's office is carrying out various activities, especially regarding the control of substandard and

counterfeit medicines. Specifically, the first priority is strengthening our regular regulatory work. There are regulatory activities performed at various levels to ensure the quality, safety, and efficacy of a medicine as a standard practice.

When we categorize them, there are about eight types of regulatory activities. By strengthening these eight regulatory activities, it is very necessary to work on preventing counterfeit and substandard medicines from entering the market or the supply chain.

From this perspective, by strengthening the work done in registration, inspection, licensing, market surveillance, and surveillance, it creates an opportunity to significantly reduce these issues; this is the first part. Secondly, even after performing this regulatory work, there may be counterfeit and substandard medicines that could enter the supply chain through various means. One goal is to prevent these medicines from entering the market or the supply chain. After they have entered, another fundamental task is to use various regulatory activities to ensure the public does not use these medicines.

Regarding this work, specifically conducting market surveillance, performing surveillance work, and additionally, based on the results obtained from these, conducting operational activities to bring substandard and counterfeit medicines under control and holding the involved parties legally accountable is the second major task. Therefore, overall, to control these illegal medicines, it is very necessary to strengthen the regular work we do and then continue to strengthen the work done after they have entered the market to ensure counterfeit and substandard medicines do not enter the supply chain in a meaningful way.

From this perspective, there will be activities we continue to perform, those we have planned; there are works we do together with various stakeholders. Especially to prevent contraband medicines especially towards our country,

which is a very vast country with a very long border, there is a chance for many medicines to enter our country through this border. Therefore, to control these medicines or take action against them, there are activities we do together with various stakeholders. There are activities we do together with the Federal Police, the Customs Commission, and regional regulatory bodies. We think that by strengthening these activities, we will continue to perform various works regarding the control of illegal medicines that sneak into the market or our country.

EFDA VOICE : Could you tell us about the regulatory gaps currently being observed in pharmaceutical oversight?

SEYOUM : The harm that these substandard and counterfeit medicines cause to public health is extremely extensive. First and foremost, these medicines are life-threatening. Because they do not provide the proper cure, there are situations where they lead to loss of life or death due to the lack of appropriate treatment and cure. Second, there is the condition of prolonging the illness. Because the medicine does not provide the proper cure, there is a situation where it causes the disease to persist or be prolonged. Third and most importantly, there is the creation of drug adaptation or resistance. Especially when they are medicines with low content, germs or bacteria adapt to that medicine, and a situation is created where they may not recover even if they use the correct medicine later. Another issue is the situation of creating economic and social crises. Because when people buy the medicine and fail to recover, they are subjected to additional expenses. Furthermore, by being absent from their workplace, they create an economic crisis for the country, themselves, and their families. Therefore, controlling these medicines is very essential to protect the public from these multifaceted problems.

EFDA VOICE : What improvements are planned to strengthen medicine quality control?

SEYOUM : *Our regulatory authority's office is carrying out various activities, especially regarding the control of substandard and counterfeit medicines. Specifically, the main and first priority is strengthening our regular regulatory work. There are regulatory activities performed at various levels to ensure the quality, safety, and efficacy of a medicine as a standard practice. When we categorize them, there are about eight types of regulatory activities. By strengthening these eight regulatory activities, it is very necessary to work on preventing counterfeit and substandard medicines from entering the market or the supply chain.*

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Negash Sime
Deputy Director General of the Food Sector

EFDA VOICE : *How does the Authority ensure food quality and safety within the supply chain?*

NEGASH : *According to the Authority's specific role within the food supply chain, the focus is placed on partially and fully processed foods by ensuring that manufacturers and importers fulfill specific requirements before any product enters the market. The first essential requirement is a competency certificate, which serves as a vital mechanism for the authority to indirectly assess the safety and quality of a product before it is distributed. Secondly, a formal food registration process is conducted, during which documentation is verified to ensure that safety and quality standards are maintained before a market permit is granted. In the third stage, samples of the food are taken for laboratory testing—including microbiological or physico-chemical analysis—to confirm the product meets established national standards. Even after a market permit is issued, the authority performs post-market inspections where officials visit shops in person to evaluate products or visit production sites directly to monitor their status. Finally, the Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority conducts market surveillance, research, and surveys while also responding to public feedback to identify safety concerns, taking all necessary regulatory actions whenever issues are found.*

EFDA VOICE : *What kind of common violations or gaps are observed in the food industry?*

NEGASH : *Within the food industry, since there is a process where we periodically go down to monitor the operations, first, among the challenges we identify, there is a lack of awareness.*

Especially because various people are involved in this field, we see situations where, due to low awareness about food safety, proper attention is not given to food safety and quality.

For example, when food is produced, there are professionals we call production managers. Strictly speaking, a product should not be produced if these professionals are not present; however, we see gaps where products are manufactured without their follow-up. If this gap exists in the food production process, it is a very big problem. Therefore, we encounter occasions where they produce without a professional present. In fact, this is often a situation where we take action.

As I said, some do this knowingly—purposely—while others do it because of a lack of awareness, thinking, 'What's the problem if another person is there?' However, if a production manager is assigned, the work must be done while they are present. Otherwise, if someone is brought in from another department, they may not have enough knowledge to lead the production process according to the required standards. This is the first gap.

Additionally, there are problems or gaps related to capacity. This refers to standards that institutions must fulfill. This is often seen in unlicensed areas where we find illegal operations and take action. Without fulfilling any standards that a manufacturer or an importer should meet... we may not have many problems with importers because they are often checked by us and pass through that channel; however, we frequently find local illegal actors working secretly without licenses, failing to meet standards, and even lacking proper labeling. In such cases, action is taken.

Similarly, there are occasions where legal entities, after obtaining a license and being compliant for a while, later begin to miss the institution's food safety requirements.

This is particularly visible regarding labelling. Labels must fulfill certain requirements. For example, the manufacturer's name must be present, and if there is a mandatory standard, the mandatory standard marks must be applied. This is because applying that mark signifies that at least a third-party quality standard or laboratory test has been conducted. Those who stop doing this midway are also subject to enforcement.

Furthermore, we are strictly assessing and pushing for the fulfillment of product registration, especially for local manufacturers. They obtain a competency certificate and are told to register their products as soon as they start production. However, there are instances where they fail to follow through, and action is being taken against them.

EFDA VOICE: *What is expected from stakeholders to improve food regulation?*

NEGASH : *When we talk about food safety, it is important to understand that a single sector cannot ensure it alone; it is a concept that encompasses the entire chain "from farm to table." There are many actors involved in this process, and everyone must fulfill their respective roles. From this perspective, the most essential factor to mention is the need for integration and coordination. For instance, if those responsible for primary agricultural products cannot work effectively with us, or if we cannot coordinate with them, ensuring food safety becomes extremely difficult. Therefore, coordination is vital, and it must be accompanied by strong communication and alignment between every concerned sector.*

This includes the government and the private sector—meaning both producers and the public must play their part. For example, when the public identifies a food safety issue, they must inform the regulatory bodies; our institution has a toll-free line at 8482 for this purpose, and public cooperation is essential. Similarly, other stakeholders, such as regional institutions, must work in alignment and coordination with the federal level. To ensure a product safely reaches the consumer, all involved parties must exert a concentrated effort to maintain standards such as Good Distribution Practice, Good Transportation Practice, and Good Storage Practice. If everyone fulfills their specific role in this manner, I believe food safety can be maintained. However, without this cooperation, support, and alignment, ensuring food safety will remain a very difficult challenge.



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