Official Opening Speech

H.E. Fikru Regassa (PhD), State Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Development Sector, CVO/WOAH Delegate of Ethiopia

Dr. Hamid Jemal, Deputy Director General of the Ethiopian Agricultural Authority

- Honorable Representatives of HPR, Agri. Standing Committee
- Dr. Bojia Endebu, chair of EVA
- Development partners, Academic institutions, Members of the private sector,
- Esteemed members of The Ethiopian Veterinary Association,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- All protocols observed

Good Morning

On behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and myself, it is with great pride and honor that I make the opening remark at the 38th Annual Conference of the Ethiopian Veterinary Association. This year's theme, "Animal Health and Welfare Regulatory Framework for Resilient Veterinary Systems in Ethiopia," reflects a pivotal moment in our sector's evolution

We gather here at a time when Ethiopia has taken a historic step forward to celebrate the recently ratified Proclamation No. 1376/2025 to provide the Animal Health and Welfare legislation

The new Proclamation represents more than a legal instrument. It signals a paradigm shift in how Ethiopia approaches livestock health and welfare

For the first time, animal welfare is no longer a peripheral concern: it is now embedded within our national regulatory framework. This opens the door to stronger enforcement mechanisms, clearer institutional mandates, and more inclusive multisectoral collaboration.

Let me take this moment to acknowledge and thank all those who devoted their time, expertise, and advocacy to the development and ratification of this proclamation. Your commitment has laid the foundation for a more resilient and humane veterinary system-one that recognizes the intrinsic link between animal welfare, public health, and sustainable development.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Apart from the ratification of Proclamation No. 1376/2025. I dare to say that the Ethiopian calendar year 2017, which will come to an end after a week, has been a period of triumph in which many successful results and achievements have been recorded in the Livestock and fisheries resource development sector in general, and in the animal health sector/Veterinary services in particular.

Particularly, this year has been a meaningful one for Ethiopia's livestock sector, as it was marked by two important international engagements that reflect both our operational progress and growing visibility.

The first one was the hosting of the 26th Conference of the WOAH Regional Commission for Africa, which is the first one in the history of the veterinary services of Ethiopia. The event was well organized and provided a valuable opportunity to present Ethiopia's contributions/and priorities to regional peers and higher officials of WOAH.

The second one was hosting the International WORLD BEE DAY 2025 and the Second “International Forum on Sustainable Beekeeping" in collaboration with FAO. This global event took place in Jima town, which is considered a center of excellence for apiculture and honey production, usually known as “The lake of Honey,” which brought together more than 300 participants drawn from all corners of the world.

The third one was the WOAH PVS Follow-Up Evaluation mission with PPR Specific Content, which offered an objective assessment of our veterinary services. The evaluation noted improvements in service delivery, infrastructure, workforce development, and investment-indicators of steady progress and institutional commitment.

These platforms have helped us take stock of where we stand, highlighting both achievements and areas for improvement. They offer not only validation but also practical guidance for the next steps in strengthening Ethiopia’s livestock systems, where we are eagerly waiting for the official results of the status.

In addition to these, this year, in collaboration with ELFORA Agroindustry PLC, we have been able to establish the Grand Parent Stock facilities for poultry resource development around Hawassa, which is the very first one and most important in the history of the livestock resource development of Ethiopia, which will bring a significant and paradigm shift in the sector. In total sum 2017, can be considered as a year of uplifting (የማንሰራራት ዘመን)- livestock on the rise

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Ministry of Agriculture remains fully committed to translating the new Agriculture and Rural Development policy (ARD) into action. We will continue to support its implementation through capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and the development of practical guidelines that reflect both scientific rigor and local realities.

We recognize the critical assets already in place. The National Animal Disease Surveillance System (NADSS) is aligned with WOAH standards, while the Animal Disease Notification System enables real-time reporting of priority diseases. Together with quarantine, vaccination, and biosecurity protocols, these systems form the backbone of our disease prevention and control efforts.

Digitization is also advancing, notably through the Ethiopian Livestock Identification and Traceability System (ETLITS), which strengthens export traceability, trade competitiveness, and risk management. Our laboratory and diagnostic capacity, veterinary infrastructure, and education and research centers continue to shape sectoral development. However, sustained investment and expansion are essential to meet international accreditation and standards.

The Ethiopian government is placing a strong emphasis on the agricultural sector through innovative policies, strategic initiatives, and institutional strengthening. Acknowledging agriculture as the backbone of the economy, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed has introduced the initiative ‘Yelemat Tirufat’ or "Bounty of the Basket” Program, aimed at driving economic growth. At the forefront of Ethiopia's agenda is the goal

of food and nutritional security, supported by home-grown economic reforms, with a commitment to sustainability and resilience.

The Yelmat Tirufat has shown a significant increment in milk, poultry egg, honey, and fish production, which clearly indicates an uplift of the sector.

And let me assure you that the Ministry of Agriculture stands with you. Let us continue working together to ensure that the livestock resource of Ethiopia is not only the backbone of our economy, but also a beacon of possibility.

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we begin this conference, I urge all of you to reflect on the significance of this moment. Let this conference serve as a platform for reflection, innovation, and renewed commitment to the values that we share: scientific rigor, institutional collaboration, and the welfare of animals and communities alike.

Together, we can build a veterinary system that is not only technically sound but ethically grounded, protecting the health of animals, the livelihoods of farmers, and the well-being of our communities. Let us be the generation that moves beyond promises and potential to deliver real transformation. Together, we can ensure that Ethiopia's livestock sector not only uplifts lives at home but also claims its rightful place on the global stage.

Finally, I extend my sincere appreciation to the EVA Secretariat and our partners for their effective and thoughtful organization of this prestigious event, which brings us together on the Eve of the Ethiopian New Year. I also gratefully acknowledge the continued support and commitment of the private sector and development partners, whose contributions have been instrumental in making this conference a success.

With these remarks, I declare that the 38th Annual Conference of the Ethiopian Veterinary Association is officially opened.

Thank You Very Much

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