

Letter to the Editor on Aflatoxins & Profile (Amare Ayalew)

Dear Prof. Ruth Oniang'o:

I found that the Special Issue of AJFAND developed by ILRI: *Aflatoxins in East Africa: The importance of getting the full picture* is a truly special contribution. The 12 peer reviewed articles provide an important examination of the status of various efforts at assessment and understanding of exposure to aflatoxins as well as mitigation approaches in a number of locations in East Africa. The articles highlight critical aspects of knowledge and information for the management of aflatoxins in key value chains: maize, sorghum, millet, and dairy. Addressing exposure in children and the gender perspective contribute to improving health and nutrition, especially in areas and population groups most negatively impacted by the presence of aflatoxins and other mycotoxins.

We especially appreciate your leadership, the editor-in-chief, for prioritizing aflatoxins and giving the space and attention that the topic deserves. Aflatoxin is not only a nutrition and health issue but a developmental challenge threatening the competitiveness of African agriculture and the achievement of many continental commitments such as tripling intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services by 2025 or even the goal of Continental Free Trade Area in several commodities. We heartily recommend the special issue to anyone dealing with research, policy and practice for aflatoxin control in the region. The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) is pleased to post a reference to the series on our website, www.aflatoxinpartnership.org and we know that the research and documentation presented here will foster more collaborative solutions and actions to address the harmful effects of aflatoxins in Africa.

Kind Regards,
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Dr. Amare Ayalew



Dr. Amare Ayalew is Program Manager of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) based at the African Union Commission. He has led PACA's strategic planning process and the launch of regional and country programs. Dr Ayalew has researched the occurrence, epidemiology, and management of aflatoxins and other mycotoxins as well as plant health for over 20 years. Prior to joining PACA, he had served as Associate Professor of Plant Pathology and Head of the School of Plant Sciences at Haramaya University, Ethiopia. He has supervised more than 50 post-graduate students including 10 at PhD level. Dr. Ayalew received a PhD (*summa cum laude*) in plant pathology from the University of Goettingen, Germany, 2002, and bachelor's and master's degrees from Haramaya University in Ethiopia. He holds certificates in project management, evidence-based policy making, higher institution leadership, and pest risk analysis. In 2008, he has been a USDA fellow and visiting professor for specialized training on sanitary and phytosanitary topics at Texas A&M University, USA. He had five separate research stays at the Bavarian State Research Center in Freising/Munich, Germany, studying mycotoxigenic fungi, mycotoxins, and biorational plant disease control between 1993 and 2012 and participated in wide ranging international trainings and professional forums.