Meet Gebrehiwot

Becoming a rural sales agent for EthioChicken gave Gebrehiwot the opportunity to build a business and provide improved poultry breeds to farmers in his community.
EthioChicken is one of Ethiopia’s main chicken suppliers. The poultry sector in Ethiopia has huge potential to create jobs and improve nutrition, but to do this, new, more productive breeds of chicken need to be available to rural farmers. To address this need, EthioChicken partnered with Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation, a USAID-funded program that helps commercialize agricultural innovations in smallholder markets, to commercialize improved chicken breeds and expand its network of sales agents to reach more farmers located in rural areas. The poultry breeds that EthioChicken is introducing into Ethiopia grow 150 percent larger in the first three months and produce four times as many eggs as local breeds. The company’s rural sales agents raise chicks for the first 40 days and receive a commission for each sale thereafter. EthioChicken trains agents in how to raise the improved breeds and increases the number of chicks agents receive in a batch as they gain experience.

One of EthioChicken’s most successful agents is Gebrehiwot, who started his poultry business raising 1,500 chicks from EthioChicken in his home town of Hawzen. Before becoming a poultry farmer and sales agent Gebrehiwot was a nurse in Mekele. A lot of people advised him not to leave his stable job and get involved in the poultry business, but Gebrehiwot had a commitment and passion for being an agricultural entrepreneur, and with no prior experience with poultry management, started his business. With training and a supply of day-old chicks from EthioChicken, Gebrehiwot succeeded as a rural sales agent, and after more than three years in the business, now raises more than 30,000 chicks and sells them in his community, enabling him to expand his poultry business and start investing in new businesses. Not only is Gebrehiwot building a business for himself, he is also expanding rural farmers’ access to improved breeds that provide income and nutrition to households in his community.