

The General Working Conditions of Flower Farms in the Ethiopian Rift Valley

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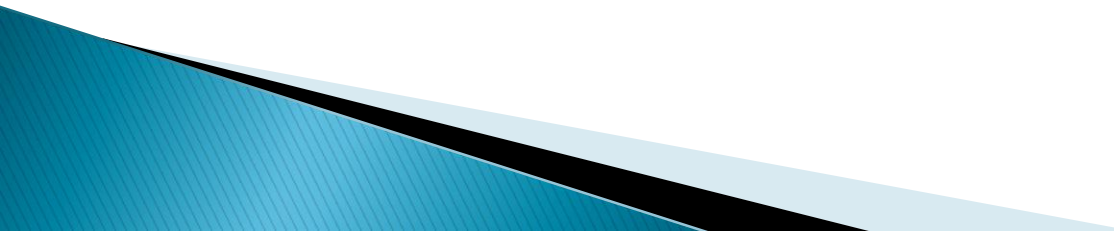
2012

Introduction–



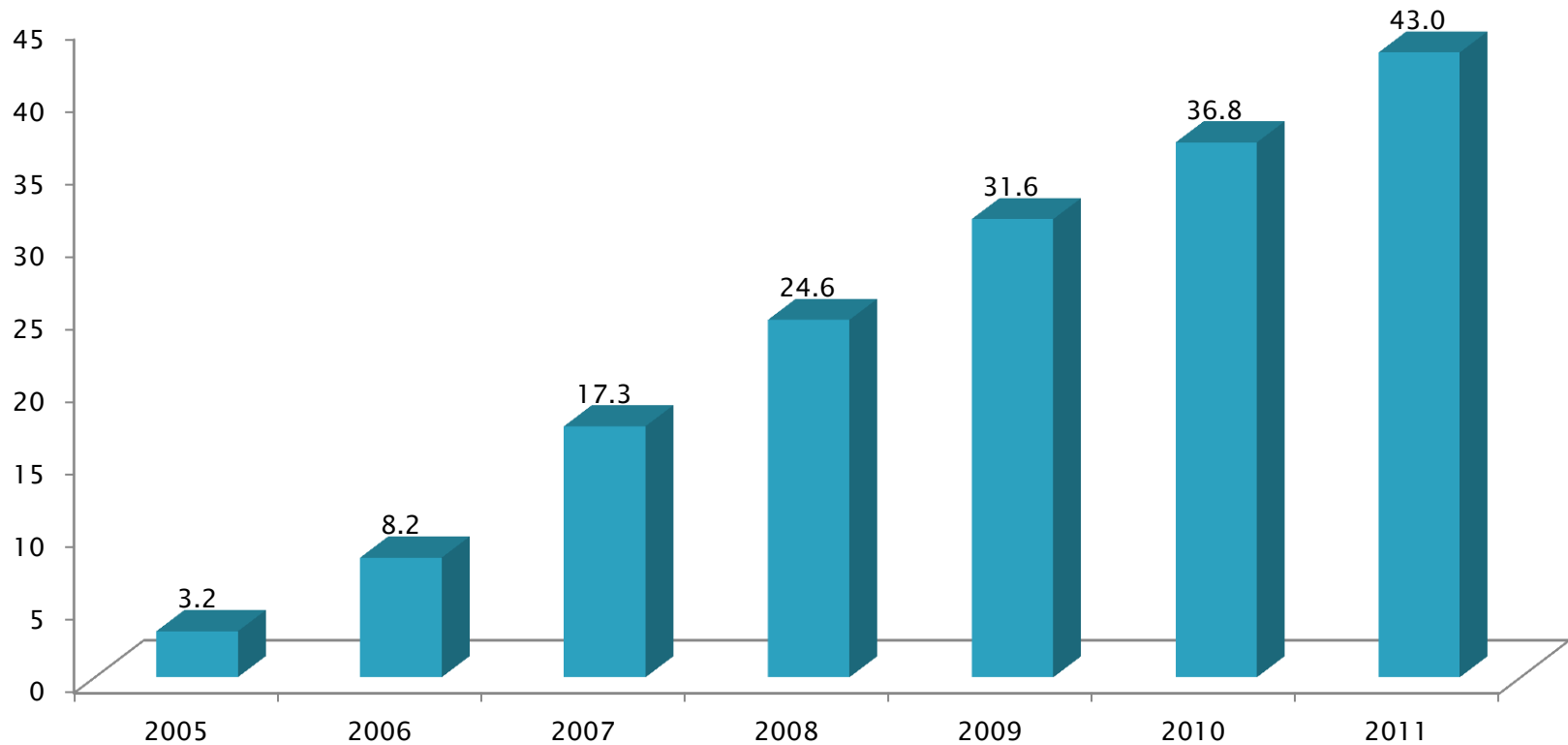
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Ethiopian Flower Industry:

- I. Land is State owned, thus investors have easy access to cultivable land.
 - II. Banks have been regulated to lend 70 % of the total investment capital at a lower rate.
 - III. The agro-ecological conditions are suitable for production of flower, fruit and vegetables
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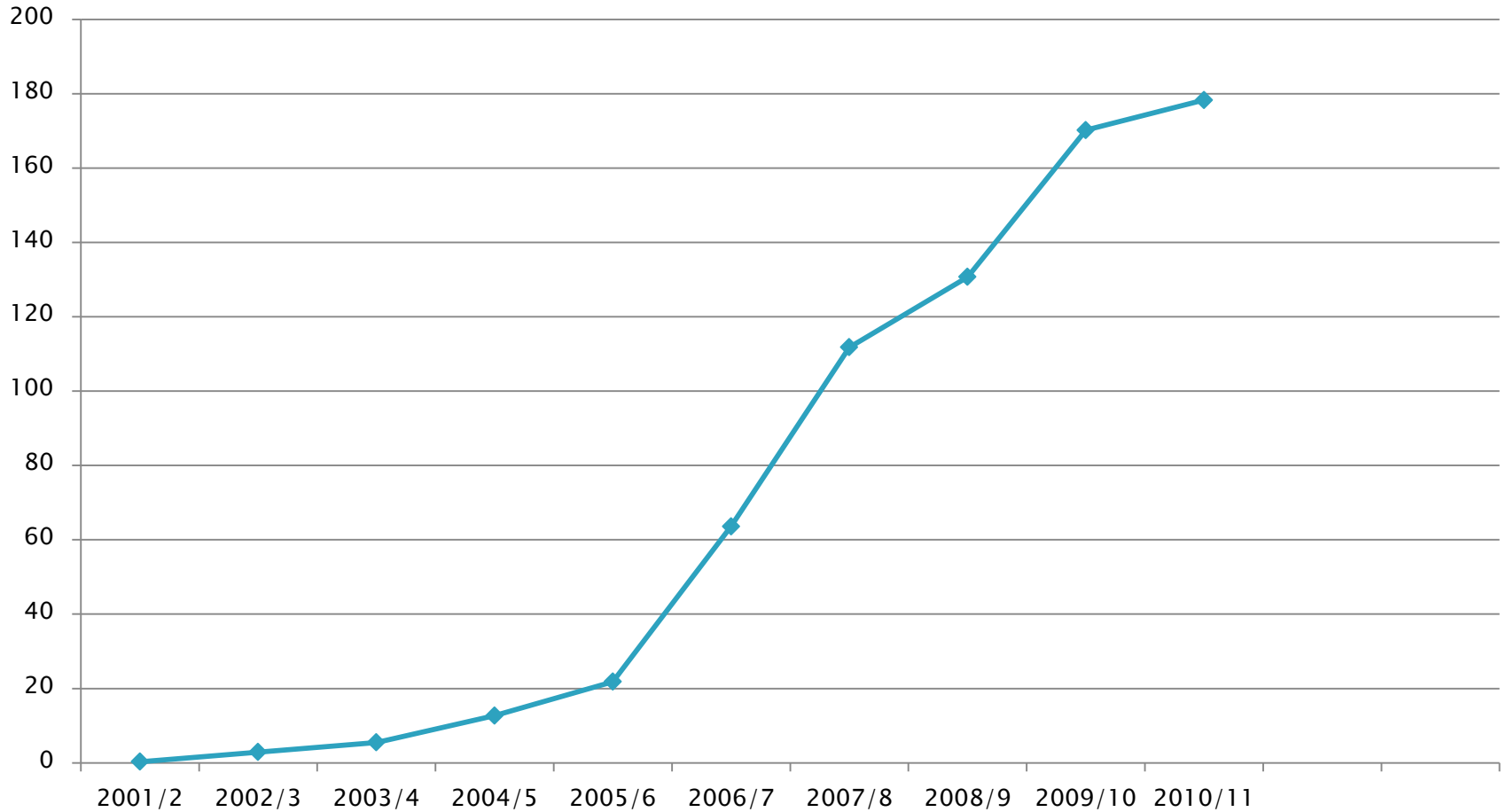
Results of Incentive package

Volume of Export in Million Kg



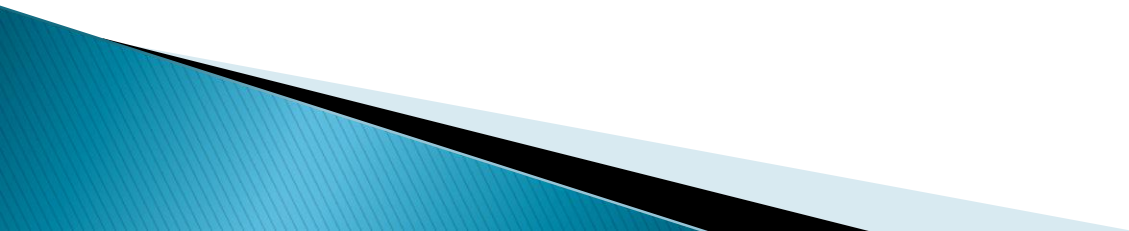
Results of Incentive package

Foreign Exchange Value in Million USD



Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to assess the general labour condition of flower farms and their economical impact on the livelihood of the workers and the local people.




Data Source

- ❖ For this study 30 flower farms in the central part of Ethiopia were selected and surveyed. A total of 195 employees were interviewed in depth between October 2010 and January 2011.

Study Results

❖ Service Year and Job Security

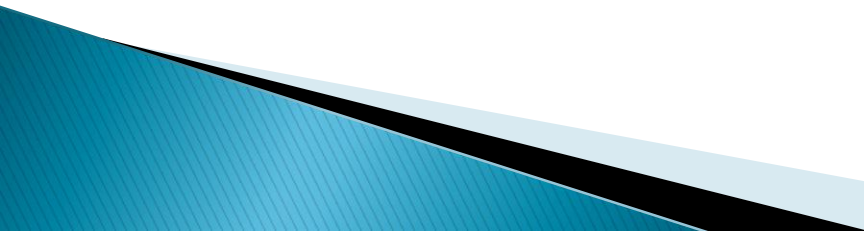
- ❖ About 66% of the employees worked for more than 18 months
 - ❖ except those in leadership position, none of them entered and did sign any kind contractual agreement with their company .
 - ❖ 25 percent of the working population is confused about their work status and can't tell if they are permanent or temporary staff, and many more don't know if they qualify for employee benefits.
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Service Year and Job Security cont'd

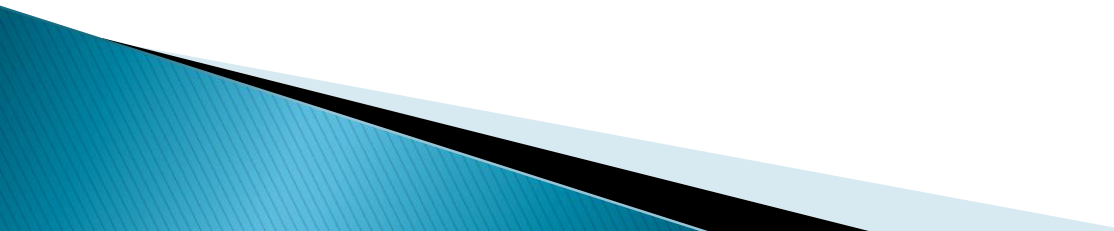
- ▶ Ethiopia has ratified most of ILO Labour Proclamation Part two, article 4 state that The “No. 377/2003.”

“A contract of employment shall be stipulated clearly and in such manner as that the parties are left with no uncertainty as to their respective rights and obligations under the terms thereof”

lack of due observance to this proclamation, left farm works in precarious conditions and without any protection. This created a sense of job insecurity and exposed employees to over exploitation and abuse.



Trade Union

- ❖ With the assistance from “EWCTU” A trade union has been formed earlier but it is at infant stage.
 - ❖ In most farm it's nominal and operationally not functional.
 - ❖ There is no communication between the union leader's and the workers or between union and the management, and vice versa.
 - ❖ Most private enterprise employers are unenthusiastic to allow their workers to organize themselves under trade unions.
 - ❖ Everybody is afraid of retaliation and losing job not to join and rally behind the union so as to form strong labour union.
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Job Description

Most of the employees have no any contractual agreement with the farm and hence they don't have any written job description and permanent place to work. Consequently,

- ❖ Employees regardless of their choices serve at any place with in the farm;
- ❖ Transfer from one position to another on employees request is not entertained.
- ❖ Beside these the farms have no development structure for the workers for this reason promotion and transfer to another position are not transparent

Working Hours

Working Hours / Day	Frequency	Percent
4.5 to 6hr	52	26.7
8hr	109	55.9
10 to 14hr	35	17.9
Total Observation	195	100

Wages level :

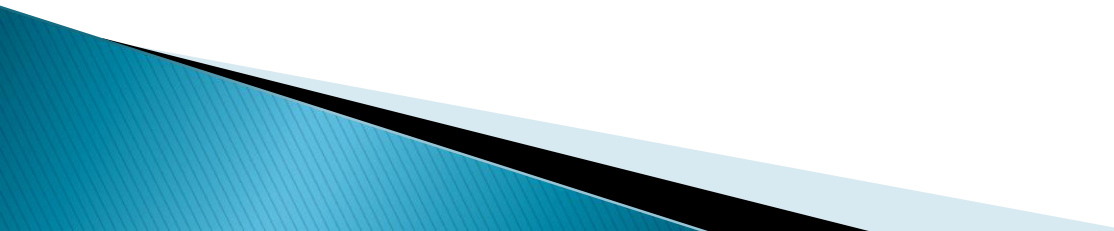
Wage In USD/Day	Frequency	Percent
0.843 — 0.983	60	0.308
0.993 — 1.217	75	0.385
1.227 — 1.498	34	0.174
1.500 — 2.060	13	0.067
2.062 — 2.062	13	0.067

Overtime Wage con't

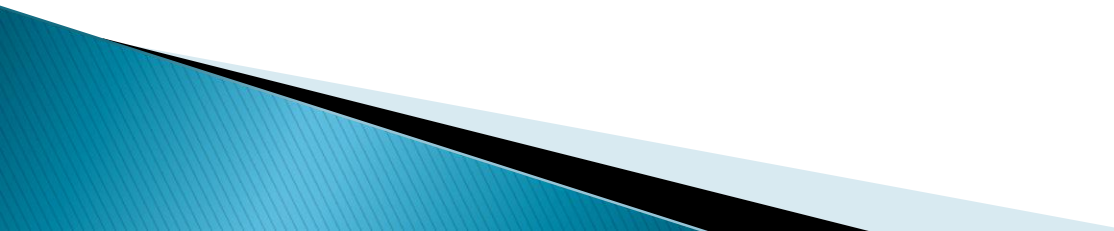
Only 58 percent of the workers acknowledged an overtime pay for an extra time they worked while 25 percent doesn't know whether they were paid overtime or not.

Large number of employees feel that they were cheated for their hours are not properly recorded.

In some instance hourly wage is so blended with piece rate to obfuscate the reckoning of overtime hours and pay. For instance, those who are packing flowers should produce a given number of boxes per day before their overtime pay kicks in regardless of how late they stay after 8 working hours.



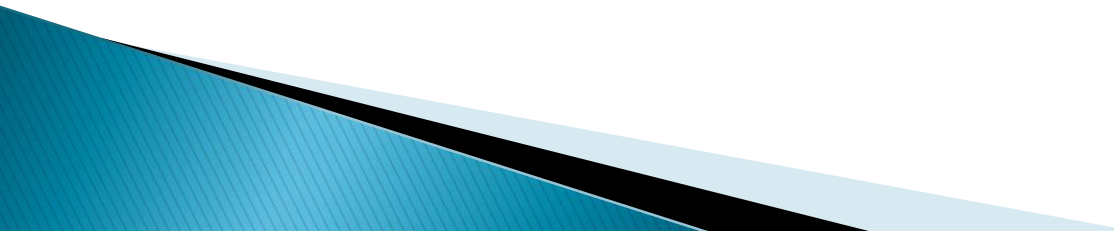
Occupation and Safety Measures cont'd

- ❖ 74 percent of the employees have either direct or indirect contact with chemicals. 48 percent of them are not wearing protective clothing at all.
 - ❖ We found protective's wearing, that was made from poor quality local fabrics, plastic and synthetic materials and very uncomfortable to use in the tropical worm environment like that of the Ethiopian Rift Valley.
 - ❖ Some reported the difficulty of getting a replacement for worn out or defective protective clothing.
 - ❖ As a result many people, including chemical sprayers, are unwillingly exposed to chemicals for they were compelled to work without proper protective closing and masks.
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Health Impact

- ❖ The result shows that 56 percent of the employees have some kind of health trouble.
- ❖ Many workers especially working with chemicals reported skin problem and breathing difficulty, and they believe it is directly related to their working condition.

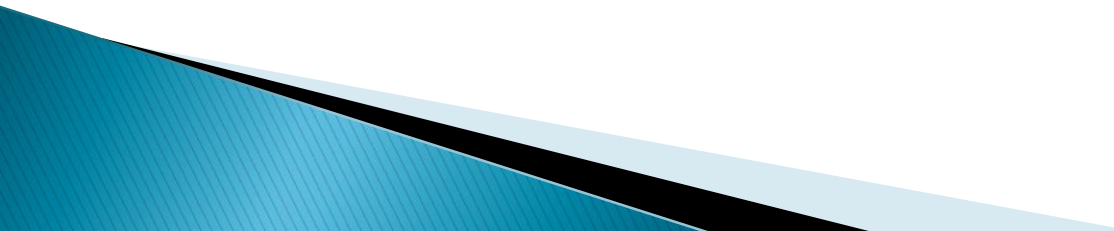
Gender relations

- ❖ About 50 % believe that there is gender gap and 50 % argue men and women have equal treatment.
 - ❖ lack of equal employment opportunity,
 - ❖ lack of equal representation in different position,
 - ❖ Discrimination of men and more favour towards women were the major points that were raised as a difference
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Regulation mechanism

- ❖ The code of practice for sustainable flower production was first introduced in Ethiopia by EHPEA in 2011.
 - ❖ It is aimed to regulate the undesired social, economical and environmental consequences of flower production and to enable the Ethiopian flower industry to achieve international standards
 - ❖ The government believes compliance to these standards will help to eliminate abuse in the flower industry(EHPEA, 2011).
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Conclusion

- ❖ Even though the government invested a lot in attracting and creating conducive environment for investors, not much was accomplished in regulating flower industries, standardizing the working conditions on the farm, and monitoring impacts of this industry on society and environment.
 - ❖ As a result, over the last few decades, not much improvement was seen in the working conditions of flower farms. Instead, ILO conventions has been overlooked, employees concerns and grievance were often neglected, and employees were unwillingly conditioned to tolerate hardship and live with abuses and malpractices.
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Recommendation

- ❖ It is imperative that flower farms respect ILO policies, listen to its employees concern, and encourage labour union.
 - ❖ Minimum wage needs to be established inconsideration of living costs of each regions
 - ❖ It is vital to empower women and build their confidence by educating them about their right
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