

The Chancellor of Ghent University has the honor of inviting you to attend the public defense of the doctoral dissertation of

Mulubrihan Bayissa Tullu

Title of the doctoral dissertation:

Unlocking Ethiopian beekeeping potential through production systems and value chain analysis: the case of southwest Ethiopia

The public defense will take place on 27th January 2026 at 1:00 pm in the Azalea A0.1 at Campus Coupure, Coupure Links 653, 9000 Ghent.

There will be a reception to which you are heartily invited. Please confirm your attendance by the 23rd of January to: mulubrihanbayissa.tullu@ugent.be

PhD thesis supervisors:

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Prof. dr. ir. Ludwig Lauwers
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Examination board:

Prof. dr. ir. Pascal Boeckx (Chair)
Department of Green Chemistry and Technology
Faculty of Bioscience Engineering
Ghent University, Belgium

Prof. dr. ir. Miet Maertens
Department of Earth and Environmental Science
Faculty of Bioscience Engineering
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Prof. dr. Dirk C. de Graaf
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Abstract of the doctoral research

The demand for beekeeping products on the global market is increasing, while the beekeeping sector still faces multiple challenges, particularly in developing countries. Ethiopia, despite being the first in Africa and among the world's leading honey producers still has a big beekeeping potential. This huge potential, thanks to a rich environment, however, remains unexploited, which hampers the contribution of beekeeping to the local community and the country's economy. This PhD thesis is to unlock this big potential by examining the production systems, value chain and productivity of smallholder beekeepers. The dominance of traditional system linked to production of raw honey mainly for local beverages (tej/birz) affects the utilization of the potential. The weak link to a profitable market, the low farmgate price of honey and the minimal processing practices of smallholder beekeepers prevent to attain the higher income that could be generated in this sector. Profitability at the farm level is better in mixed farms, but with a high proportion of improved hives. Users of mixed hives have shown significantly better performance compared to users of only traditional hives. The considerable improvement of access to modern beekeeping technologies at affordable costs, linking beekeepers to high-value markets and engaging smallholder beekeepers in value addition practices, can improve production volumes and beekeepers' incomes while exploiting the potential.

Brief Curriculum Vitae

Mulubrihan Bayissa Tullu has been a PhD researcher under the NASCERE sandwich program since September 2021 at Ghent University, Department of Agricultural Economics. He holds his MSc in Agricultural Production Chain Management from Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands (2014), and his BSc in Agricultural Economics from Haramaya University, Ethiopia (2010). He has over a decade of professional experience in research, teaching, and community service in agribusiness and value chain management while working at Jimma University in Ethiopia. He has published in international peer-reviewed journals and presented his work at international conferences.