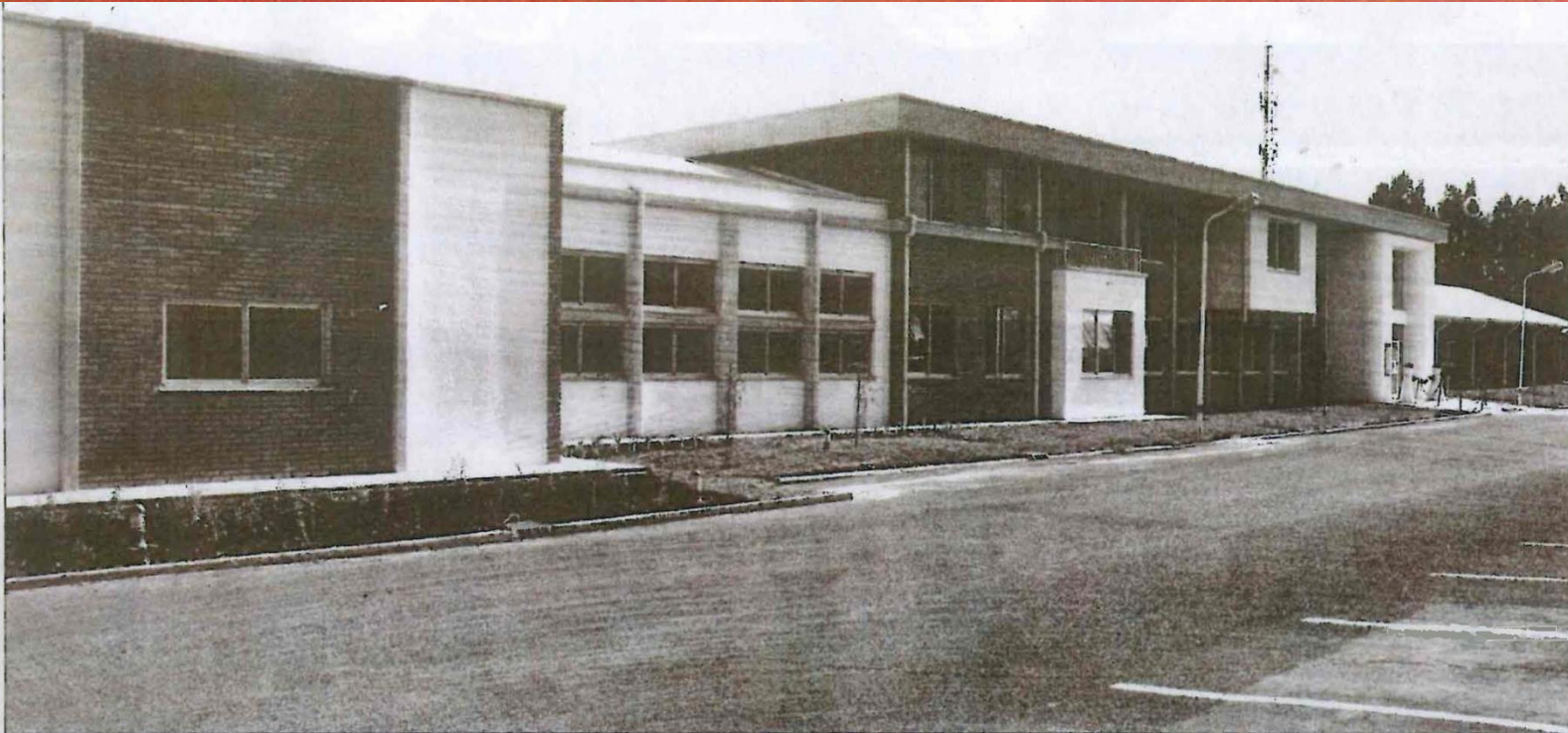


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(Photo Hadush Abraha)

The new inaugurated Genebank

Boosting swift forages said critical to combat climate change impact

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

ADDIS ABABA--International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) underlined the need for maintaining the variety of forage seeds to keep up the well being of biodiversity and mainly the life of animals. The remark was made Monday when ILRI inaugurated its Gene bank and Bio science research center.

The center is equipped with state-of-the-art technologies and aimed at identifying, documenting and experimenting variety of forage seeds.

At the event, Livestock Development and Fisheries State Minister Dr. Gebregziabher Gebreyohannes said that the Gene bank would help to breed various forage seeds and to produce swift grasses.

The swift breed seeds are very essential to the country agro economy in protecting health of animals with nutritional valued forages. And mainly it would help to produce sufficient grass that would protect animals during drought, he said.

He noted that the ministry has prepared a Master-Plan that would help to improve milk, meat and chickens breeding development.

As to him, the master plan would focus on forage delivery as a mechanism to protect the health of animals in the next 15 years.

According to him, the ministry together with ILRI is working to improve agricultural productivity. The institute is also helping the sector through research, consultation and nurturing the skill of Ethiopian expertise.

ILRI Gene bank Manager Jean Hanson for his part said that currently forage diversity is extinguishing due to drought, land degradation and urbanization.

The establishment of such Gene banks is critical to conserve the variety of forages for current use and future generations, he said.

"Here, seeds are stored in cool dry conditions to ensure maximum longevity."

According to him, every year, 1000 samples are made available to national partners for further

study and various researches including Ethiopians have been participated.

The new Gene bank would serve to conserve seeds and living plants, seed quality control, multiplication and regeneration of the accessions and distributions to users.

Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute Livestock Research Director Dr. Getinet Assefa noted that 40 forage seeds including rhodes, alfalfa, elephant and panicum grasses among others are identified and delivered for experiment.

Conserving the variety of forage seeds is inevitable scheme to maintain the health of animals to the current and the future generation.

As to him the Gene bank identifies the phenotype and genotype of seeds and documents their variety in the country and abroad.

The inauguration of the Genebank believed to make reduce the impact of climate change in Ethiopia and the horn through conserving, breeding and providing swift forages to the areas that are frequently hit by drought.