

Field Trip Aug 3-13, 2010

Participants: Asrat Hailu, Alon Warburg, Teshome Gebre-Michael, Ayssheshm Kassahun, Wondimi Hailemariam- Head of Motor Pool, Ahmed Zeyinu- Head of Human resource, Addis Ababa University, Teshome Awogitenew & Michael Berhanu- Drivers, Shewaye Belay (Mekele).

Itinerary:

1. Team traveled by road to Humera Alon flew directly to Humera on Aug 6
2. Four days work in Humera and Mykadra
3. Three days in Sheraro
4. Two days in Mekele

Main achievements:

Premises for field stations were identified, in Humera and in Sheraro and rented. Both are adequate but require some renovation and fitting to become suitable for project activities. The facility in Humera was previously rented and operated by Medecins Sans Frontieres. It has lots of space and more rooms than we will require. Enclosed parking, lavatories and showers, residential rooms, laboratory as well as storage spaces. Some renovation required before it becomes suitable for our needs but the land-lord assured us it will be done by September.





The newly rented project facility in Humera featuring views of the courtyard and bathrooms (Top photos) and internal rooms (bottom)



A much smaller facility was rented in Sheraro with two large rooms for labs and several small rooms to serve as residential and storage rooms. This facility is new so requires only minor final touches (e.g. floors and toilets)

Trapping sand flies:

Although this was the height of the rainy season, light traps as well as sticky traps were deployed every night to monitor sand fly activity. No *Phlebotomus* spp. were collected in any of the traps but moderate numbers of *Sergentomyia* spp were found.



Cracks in vertisols in the sesame fields observed during the dry season (May 2010 -Left) completely disappeared during the rainy season (Aug 2010). Only *Sergentomyia* were collected in traps placed near trees and around farms (rainy season - below)



Sheraro

The KA focus comprises agricultural communities made up of widespread family compounds cultivating maize and other seasonal crop. Small herds of livestock and domestic animals around homes. The villages are situated on rocky hills surrounded by large fields many of which are in vertisols and promote cracks during the dry season. Attempts were made to capture flies in houses, animal shelters, pit latrines and open spaces in and around houses. Sticky traps were placed on trees, walls and rocky outcrops close to the villages. Many *Sergentomyia* but no *Phlebotomus* were collected.



Mickey, No 1 Driver next to the project vehicle (Top left). Trap placed in latrine, proved productive but, only *Sergentomyia* spp. (Top right). Trap placed in animal shelter was much less productive (bottom right). A rare glimpse of Alon actually doing some work (bottom left)



Rainy season produced an abundance of birds and other wildlife close enough so that even a novice photographer managed some reasonable shots



The health center in a village near Sheraro where many of the VL cases live (top left). Promoting pit-latrines for improved hygiene (top right). Interior of a house, very few sand flies collected perhaps due to smoke from open fire (center left). Placing sticky traps on rocky outcrops yielded many *Sergentomyia* spp (center right). Down-draft light traps collect an abundance of insects requiring lots of work to sort-out the sand flies (bottom)



On the way from Sheraro to Mekele stopped at a market town (Inda Silase) to buy baskets for Injeras (for Roy). In Axum the immense obelisks (the one next to Aysheshm is over 500 tons, single piece of rock excavated at a site several kilometers away) triggered some heated debates and wild ideas about elephants and alien technologies - that made some of us burst out laughing. The road from Axum to Mekele via Adwa (famous battle against the Italians) and Adigrat proved beautiful but tricky under the dark, foggy wet and slippery conditions. We made a note that they should only be attempted by well rested professional and sober drivers).



Mekele

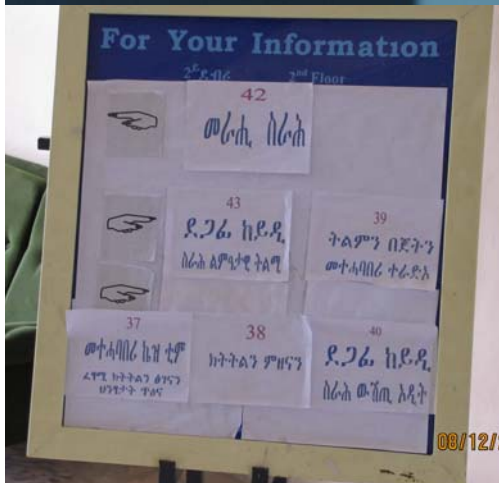
HOTEL FOR THE NOVEMBER MEETING: In Mekele we focused efforts on locating a suitable hotel for our meeting in November. Having seen several hotels we returned to the famous Hotel Milano which turned out to be the only one suitable for that meeting. Other hotels were either too small or much more expensive. So despite the “Pink Panther” décor, the Milano was selected.

TIGRAYAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH: Discussions were conducted with Ms. Tsigemariam Teklu, the focal person for Kala-azar at the Tigrayan Regional State Health Bureau. Ms Teklu expressed her interest in collaborating with the project. In all aspects dealing with the emerging focus in Sheraro. All efforts will be made to coordinate and synergize with local government in studying the focus.

SAND FLY EMERGENCE TRAPS: Shwaye and Alon contracted a professional metal worker to prepare emergence trap frames.



Mr Kidane Tadesse, metal worker in Mekele contracted to prepare frames for emergence traps. With his children (above) and with prototype of emergence trap frame (right)



The Milano Hotel in Mekele: The “Pink Suite” (top right). The “Pink Carnation” meeting hall. A wall mural depicting local wildlife and informative signs (not from the Hotel)