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## **Nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Ethiopian biosphere hotspots**

Governments and development agencies are promoting the production of staple foods to combat hunger and to provide export crops to generate income. Nevertheless, it is not only calories or cash that count, but also nutritional values. Fruits and vegetables are significant for a healthy and balanced diet. Agricultural policies and practices should therefore become more 'nutrition-sensitive'.

The biosphere reserve in the Yayu Region of Ethiopia is a biodiversity hotspot. More than 90 percent of the population are smallholder farmers. The major cash crop is coffee, which is grown under trees in the forest. The NutriHAF Africa project, in which GlobalHort is a research partner, investigates the possibility of integrating vegetables into this farming system to increase nutrition security, intensifying agriculture and thus reducing pressure on natural habitats.

The suitability of crops for multi-storey cropping systems depends on shade-tolerance and the risk of wild animal damage. New crops should also not 'disturb' coffee plants, so management needs to be adapted to avoid negative impacts on coffee production. Nutritious crops will affect gender-relations: Horticulture production could result in a better income for women, as well as an increase in their workload. Both factors may affect the nutrition of their families. Women prefer their home gardens for horticulture over forest plots.

The negative image of leafy vegetables as 'weeds' or 'poor man's food' and consumer habits may also be a challenge. It is thus important to find out how nutritious crops can be promoted and how markets for fresh, processed and preserved vegetables can be developed.