

Haile and Worke

FARM-Africa is working with the Manja tribe in Ethiopia's Bonga Forest – helping the families to protect the trees around them and lift themselves out of poverty.

Ethiopia's Bonga Forest is home to the Manja tribe, many of whom are traditionally reliant on selling wood they have cut from the forest to survive. Haile, his wife Worke, and their 5 children grew maize on their small plot - but this only earned them £5 per year. Their only other way to make ends meet was to sell wood. They were struggling to feed their children, never mind provide household necessities. The family went without sufficient food for nearly nine months of every year.

FARM-Africa has been working over many years to help Manja families living in the region find new opportunities to earn a living that don't damage the forest around them. As part of this, Haile received training in effective crop cultivation that also protects the soil's nutrients. This provided him with the tools and knowledge that he needed for his family to work their way out poverty.



In no time at all Haile's small family plot was a thriving vegetable patch – producing plenty of potatoes, inset (false bananas), sorghum, carrots, cabbages and wild pepper. The potatoes alone earned 5 times more than the previous year's maize crop, and Worke is busy selling at the market – but this time it is carrots and cabbages.

Business is going so well that they have been able to set up two beehives in their back yard. FARM-Africa also trains people in bee keeping to allow them to safely harvest honey from the forest bees to sell at market. Honey is a key ingredient in the national drink – Tej – so it always fetches a good price!

Haile and Worke are just one example of how much people can achieve with just a little help from FARM-Africa to get them started. They are now even the proud owners of seven goats, two sheep and a heifer.

And it's not just the families that have been benefiting – the forest has too! The Manja people are now working together to protect the forest. With their new understanding of the market value of forest products like honey, cardoman and wild pepper they are keen to do as much they can to protect the trees around them.