



African Harvest: A celebration of food, farmers, radio, and resilience

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ottawa, Canada – May 15, 2017

Local charity Farm Radio International is hosting its second African Harvest fundraising dinner this month to celebrate good food, hardworking farmers, and the important role that radio plays in rural communities across Africa.

African Harvest is a time to celebrate farmers and the hard work they do throughout the year to feed their families and communities. Although Canadians typically associate harvest time with the fall, African climates often mean that harvests take place throughout the year.

A special focus this year is on Ethiopia. Over the past year and a half, Ethiopian farmers have been struggling in the face of the worst drought the country has seen in fifty years — worse even than those of the 1980s. Thankfully, the country is better equipped to deal with drought now than it was back then. Thankfully, too, with some help from Farm Radio International and its partners, farmers in one hard-hit part of the country were able to turn on the radio to find out what they could do to keep more of their crops and animals alive.

Taking place May 27 at Ottawa’s historic Experimental Farm, African Harvest 2017 pays homage to the resilient farmers of Ethiopia with an authentic Ethiopian meal. Thick, flavourful meat and bean stews called *wat* will be served alongside *injera*, a spongy sourdough flatbread made with fermented teff flour. Pieces of bread are used instead of cutlery to pick up pieces of food or to sop or scoop up stew.

Ethiopian-born Gizaw Shibru, Farm Radio International’s director of operations, will be on hand to answer questions about food, culture, and farming in his home country. He will also share [how Farm Radio International played a role in helping Ethiopian farmers cope with the drought](#), and the impact that radio has had in the country more generally.

The event also features live performances by the Tine Rufaro Marimba Band and a silent auction, with all proceeds from the evening going to support the work of Farm Radio International — the only Canadian NGO focused exclusively on using radio as a tool for international development.

Tickets are available for purchase online through [Eventbrite](#). The cost per ticket is \$100, including a \$40 tax receipt. Discounts are also available for groups of 5 and 10. The last African Harvest dinner sold out and space is again limited. For more information, please visit www.farmradio.org.

Contact

To learn more about African Harvest or to arrange an interview, please call 613-761-3646 or email info@farmradio.org (monitored daily). The following individuals would be pleased to discuss the event and Farm Radio International's work.

Kevin Perkins
Executive Director

Doug Ward
Chair of the Board

Gizaw Shibru
Director of Operations

Jacqueline Toupin
Board Member

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About Farm Radio International

Farm Radio International is the only international non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to serving African farming families and rural communities through radio.

Why radio? Even in the most remote communities in rural Africa, people have radio. It serves young and old, men and women, those who are literate and those who are not. Done well, rural radio programs have the power to transform lives for the better. That's why Farm Radio International has been working since 1979 to help radio serve Africa's small-scale farmers. When they have access to the information they need, when they need it, farmers are able to grow more and better food and enjoy better health and economic security.

With nearly 700 radio partners across 40 sub-Saharan African countries, Farm Radio International currently reaches tens of millions of small-scale farmers with life-changing information and opportunities to have a stronger voice in their own development.

Fact Box

- Ethiopia continues to struggle from the residual effects of the 2015-16 El Niño-induced drought — the worst in decades — with drought conditions expected to peak later this year. As a result, some 5.6 million Ethiopians are expected to need emergency food aid in 2017. (Learn more [here](#).)
- While food aid is an important part of the solution to the situation in Ethiopia and elsewhere, it is not the only one. As Farm Radio International has demonstrated, radio has an important role to play in helping drought-affected farmers learn how to keep crops and animals alive despite the dry, unpredictable weather. (Learn more [here](#).)
- Even in 2017, radio is still the best way to reach African small-scale farmers. It is especially useful in emergencies, quickly sharing life-saving information in real time. And, with the spread of cell phones across the continent, radio is now a two-way technology. Armed with cell phones, radio listeners can interact with their radio stations, communicating the challenges they are facing and the questions they have — as Ethiopian farmers did when the drought struck in late 2015.

