



New partnership embraces radio, promotes conservation agriculture in Africa

Partnership between Foodgrains Bank and Farm Radio International will provide conservation agriculture radio programming to 500,000 farming households in Tanzania and Ethiopia

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OTTAWA, Ontario — Canadian Foodgrains Bank is pleased to partner with Farm Radio International in a new initiative encouraging farming families in Ethiopia and Tanzania to adopt conservation agriculture techniques.

“Farm Radio International is a highly respected organization that does excellent work supporting radio stations across Africa in communicating vital farming information to small-scale farmers in ways that are accessible and interactive,” says Theresa Rempel Mulaire, who manages the Conservation Agriculture program for the Foodgrains Bank.

“We are very excited to partner with them in this way.”

Conservation agriculture is a farming approach that uses minimal soil disturbance, crop rotations, and cover crops to improve soil health and increase production.

Working through two radio stations in Tanzania and three in Ethiopia, Farm Radio International will design and deliver participatory radio programs that introduce conservation agriculture techniques to farming families, and invite feedback and questions from farmers.

“Farm Radio International will use its own innovative ways of interacting with female and male farmers through mobile phone and radio,” says Karen Hampson, who manages Farm Radio International’s programs in eastern and southern Africa.

“We have evidence from eight countries over the last eight years which shows that interactive radio is a very effective method for not only reaching farmers who have little access to information, but also giving them room for discussion and informed decision making,” she adds.

Over three years, the five radio stations will produce and broadcast 180-200 hours of original radio programming related to conservation agriculture, reaching a potential audience of up to 500,000 farming families.

The target audiences for the broadcasts are rural households who depend on farming for their livelihoods, yet struggle to produce enough food for their families. Radio is a key mode of communication for them, as they are often unreached by agricultural extension workers and other forms of mass media.

The Foodgrains Bank is in the midst of a five-year, 18-million-dollar program scaling up the adoption of conservation agriculture techniques by farming families in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, which will end in March 2020.

The Government of Canada, through Global Affairs Canada, is supporting the program with a grant of \$14 million over the five years of the program.

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Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger. In the 2015-16 budget year, the Foodgrains Bank provided over \$43 million of assistance for over one million people in 40 countries. Canadian Foodgrains Bank projects are undertaken with matching support from the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada. Assistance from the Foodgrains Bank is provided through its member agencies, which work with local partners in the developing world.

Farm Radio International is the only international non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to serving African farm families and rural communities through radio. Working in partnership with 650+ broadcasting partners across 40 African countries, it reaches tens of millions of small-scale farmers with life-changing information and opportunities to have their voices heard.