

Voices

SHARING IDEAS, GROWING SOLUTIONS.

The newsletter for
partners of Farm Radio
International



August 2008, NO. 84

How Radio Organizations Can Help Farmers Adapt to Climate Change



partageons les connaissances au profit des communautés rurales
sharing knowledge, improving rural livelihoods

In October 2007, Farm Radio International, in collaboration with the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural

Cooperation (CTA), launched African Farmers' Strategies for Coping with Climate Change, a radio scriptwriting competition for African radio organizations. Contestants were invited to submit a radio script on themes related to local adaptation to climate change. Fifty-one entries were received from 20 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. The 15 winning scripts are included in package 84 and information about the winners can be found on pages 4-5 of this issue of *Voices*.

The Impact of Climate Change

The climate in Africa is becoming more variable and rising temperatures will cause rainfall patterns to change. Over the next 50 years, it will likely become drier in the northern and southern parts of the continent and wetter in the tropics, with significant regional variations. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and dust storms are likely to increase. Sea-level rise will threaten low-lying areas of West Africa by causing erosion and flooding. Higher water levels and increased ocean temperatures will also have a negative impact on coastal fisheries.

Climate change affects people differently, depending on their livelihoods and where they live. In many cases, it is the most vulnerable groups in society – those reliant on natural resources for subsistence – that will be the most affected and for whom effective coping strategies are urgent. When temperatures rise, moisture evaporates more quickly from the earth's surface, drying air and soil. As the air and soil become drier, crop production is affected. Crop production will also be affected by an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events and by longer growing seasons in cool areas. It is estimated that climate change will reduce crop yields by an average of 10 per cent over the whole of Africa.

Climate change will also likely mean decreased water security. It is estimated that, by 2050, rainfall in Africa will have declined by 5% and become more variable.





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Importance of Communication and Information in Climate Adaptation Strategies

African farmers can prepare for and adapt to the negative effects of climate change only if they understand it and its impacts. While many farmers already use strategies to cope with varying conditions, as weather becomes less predictable, some of these strategies may no longer work. Effective communication approaches are critical to help farmers adapt to climate change.

Radio is the most effective way to reach African farmers with new information and allow them to communicate their knowledge and experience. The challenge for radio broadcasters is to ensure that their audience understands climate change messages and finds them relevant. Radio programs can also encourage communities to assess local problems and identify local solutions to climate change.

Plenty of research in Africa is testing methods for farmers to adapt to climate change. Some research looks at the traditional approaches farmers have relied on for centuries, while other projects test new methods. Radio organizations can play an important role in publicizing research results and transforming them into programs that their audiences can understand and use. Also, by interviewing local farmers, radio organizations can pass on information about how farmers from different communities adapt to droughts, improve soil fertility, select which crops to grow, and other innovations.

Adaptation Strategies

There are many different ways farmers can adapt to climate change. The following sections highlight methods introduced by the winning scripts.

Using Drought-Resistant Plants

As the climate becomes warmer, farmers need crops and crop varieties that tolerate heat and drought. Some resilient crops – such as barley, cassava, millet and sorghum – have been used by

farmers in drylands for many years. Farmers familiar with these crops have much expertise in this area. For example, script 1, *Sekedo, a drought resistant sorghum for Karamoja*, looks at a new short-season, drought-tolerant sorghum variety which is providing food and income for farmers in northeastern Uganda.

Other crops are being improved through plant breeding. Examples include drought-tolerant maize, early maturing maize for regions with short rainy seasons, and the drought-tolerant rice varieties known as NERICA (New Rice for Africa). Script 2, *Growing NERICA is a farming solution for coping with climate change*, presents testimonials from six farmers, attesting to the multiple economic, social and ecological benefits of growing NERICA varieties. Script 3, *New rice variety for Africa to save wetlands in Uganda*, explains that growing upland NERICA varieties can reduce the environmental degradation created by rice grown in wetlands.

Forestry and Agroforestry

Agroforestry strategies help to counteract the pressures of deforestation by allowing planned harvests of both food and fuel from the same field. Script 4, *Mangoes to the rescue: A local response to climate change*, looks at how mango production not only offers a healthy fruit crop, but also increases the yields of nearby food crops, even in the face of erratic weather. Agroforestry species are typically multi-use trees, which can provide timber for construction, medicines, livestock feed, windbreaks and other uses, besides food and fuel. For example, script 5, *Endangered raffia palm groves (Raphiales): An environmental threat, a danger for the culture and economy of the grassfields*, explains how conversion of lowland raffia palm habitat to agricultural use has undermined the environmental, social and economic benefits of raffia groves, and contributed to increasing aridity and water scarcity. Script 6, *Forests shall heal the land*, details the multiple environmental, social and economic gifts of healthy forests, and offers recommendations on how to restore them.

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Livestock

Because of climate change, livestock farmers will be under increased pressure to find adequate water and forage for their animals, while coping with increasing disease problems. Conflict between pastoralists and crop growers is also likely to increase as available resources decrease. Researchers at CIAT, the international research centre, select and promote drought-tolerant grass and legume species as livestock forage. For example, *Cratylia*, a leguminous shrub, is drought-tolerant and widely recognized for improving animal nutrition. Script 7, *Livestock management practices to cope with climate change*, looks at

what climate change means for livestock and livestock managers, and the steps they can take to reduce its negative impacts.

Water and Soil Management

Water scarcity already affects more than a third of the world's population, and climate change will worsen this situation. Practical solutions for managing water in crop and livestock production include water harvesting techniques traditionally practiced in West and North Africa.

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Letters to the Editor

Script 81.10 [Fruit Changes Farmers' Lives] is very useful in Senegal. We can adapt it in our programs with fruit producers living in Niayes or Casamance. The majority of fruit consumed by Senegalese come from these two areas and what is interesting in the script is that it is as though it was written in collaboration with farmers in Casamance. All the other scripts [in Package 81] are interesting too such as the one on gender and HIV/AIDS, and the one on how powder of little pepper protects stored rice – some people in the Senegal Valley who I sent this script to really appreciate it and plan on testing this practice, and the script on the technique for thinning millet could be a subject in our next meeting with farmers. Congratulations for these rich scripts.

Mariama Sy Coulibaly, journalist with Radio Convergence Panafricaine FM in Senegal (she was formerly with Afia FM)

As for the November package, we have used script no. 9, about widow cleansing. The issue is somehow different in our community: if there is a woman with her period the funeral process cannot go on until the woman is given to a man who is not from that community to sleep with her. So we had two live call-in discussion programmes at the Studio for one hour each, about this topic and about women taking the body of the dead to the tomb, which is also against the culture. The other programmes were from script no.2 [Selenium can help people living with HIV and AIDS] and script no 5 [When parents die of AIDS, farming knowledge often dies too] of which I conducted interviews from the PLWHA [People Living with HIV/AIDS] in the area who have formed support groups and the agricultural officers in the area.

Dominic Mutua Maweu, Mang'elete Community Radio, Kenya



Dominic Mutua

Stay Tuned For ...



Package 86 (November 2008). This package will feature scripts on water and sanitation, potatoes and maternal health. If you have any stories about these topics that you would like to share in *Voices*, please email bmckay@farmradio.org.

Winners

Announced in Continent-Wide Scriptwriting Competition

CONGRATULATIONS to everyone who entered the scriptwriting competition on climate change adaptation strategies for African farmers. The judges for the competition were Venus E. Jennings from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Nathalie Beaulieu from the International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA) program, Kelvin Chibomba from OneWorld Radio Africa, Anna Egan from Panos London, Andreas Mandler from GTZ, Traoré Sayouba from Radio France Internationale (RFI), and Leon van den Boogerd from the Radio Netherlands Training Centre (RNTC).

A broadcaster from Radio Salus in Rwanda has won the grand prize in a continent-wide scriptwriting competition on climate change adaptation strategies for African farmers, while 14 other radio broadcasters and producers also won prizes for their entries.

Jean-Paul Ntezimana from Radio Salus in Rwanda impressed the international panel of judges with his script on managing rain-water to prevent soil erosion and provide water for crops. This is an important adaptation practice for farmers who face extremely heavy rains on some occasions and droughts on others. Other winners focused on a variety of topics, including the importance of manure, water-conserving irrigation practices, drought-toler-

ant rice, preventing deforestation, and livestock management.

All 15 winners received digital audio recorders, which will assist them with their work, for example by enabling them to produce programs in the field highlighting the voices of local farmers. Jean-Paul Ntezimana from Radio Salus will receive a farm radio training/internship sponsored by the German Organization for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). Jean-Paul Ntezimana and Gladson Makowa from the Story Workshop in Malawi will also have the opportunity to participate in a seminar on climate change arranged by CTA that will take place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in October.

The winners and script titles are:



Jean-Paul Ntezimana from Radio Salus in Rwanda: *Rainfall retention protects soil*



Gladson Makowa from The Story Workshop in Malawi: *Manure the magic worker*



Adama Zongo from Radio Rurale du Burkina in Burkina Faso: *Organic fertilizer within easy reach*



Kwabena Agyei from Classic FM in Ghana: *Mangoes to the rescue: A local response to climate change*



Lamine Togola from Radio Fanaka in Mali: *Farmers around the world face climate change*



Pius Sawa Murefu from Radio Sapientia in Uganda: *Sekedo, a drought resistant sorghum for Karamoja*



Frederic Takang from Abakwa FM in Cameroon: *Endangered raffia palm groves (Raphiales): An environmental threat, a danger for the culture and economy of the grassfields*



Mariama Sy Coulibaly from Radio Convergence Panafricaine: *Fissel farmers don't pick up straw after harvesting, a method that protects land from heat*



Sachia Ngutsav from Radio Benue in Nigeria: *Forests shall heal the land*



Savitri Mohapatra from WARDA in Benin: *Growing NERICA is a farming solution for coping with climate change*



Rachael Awuor from Ugunja Community Resource Centre in Kenya: *Farmers can prepare for changing weather patterns*



Félix Houinsou from Radio Immaculée Conception in Benin: *Changing farming production in Africa to adapt to climate change*



Andrew Mahiyu from NASFAM in Malawi: *Livestock management practices to cope with climate change*



Dominic Mutua from Radio Mangelete in Kenya: *Drip irrigation*



Joshua Kyalimpa from Opsett Media/Africa Farm Radio Bureau in Uganda: *New rice variety for Africa to save wetlands in Uganda*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AFRI!

The African Farm Radio Research Initiative is just over a year old and we are now ready to launch our radio program development stage!

In April and May 2008, all AFRI country teams (Ghana, Uganda, Mali, Malawi, and Tanzania) met to finalize their Country Action Plans and to select specific agriculture and food security improvements. These improvements will be central components in the participatory campaigns and radio programs that will take place over the next two years. Beginning in August, AFRI stations will develop and broad-



AFRI Staff. From left to right – Margaret Kingamkono, Ben Fiafor, Rex Chapota, Gizaw Shibrú, Sheila Huggins-Rao and Emily Arayo. Bottom row – Modibo Coulibaly, and Martine Ngobo.

cast three consecutive participatory radio campaigns based on what communities identified as important and relevant agricultural and food security improvements. In the first set of radio campaigns, Mega FM in Gulu, Uganda will look at sustainable bee keeping. In Mali, Radio Fana will focus on growing fonio. In Ghana, RAP radio in Afram Plains will look at improved maize varieties, and in Malawi, Nkhotakota Community Radio will focus their first campaign on international and local market research. For more information you can view our website at www.farmradio.org/english/afri.

FRW PUTS NEWS FOR FARMERS FIRST

By Heather Miller, FRW Editor in Chief

Around the world, agriculture has been making the news. The rapid hike in food prices – often called the food crisis – grabbed countless headlines. The impact of climate change on food production and the complex nature of the bio-fuels debate were brought into focus. Through Farm Radio Weekly (FRW), we have worked to stay on top of these big news issues, and bring you stories about how they affect small-scale farmers.

On May 5, we published a special issue of FRW devoted to the topic of high food prices (Issue 21). One of our goals was to go beyond the widely reported impact on consumers and beyond the talk of officials proposing solutions. We asked two of our regular correspondents, Idy Sy Diop, in Senegal, and Lilianne Nyatcha,

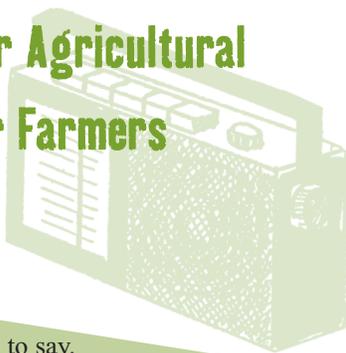
in Cameroon, to ask farmers what they thought needed to be done to boost food production and promote domestic food security.

We have highlighted stories about farmers using creativity and available resources to maintain their yields despite soaring chemical fertilizer prices (one of the driving forces behind rising food prices). FRW Issue 18 carried a story about a Burundian farmer's innovation to use inexpensive rice bran as fertilizer. We have also looked at how high-level government decisions have resonated on the farm. In FRW Issue 24, we featured a story examining the Ugandan government's imposition of levies on imported rice and how this led to a dramatic increase in domestic rice production.

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Spotlight on Popular Agricultural Radio Programs for Farmers

What agricultural programs are most popular with your listeners and why? Farm Radio International is interested in hearing what you have to say. Information you send us about your programs will be shared with other radio organizations in the November issue of *Voices*. Send your comments to Blythe McKay at bmckay@farmradio.org. To get the discussion started, please read the article below, which explains which radio program farmers in northwestern Tanzania enjoy listening to. The article is based on an interview with FADECO's founder and executive director Joseph Sekiku when he visited Farm Radio's Ottawa office in June.



FADECO

The Family Alliance for Development and Co-operation (FADECO) is a rural development NGO in Karagwe, northwestern Tanzania. FADECO strives to help farmers raise their standard of living by disseminating vital information and tips on agricultural practices. In July 2007, by using recycled parts of an old computer and locally fabricated antennas, Joseph Sekiku launched the first radio station in Karagwe: FADECO community radio 100.8 FM. The station is currently taking part in Farm Radio International's African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) project.

Agricultural Programming – Market Information

As an organization, FADECO works on many development issues. But 70 per cent of the station's programming is focused on agriculture, with topics ranging from production to processing and value addition. All of FADECO FM's programs are in Kiswahili. One of the most popular programs on FADECO FM's airwaves is *Market Focus*. *Market Focus* is a daily compilation of market prices. Devota Martine, a volunteer manager, hosts the show. Market prices are compiled from various sources, such as the Kenya Agricultural Commodities Exchange and FOODNET in Uganda. Local Tanzanian market information is gathered by volunteer reporters throughout the country. They send text messages with crop prices or sometimes call the station for a live update using Skype, a free online calling tool.

What has been the impact of a radio program like *Market Focus* on the farmers in Karagwe? Before this radio program, farmers were exploited. A farmer producing maize, beans, or bananas wouldn't know at what price to sell his crop. But now, if a buyer quotes a price, the farmer has more bargaining power, because he or she is informed about market prices in various regions.



The following article was submitted by one of our longtime radio partners – Aaron Kah from Abakwa FM in Cameroon. Thank you Aaron for your contribution! The most common feedback we receive about *Voices* is the wish to read more articles written by radio partners and about radio partners. We invite you to submit articles about your station and your community! Please send them to bmckay@farmradio.org.

Snails: A recipe for hope



It is not surprising these days to see women and their children smiling about the native snails once neglected in many parts of Cameroon. These snails are a new recipe for hope in farming organizations and other groups that rely on snail husbandry to ease the burden of poverty and hunger. This crawling organism with a coiled shell and retractable muscular foot on which it crawls is highly rich in protein and tastes like chicken gizzards when prepared.

Some years ago, deforestation, bush fires and pesticides made these slow-moving creatures difficult to find, though they were still hunted for traditional meals in some coastal parts of Cameroon. Following the recent demand for these delicacies and sensing a steady market, Heifer Project International Cameroon launched a five-year small-scale snail production project to improve household nutrition and income for some 750 families throughout the country. The project participants are alleviating protein deficiency and contributing to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of forest resources. Two hundred and fifty families are receiving 1,000 snails each, and passing on the same number to a second batch of 250 families after three years. These families will in turn pass on 1000 snails to 250 more families in the fifth year of the project. Families will receive relevant training on farm inputs and technical follow-up.

The organizational capacity of the farmer associations or groups will be strengthened through training in leadership and management: this will prepare them to take full control of the project by the end of the fifth year.

Project farmers are competing to give testimonies on how Heifer Project has helped their lives to become worth living. So, if you're on the streets in Cameroon, don't forget to try snails roasted on sticks!

For *Voices*, Aaron Kah
Abakwa FM Radio, Bamenda,
Cameroon



Digesting the climate change scriptwriting competition: Lessons for climate change communicators



The Farm Radio/CTA scriptwriting competition on African farmers adapting to climate change has come and gone: but what lessons can we learn from the competition?

One thing that's clear is that writing about climate change is challenging. Scientific information about climate change is complex; the ways in which good agricultural practices may reduce the effects of climate change can be complicated. Creating a factually accurate yet entertaining or engaging message is perhaps the most challenging aspect of all.

Yet many of the scripts in the competition did achieve a good balance between entertainment and technical message.

Judging by the content of the scripts, the African experience of climate change at this point in time is, understandably, largely focused on erratic rains, floods, drought, and other drastic events or frightening trends. Thus, climate change is experienced and reported on as a fearful phenomenon. As the media gain experience in reporting on climate change, there will be more opportunities for positive climate change stories – rural and urban men and women carefully adopting practices which either reduce greenhouse gas emissions or build the resilience of farmers, helping them adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change. Thus the shift from frightening event to empowering information is still to come, though not far off.

What are the lessons for broadcasters? What specific steps can broadcasters take to produce informative, entertaining and inspirational stories about climate change?

Writing for radio: Some of the key steps are common to all writing for broadcast. Simplifying language, writing “for the ear,” varying sentence length, and writing as if talking to one person rather than an anonymous and faceless audience – all result in more compelling radio. On the other hand, while quoting experts can be informative, it does not build the kind of individual and community capacity and confidence that is needed to adapt to challenges such as climate change.

Farmers' voices: Many of the scriptwriters clearly offered a forum for farmers' voices to be heard. The scripts consulted and quoted local sources, incorporating farmers' real words. Airing farmers' voices is essential to help build understanding and the capacity to adapt to climate change.

Understanding and communicating science: Another key lesson is that, to write well on a topic, it helps to know the subject matter well. Like communication on other scientific subjects, if you can understand climate change and communicate that understanding in simple words, you are well on your way to producing good radio. The InfoKit on climate change, which was sent to all writers, was our attempt to provide some background information on the topic. The InfoKit is available at <http://www.scriptcompetition.net/ressources/trousse-d'information/>.

Journalism skills: To produce good radio on climate change or any other topic, you need good investigative skills – a good sense of who to talk to, what kinds of questions to ask, what kinds of background materials to consult before and after your interviews, and a good sense of how to frame and edit your interviews to make them both entertaining and informative.

Mixing entertainment and fact is a difficult task. The tendency is to either put listeners to sleep by reciting interesting but eventually boring facts and expert opinions, or to write a compelling drama which has listeners scratching their heads when asked to explain the message.

We would like to encourage all of you to start to or to continue writing about climate change. For more information, please download a copy of our “Scriptwriting Tips” kit at this website: <http://www.scriptcompetition.net/ressources/conseils-pratiques-de-redaction-de-textes-radiophonique/>. If you have ideas for scripts on climate change adaptation based on farmers' experiences in your area, please contact Vijay Cuddeford at vcuddeford@farmradio.org.

Training opportunities

Online News University

News University, a project of the Poynter Institute and funded by the Knight Foundation, is committed to providing interactive, inexpensive courses that appeal to journalists at all levels of experience and in all types of media. News University offers training for journalists anytime, anywhere through online training. The courses they offer include reporting, writing, editing, ethics, broadcast and many other topics. Many of the courses are available free of charge to registered users of News University. You can register for free at the following address:

<http://www.newsu.org/profile/>.

For a complete course list, please go to:

http://www.newsu.org/courses/course_list.aspx.

Clive Menell Fellowship

The Clive Menell Fellowship is an annual award for two mid-career or senior journalists in South Africa. Fellows will participate in three weeks of discussions and studies on international media issues. The fellowship takes place at Duke University's DeWitt Wallace Center for Communication and Journalism in the United States. The Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ) organizes the Menell Fellowships. Deadlines for the applications are August for October/November Fellowships and January for March/April Fellowships. For more information, contact IAJ at info@iaj.org.za, telephone +27-11-484-1765.

To learn more about training opportunities and other upcoming events, don't forget to check out Farm Radio Weekly's upcoming events section:

<http://farmradio.org/english/weekly/topic/upcoming-events/>

Resources

The South African newspaper *Mail & Guardian* is seeking articles for the new publication *Voices of Africa*, which aims to build a network of writers who publish original articles about African views and experiences.

The *Mail & Guardian* is looking for "audition" articles of approximately 800 words that depict the life of a writer's local environment. These articles should not present traditional news reports, but original and personal point of views. The publication is open to all contributors from African countries, except South Africa.

To read more, visit <http://ww2.mg.co.za/page/voices-of-africa>.

You may submit your articles to charlotteb@mg.co.za (for articles in English) or stephanie@okapi.cc (for articles in French).

Network of Climate Journalists of the Greater Horn of Africa

The Network of Climate Journalists of the Greater Horn of Africa (NECJOGHA) was created following a series of discussions between journalists and climate scientists at the Climate Outlook Forum of 2002. The network's goal is to enhance the interaction between climate scientists and journalists and, in so doing, to disseminate climate information in ways that are easily understood by all, including policymakers and the general public in the Greater Horn of Africa. There are 10 countries in the network: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Patrick Luganda of the NECJOGHA Secretariat describes the importance of climate journalism in an opinion piece: "*The Media, Climate and Society – The Africa Story.*"

NECJOGHA provides many resources on its website, including:

-News stories about climate, posted by members on the home-page: <http://www.necjogha.org/>

-A forum to discuss reporting and recent news, or debate issues surrounding climate change, natural disasters, and government policy: <http://www.necjogha.org/forum>

To become a registered user of the NECJOGHA website, go to:

<http://www.necjogha.org/user/register>.

Live from Africa: A Handbook for African Radio Journalists

The Institute for War and Peace Reporting has produced this extensive guide to radio journalism, which includes discussion on the role of journalism and practical information on preparing and airing news stories. The full handbook is available online at:

<http://iwpr.net/pdf/LiveFromAfricaPart1.pdf>.

Website devoted to press freedom in East Africa

Kenya's Media Institute has launched a Website to inform journalists about the most recent news on press freedom in East Africa.

On EastAfricaPress.com, visitors can read the latest news on free expression violations, participate in a journalist forum, read about the East African Editors Forum and browse other top stories about media news. To visit the site, go to <http://eastafriapress.net>.

Audacity: Free and open source audio editing software

Audacity is a free, easy-to-use audio editor and recorder. Audacity allows you to: record live audio; convert tapes and records into digital recordings or CDs; edit Ogg Vorbis, MP3, WAV, or AIFF sound files; cut, copy, splice, or mix sounds together; change the speed or pitch of a recording. For a complete list of Audacity features, go to this link: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/about/features>.

In the help section of the Audacity website

(<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/>), you will find links to a complete user manual and the Audacity Wiki, which provides step-by-step tutorials on how to use Audacity. (A wiki is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content.)

To download your free copy of Audacity, go to the following website: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>. On this page, you can choose to download Audacity 1.2 (this is a stable version made for all users) or Audacity 1.3 (for advanced users of Audacity).

To read up on more resources for African broadcasters, check out Farm Radio Weekly's Radio Resource Bank section:

<http://farmradio.org/english/weekly/topic/radio-resources/>

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The following is a sample FRW story about the growing popularity of urban agriculture that has accompanied rising food prices.

Africa: Urban agriculture provides relief from high food prices (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, The Herald, New Era)

Like any other farmer, Karim visits his vegetable plot every morning. He tends to his lettuce and other crops, irrigating them with water from a nearby stream. But there's a busy road just metres from where Karim works the land, and power lines overhead. He's one of a growing number of urban dwellers turning to agriculture in the wake of rising food prices.

About 200 people farm alongside Karim. Any vegetables they don't eat themselves are sold at a local market. Karim is proud to say that their produce feeds many people in Ghana's capital city of Accra.

Mark Redwood is an expert in urban agriculture with Canada's International Development Research Centre. He says there is a direct link between the rising cost of food and the number of people practicing urban agriculture. By growing crops on rooftops, in culverts, or under power lines, people stand a better chance of feeding their family, regardless of market prices.

In cities across Africa, people are increasingly seeking out

small patches of land to grow their own food. Jessica Mbano lives with her family in Glen Norah, a densely populated suburb of Harare, Zimbabwe. She says she didn't used to farm, but when food prices began to soar, she needed a way to feed her family. She now grows maize on a small plot near her home.

In southern Namibia, Otilié Abrahams is part of a civil society organization that promotes backyard gardening. The organization has existed for more than 20 years, but interest in their programs has never been higher.

Ms. Abrahams insists that it doesn't take a lot of land to improve family food security. A door-sized plot, about one metre by two metres, can be used to grow six or seven types of vegetables, such as cabbage, carrots, radishes, bush beans, and spring onions. These vegetables can be planted in rows just 15 centimetres apart.

She recommends fertilizing and watering crops with household waste. Organic kitchen scraps, dead leaves, and ash all make good compost. Vegetables can be watered with bath water or even dishwashing water. You can also collect rain water to irrigate the garden, using a barrel or other container.

Urban farmers who produce a surplus also benefit from nearby markets. The rising cost of oil is a driving force behind high food prices. But those who sell their crops close to home avoid transportation costs and enjoy better profits.

Subscription to FRW is free!

To sign-up to receive weekly FRW issues go to http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/fr_weekly_subscribe.asp.

WELCOME NEW PARTNERS!

- Development Broadcasting Unit** – a unit at the Malawian Broadcasting Corporation, based in Blantyre, Malawi
- Dzimwe Community Radio Station** – a community radio station based in Mangochi, Malawi
- FADECO Community Radio** – a rural community radio station in Karagwe, Tanzania
- La Voix du Sud Ouest** – an association with a community radio station in Diébougou, Burkina Faso
- Radio Domoni Inter** – an association with a radio station that brings together students and journalists, based in Comoros
- Radio Gboka FM** – a community radio station based in Séguéla, Ivory Coast
- Radio Rurale de Menaka** “La voix de l’Azawagh” – a community radio station based in Mali
- Tongu Community Multimedia Network (TCMN)** – an organization starting-up a community radio station in Sogakope, Volta region, Ghana
- Trans World Radio** – a national Christian radio station based in Lilongwe, Malawi



FADECO Community Radio in Tanzania

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In script 8, *Rainfall retention protects soil*, a variety of measures, including planting of anti-erosion plants, rainwater harvesting, and construction of terraces and dams, are introduced to prevent soil erosion and retain rainwater for beneficial use. Script 9, *Manure the magic worker*, illustrates how composted manure can have advantages over synthetic fertilizer during dry seasons, as it better retains soil moisture, leading to better yields and decreased erosion. Script 10, *Organic fertilizer within easy reach*, details the steps involved in building a compost ditch, and explains how the resulting compost improves soil fertility and crop yields. Script 11, *Farmers can prepare for changing weather patterns*, describes a variety of tillage and cropping systems which can boost crop resilience and help farmers adapt to a changing and unpredictable climate.

Script 12, *Drip irrigation*, describes two methods of using drip irrigation to reduce water consumption in dry areas, and ensure that crops are efficiently provided with moisture even when rains are erratic. Script 13, *Fissel farmers don't pick up straw after harvesting, a method that protects land from heat*, details several farming methods designed to improve soil fertility, including leaving crop residues on the earth after harvesting, a practice which prevents moisture from evaporating and soil from drying out.

Other Coping Strategies:

Coping with extreme weather events:

Short-term weather forecasts – including cyclone and flood prediction – can not only save lives and property during extreme weather events, but can also help farmers decide when to plant and harvest crops. Medium-term or seasonal weather predictions allow farmers to prepare for famine or disease outbreaks and help them decide which crops or varieties to plant. Script 14, *Changing farming production in Africa to adapt to climate change*, speaks of how farmers can read the natural signals which predict the rainy season, and take appropriate steps to alter their practices to cope with shorter rains.

Social/community responses

Many climate change adaptation approaches require collective action. Communities may already have collective strategies for coping with climate change. For instance, in parts of the Sahel, when families face resource scarcity, women and children migrate to stay with relatives not affected by drought.

Script 15, *Farmers around the world face climate change*, presents the thoughts of farmers from three continents on the climate-related challenges they face, and the kinds of methods they recommend to address these challenges.

For more information, please visit <http://www.scriptcompetition.net/ressources/trousse-d'information/> to access “How African Farmers Can Adapt to Climate Change: An Information Kit for Radio Organizations.”

Supporting broadcasters in developing countries to strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities.

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