



Farm Radio partner speaks to Canadians about the power of community radio

In June, Joseph Sekiku came to Canada to make a presentation at the *Growing Inclusive Markets Forum* in Halifax. From Halifax, he flew to Farm Radio International's office in Ottawa. With his infectious smile and his knack for storytelling, Mr. Sekiku met with Farm Radio International staff and donors as well as World University Services Canada (WUSC) staff to tell them about how FADECO's new FM radio station came to be and the impact it has had on the people in his community.

Joseph Sekiku is the founder and director of the Family Alliance for Development and Co-operation (FADECO), a rural development NGO in the village of Karagwe, northwestern Tanzania. FADECO strives to help farmers raise their standard of living by disseminating vital information on agricultural practices and markets.

In July 2007, by using recycled parts of an old computer and locally fabricated antennas, Joseph 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 project. As an organization, FADECO works on many development issues. But Joseph says that 70 per cent of the station's programming is focused on agriculture, with topics ranging from production to processing and marketing.

All of FADECO FM's programs are in the Kiswahili language. Joseph says that one of the most popular programs on FADECO FM's airwaves is Market Focus, a daily compilation of market prices. Devota Martine, a volunteer manager and, according to Joseph, the "bone marrow" of FADECO FM, 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 who are located throughout the country. They send text messages with crop prices or sometimes call the station for a live update using Skype, a free web-based phone system.



© CIDA Photo: David Barbour



Joseph at CBC station in Ottawa

What has been the impact of a radio program like Market Focus on the farmers in Karagwe? Joseph explains that before this radio program, farmers were exploited. A farmer producing maize, beans, or

bananas wouldn't know at what price to sell her 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.

During his visit, Joseph toured the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) station in Ottawa. Joseph was happy to see that, although CBC has a lot of equipment and resources, FADECO FM achieves the same result as CBC – disseminating information to the people; only FADECO FM does it with very few resources. For example, Joseph brings his laptop to the field and plugs his microphone directly into the laptop to record farmers' voices.

As FADECO FM finishes celebrating its first year on the air, Joseph emphasizes that radio is the poor man's path out of poverty because it gives power and knowledge even to those who are not literate.

AFRRI Training

The African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) is well into its second year of activities. One of the key components of AFRRI is a customized training program for participating broadcasters. Starting in the Fall, representatives from our 25 participating radio stations and national partners in all five countries – Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana and Mali will take part in the first Farm Radio Training program. The training will take place in each of the five countries, beginning with a six-day intensive hands-on course focusing on developing good stories for radio and using digital audio production. Participants will work with national radio and communication experts and rural community members to develop and evaluate radio programs on agriculture and food security. Following the six-day intensive program, participants will continue their learning through a distance education course. Participants will receive Certificates of Successful Completion from the course and Farm Radio will have its first set of training alumni!



Celebrating Farm Radio Weekly's 30th issue

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 biofuels debate were brought into focus. Through Farm Radio Weekly (FRW), we have worked to stay on top of these big news issues, and bring African radio broadcasters stories about them and 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 about 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 Burundian farmers using 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.

Below is a sample FRW story about the growing popularity in 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.

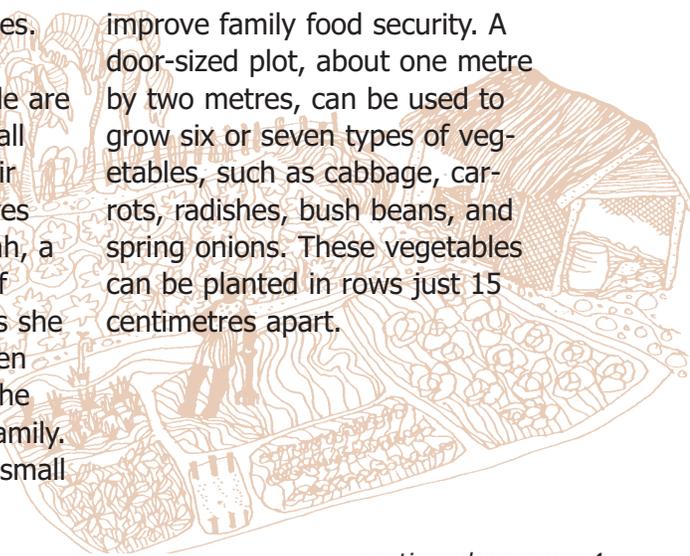
About 200 people farm alongside Karim. Any vegetables they don't eat themselves are sold at a local market. Karim is proud to say that their produce feeds many people in Ghana's capital city of Accra.

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.



continued on page 4

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 rainwater 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.

Donor and Volunteer Profile

David Barrie

David Barrie is a long-time supporter of Farm Radio International both as a Circle of Producers member donor and a volunteer on our Board of



Directors. Recently he had an opportunity to visit our projects during a visit to Malawi.

I have known George Atkins for 60 years by voice on CBC farm radio broadcasts and as a founding member of the Junior Farmers Association of Ontario in 1944. I heard George speak at a meeting about DCFRN in its early years and was deeply impressed by his world map and the number of countries where the farm

radio scripts were being used.

About 20 years ago, my wife, Miriam, and I volunteered through the Presbyterian Church in Canada to work anywhere in agricultural development. We were excited in 1990 when we were called to work with the farmers in the fifth poorest country in the world – Malawi. It was a challenging but rewarding experience that lasted over thirteen years.

We returned to Malawi for a visit this year and had the thrill of seeing our AFRI program in action. We visited a volunteer radio station, met with a group of farmers who formed a “radio listening club” and saw how their project helps others as well as themselves. Through this visit, we learned how radio is affordable and so important to small-scale farmers.

Canadians are truly blessed in so many ways and should support one of the many organizations trying to help the poor. Farm Radio International is able to reach so many through radio and is at the top of my list of charities.

As a volunteer board member and supporter, I often talk to others about the work of Farm Radio and enjoy meeting the people who support us.



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

Contact us at:
Farm Radio International
1404 Scott Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4M8
Tel: 613-761-3650
Fax: 613-798-0990
Toll Free: 1-888-773-7717
Email: info@farmradio.org
www.farmradio.org

Board of Directors

Doug Ward, *President and Chair*
Janette McDonald, *Vice-President*
Nancy Brown-Andison, *Treasurer*
Sarah Andrewes
Anthony Anyia
David W. Barrie
Magdalena Burgess
Helen Hambly Odame
Neil Ford
Gilbert Héroux
Heather Hudson
Graham T. McLeod
Charles Marful
John Morriss
Bill Stunt

Now it's easier to support rural development — **we are accepting on-line donations**

To make a secure online donation, visit our website [donations section at www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org).

Design: Anne Girard
Contributors: Brenda Jackson, Chantal Bégin, Heather Miller, Nelly Bassily and Sheila Huggins-Rao

Charitable Registration Number
(BN) 11888 4808 RR001
Tax Receipts issued for all donations over \$10.00.

Program undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).