



SHARING IDEAS, GROWING SOLUTIONS.



The newsletter for
partners of
Developing
Countries Farm
Radio Network

March 2003, No. 66

From harvest to market: radio programs that address farm issues

When was the last time you listened to farmers about what most interests or concerns them? Have you dropped in on a farmers' meeting? Have you interviewed farmers in the field? What did you learn about their hopes and dreams? What are their goals?

Chances are, farmers will tell you their primary goal is to increase yield. Why? Because, they might say, if they increase their yield, they will also increase their income. Well, perhaps.



Sometimes a farmer increases yield in the field, only to lose it after the harvest. To keep farm income up, farmers must keep losses to a minimum. Did you know that in many low-income countries, farmers lose up to half their yield after it is harvested? Much of this loss can be avoided through education about better post-harvest methods. For example, if a farmer learns to dry her grain properly, she can reduce the loss caused by mould and insects. Better

storage methods to keep out insects, rodents and other pests can also reduce loss — and protect the harvest as it is transported to market.

Are you helping farmers who listen to your programs to learn about ways to protect their harvest? They'll be interested, because it will increase their yield and help protect their income.

But even increased yield with little post-harvest loss is no guarantee of increased income. Income also depends on good marketing. And to market their produce well, farmers need accurate and timely market information. Did you know that most farmers don't have any reliable way of knowing the market price of their produce? Even a bumper crop won't help if the farmer chooses to sell just as the market price has fallen.

Are you providing reliable, accurate and timely market information on your radio programs?

Post-harvest information



Better post-harvest methods — proper storage, food processing — can benefit farmers in many ways. With adequate storage, a farmer can decide when to sell the crops intended for market — sometimes waiting until the prices are higher, rather than selling immediately after harvest. Or, if the harvest is

meant to feed the family, good storage and processing methods can ensure increased food supplies and better nutrition.

Explaining post-harvest methods on radio, like any technical information, takes special care. Focus on what's most relevant to farmers. In the scripts that accompany this newsletter, we've provided many examples of post-harvest methods, from storage to transport to food processing. The food we've used in our examples may not be common in your region, but you can use the scripts as ideas for your own programs. Try to broadcast this kind of educational program at a time when farmers have time to listen carefully.

Market information



Providing farmers with accurate and current market information can be difficult. Prices change quickly, so if you want to broadcast market information, you need to find reliable, timely and trustworthy sources. If your station has internet access, you might be able to check prices every day. Many countries have Market Information Services. Ask your local department of agriculture for help. If

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Partner profile: Masaka Rural Women & Youth Farmers — Uganda

The Masaka Rural Women & Youth Farmers Self-Help Agriculture Development Group is an excellent example of an organization that shows commitment and creativity in using different resources to educate and empower its community residents. Located near the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, Masaka Rural Women & Youth Farmers works with the community to provide information on sustainable agriculture and health issues on 98.8 FM. The group also organizes study circles and radio listening groups to reinforce the radio programs and foster further discussion. Members provide training workshops for local women and students, conduct surveys and interviews, and pay regular visits to farmers in remote rural areas to better understand the needs of the community.

One of the major challenges the group faces is the barrier to accessing information on the internet, due to the high cost of computer equipment, and a lack of

telecommunications infrastructure. That is why Masaka Rural Women & Youth Farmers has regularly consulted with Farm Radio Network staff since they joined the Network in 1999 to obtain a variety of materials for use in their programs. They often use the information to connect with other organizations that can help them access internet resources, and recently developed a partnership with RANET Uganda Program (Radio and Internet, New Information Technologies for Rural Communication), a project to connect rural communities with environmental and weather updates through an internet-radio pathway. They have received donations of equipment from WorldSpace Foundation, RANET Uganda Program, and InterConnection.

Prince Ismail Nakibinge, Director, recently wrote to us: “We wish to convey to you our sincere and heartfelt thanks for the tireless efforts you have put in assisting Masaka Rural Women & Youth Farmers throughout the year. ... we have been able to mobilise and sensitise people on the importance of getting timely information.”

It is through an outstanding commitment to participate and learn from others that Masaka Rural Women & Youth Farmers enriches the lives of individuals in their community. Their determination and resourcefulness in applying information they receive from sources worldwide helps farmers to face the everyday challenges of rural life.

Masaka Rural Women & Youth Farmers can be contacted at: Prince Ismail Nakibinge, Director
PO Box 472, Masaka, Uganda.

E-mail: princenakibinge@yahoo.com



Rosette Mukasa broadcasts agriculture and health programs on radio 98.8



Looking for information?



Do you need information to help you prepare a radio program or communication campaign? Or perhaps answer a question from one of your listeners? Whether you're looking for shea butter processing methods, suggestions on sources of HIV/AIDS funding, training courses, marketing data, information on controlling a particular pest or obtaining recycled computers, or simple contact information, the library welcomes your requests. Write, fax or e-mail your request(s) to library@farmradio.org — just remember to be as detailed as possible so we can give you the information you need. We look forward to hearing from you!



Resources

— Publications and organizations



Understanding and Using Market Information Available free of charge from the Food and Agriculture Organization (in English, French and Spanish), this guide is designed to assist extension workers and others in regular contact with farming communities in providing farmers with market information. Other titles also available at no cost: *A Guide to Marketing Costs and How to Calculate Them* and *A Guide to Maize Marketing*. Contact: FAO, Agricultural Support Systems Divisions, Viale delle Terme de Caracalla, 00100 Rome Italy. Fax: 39 06 5705 6850/4691, E-mail: AGS-Registry@fao.org Also available for download on the internet: www.fao.org/ag/ags/AGSM/unmis/unmis.htm (English)

Improving Food Security includes practical information on food preservation and storage, pest control, and grain banks. One of many PILLARS Guides (Partnerships in Local Language Resources) which provide information, ideas for practical action and discussion-based material for use in small group situations. Available in English and French from Tearfund Resources for Development, PO Box 200, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV 16 4WQ, UK. Tel: 44 (0) 1746 768750, Fax: 44 (0) 1746 764594, E-mail: roots@tearfund.org Cost = £3.50 (some free copies may be available for groups unable to send foreign exchange)

Agrodok Series Agrodok publications include titles on marketing (*Marketing for Small-Scale Producers*) and many booklets on food processing, preservation and storage. Available in English and French (some in Portuguese and Spanish) from the Agromisa Foundation: PO Box 41, 6700 AA Wageningen, The Netherlands. Fax: 31 317 419178, E-mail: agromisa@agromisa.org Website: www.agromisa.org

Food Chain The journal *Food Chain* contains practical information on small-scale food processing from ideas, methods and appropriate technologies to marketing and economics. *Food Chain* is available free of charge to those working in development: field workers from development organizations, individuals and small groups involved in food processing for income generation. Published by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG). ITDG also offers a Technical Information Service to fill specific information requests. Contact: Food Chain, ITDG, Bourton Hall, Bourton on Dunsmore, Rugby CV23 9QZ UK. E-mail: foodchain@itdg.org.uk All ITDG material is available on-line at www.itdg.org/html/technical_enquiries/technical_information_service.htm

The **Post Harvest Bulletin** is a quarterly publication of the Crop Post Harvest Programme (CPHP) – Southern African Region. CPHP aims to improve productivity and livelihoods of people in the region by providing information to reduce losses, improve quality and add value to primary crops through

better marketing, more efficient storage, processing innovations and the development and management of small-scale enterprises. Contact: CPHP, Southern African Region, 17th Floor Karigamombe Centre, c/o Cormaton Consultants (Private) Limited, 53 Samora Machel Avenue, PO Box 2855, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe. Tel: 00 263 4 780844 E-mail: cphpzim@africaonline.co.zw www.cphpsa.org.zw

Food and Fertilizer Technology Center The Center provides farmers in the Asian and Pacific region with practical information about new technology to help them achieve higher yields and better incomes. Annually publishes 20-25 agricultural bulletins, a quarterly newsletter, and several books. The Center also publishes a biannual review of agricultural commodity prices in Asia and the Pacific. Contact: Food and Fertilizer Technology Center, 5F.14 Wenchow St, Taipei 10616 Taiwan ROC. Tel: (886 2) 2362 6239, Fax: (886 2) 2362 0478, E-mail: fftc@agnet.org www.agnet.org See website section: Agricultural Marketing Information Systems in Asian and Pacific Countries www.agnet.org/library/abstract/ac1994d.html

— On the internet



Information Network on Post-harvest Operations INPhO This FAO website provides information on post-harvest operations and post-production activities for staple foods and edible crops. The site offers a forum for the exchange of information and includes a cookbook with over 800 recipes for the traditional preparation of local products from around the world. www.fao.org/inpho/

Agricultural Market Information Virtual Library A resource of market information sources available through the internet, including documents and selected websites presented by region, by commodity, and on market analysis. www.aec.msu.edu/agecon/fs2/market_information.htm

— Radio resource



Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) CTAs Rural Radio Resource Packs (RRRP) are designed to encourage the use of rural radio to disseminate technical information, to strengthen links between extension workers and farmers, and to promote knowledge-sharing between farmers. Related RRRPs available in English and French: *Market diversification, Niche markets, Crop storage and marketing, Marketing strategies for small-scale farmers*. (Forty other titles related to small-scale agriculture are also available.) Contact: CTA, Postbus 380, 6700 AJ Wageningen, The Netherlands. Tel: (31)317 467100, Fax: 31 317 460067, E-mail: vuga@cta.nl www.agricta.org CTA also publishes *Spore*, a newsletter that provides information on agricultural development for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Available in English, French and Portuguese free of charge to relevant organizations and individuals in ACP countries, or online at: <http://spore.cta.int/>



From harvest to market ... (continued from page 1)

you decide to provide daily or weekly market information, choose a regular time that suits the schedules of farmers, and focus on crops that are common in your region.

There are other ways you can help farmers understand and use market information. On your programs, invite resource people to discuss why prices change; how to interpret prices; how to calculate marketing costs. Discuss how historical information, such as the price of a farm product over a long period, can be useful when deciding what crops to grow, and when. With the right information, farmers can plan their production to meet market demand, schedule their harvests at the most profitable times, decide where to sell their produce, and negotiate better deals with traders.

Partners in production

You listened to farmers to find out what issues concern and interest them. And you used what they told you to produce farm radio programs — including post-harvest and market information. Now that you've aired your programs for several weeks, you can find out what the farmers in your listening audience think. Is the information useful? Can it be improved? What other issues would they like to hear about? Think of farmers as your partners in production. They can provide valuable information to help you shape your radio programs. What concerns them, concerns you.

And if you'd like more help from us, please ask. We're your partner in production too, and we're here to help.



Developing
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*Supporting broadcasters to
strengthen small-scale farming
and rural communities.*

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Partner noticeboard



In the next few months, you will receive a questionnaire about your training needs as a farm radio broadcaster. Developing Countries Farm Radio Network requests that our partners complete these surveys from time to time to help us improve our programs and services.

Look for this questionnaire in the mail. We ask you to take a few moments to answer the questions as completely and accurately as possible, and return the questionnaire to our Toronto office. Remember: the more we know about your work, the better we can serve *you*.

We've noticed that e-mail messages that are sent to our partners at hotmail or yahoo addresses are sometimes returned to us. This might be because these accounts are set to block e-mail messages from all senders who are not listed in the user's address book. If you have a hotmail or yahoo e-mail address, and want to receive e-mails from the Network, please ensure that our e-mail addresses are in your address book or contacts folder.

