

## Celebrating farmers' creativity... *continued from front page*

You may also want to give recognition to families and the larger community for collective practices, as well as to individual innovators. This is a way to acknowledge collective local knowledge, and broaden the impact. Find creative ways to do this, such as broadcasting from community events, or collaborating with farmers' groups.

### Programming ideas

- Identify and visit local farmer innovators. Record interviews on location or invite farmers to your station to discuss their innovations. Follow up with farmers once they have had more time to test their experiments. (See scripts 3 and 5 in this package.)
- Include stories of local women innovators. Rural women innovate to increase their income and to reduce their workload, and their innovations are often practical and low-cost and highly applicable to other farmers.
- Announce in advance, and present special awards from your station to local farmers for their innovations. Awards could be for plant varieties, cultivation methods, new tools, energy conservation. Or award prizes to listeners who respond with letters or calls about the innovations presented in your programs. (See article on page 3 and 4 of the newsletter.)
- Interview several farmers (or maybe have a panel) who have passed innovations on to one another.
- Hold on-air discussions with researchers who are identifying, testing, and promoting farmer innovation.

### How to use the scripts in this package

The scripts in this package present farmer success stories, examples of experimental methods and information about the importance of protecting traditional knowledge. You can use the scripts to introduce the concept of innovation to your community, as many local people may be unaware that they are innovators. Follow up the scripts with stories of local innovation. You can also use the scripts to raise awareness and publicize farmers' events in the community. If they do not already exist, you may want to work with farmers' organizations to organize these activities. For example:

- Plan a tour of farms in your area. Participants can visit farmers and exchange information. Record parts of each visit. Broadcast bulletins from various locations on the journey. A farmers' organization may be interested in setting this up. In India a long village-to-village walk, called Shod Yatra, takes place over several days and is considered a journey to explore local creativity and support farmer innovation.
- Organize field days, market days, or seed fairs where farmers can exchange seeds and ideas. (See script 2 in this package.)
- Organize a competition for innovation. As an example, India's National Innovation Foundation was established to reward and encourage innovation. Winners in each category (farm implements, energy conservation, etc.) receive cash prizes.

Many of the technologies proposed to smallholder farmers are rejected by them, being too costly or unsuitable for local conditions. The ideas of another farmer are very likely to be more appropriate and acceptable. Take the opportunity to extend the knowledge and innovation of farmers to your audience and the broader community.

<sup>1</sup> *Farmer innovation in Africa: a source of inspiration for agricultural development*, edited by Chris Reij & Ann Waters-Bayer, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *Honey Bee*, Vol. 11(4) & Vol 12 (1), March 2001.

<sup>3</sup> *Farmer to Farmer: A story of innovation and solidarity*, compiled by Erna Kruger, Farmer Support Group, University of Natal.



**Developing  
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Farm Radio  
Network**

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

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## Celebrating farmers' creativity and innovation



In Mexico, farmers who noticed velvetbean growing wild in their fields used it to increase soil fertility and improve maize yields. In Northern Ethiopia, farmers reclaimed farmland from a river by constructing walls in the river bed and diverting the water flow. In India, an innovative farmer designed a tree plantation that successfully survived a severe three-year drought.

Farmers' innovations have stood the test of time and hold the potential to meet the challenges of increasing production and managing the natural resource base.

During the last 40 or 50 years, however, many farmers have relied less on their own experimentation and innovation, and become more dependent on outside information provided through extension systems. This has had the effect of disempowering many farmers, as they became passive recipients of knowledge and technology.

Radio broadcasters can play a part in reversing this trend and ensuring that small-scale farmers are active participants in the process of agricultural development.

***"... Africa still has a major resource waiting to be tapped, and that is the creativity of its farmers."***<sup>1</sup>

### The value of sharing

Sharing innovations by radio gives listeners a chance to hear personal success stories. Farmers can learn how neighbours in the next village or region improve their planting techniques, increase yields, modify tools and reduce labour. Through this sharing, farmers' experiences are validated, their confidence grows, and they begin to value their own knowledge. Farmer success stories have the potential to inspire other farmers in similar circumstances to solve their own particular problems. Listeners can build on and adapt the innovations that are presented. In turn, they can share the new ideas with other farmers. A chain of innovation develops.

In addition, farmers who are publicly recognized as innovators may become further motivated to continue with their own experiments.<sup>2</sup>

Technologies developed by farmers themselves are generally highly applicable to other farmers, being deeply rooted in farmers' own problems of daily living and survival. A farmer is usually the best judge of what is useful to his or her farming operation. The next best judge is another farmer. And successful results on one farmer's land motivate others.

The process of sharing can extend further still. Extension workers and scientists, observing successful practices in the field, can provide support to farmers and disseminate their innovations through networks of colleagues.

### Positive news

Stories of successful farmer innovations are "good news" stories. With violence and catastrophes (wars, drought, hunger) dominating much of today's media, positive accounts from farmers about victories such as reclaiming land or increasing production offer a different perspective and provide inspiration.

### Broadcasting innovation

When planning your programming, remember that the ultimate goal in promoting innovation is to develop the capacity for innovation, not simply to focus on the innovations themselves. If you accomplish this, farmers will develop the means to respond to change and crisis, and will develop their own circles of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> For example, you can provide information about a variety of useful experimental methods that a farmer could use (see script 1 – *Compare farm methods on different test plots*); or ways that farmers can adapt technologies (see script 7 – *Save time with rainwater harvesting*). Encourage farmers to explore new possibilities. And try to create an awareness of the value of farmer experimentation and innovation in the community.

Ideally, broadcasts about farmer innovations should be backed up by visits, field days and face-to-face exchanges among farmers. Broadcasters can integrate these field visits as much as possible with their programs. For example, broadcasts might precede or follow the field visits, or both. Or, even be recorded during the event.

## Message from the Executive Director ...

In recent years, a number of factors have had significant influence on the way we work for food security, poverty reduction and social justice. The continuing evolution in the activities of Developing Countries Farm Radio Network is a response to a changing environment in the countries where we have partners, the needs and requests of our partners, and to donor priorities. We have, and will continue, to adapt and respond to diverse demands – always maintaining the integrity of our work.

To guide our activities now and in the future, we refer regularly to our organizational **mission** and **values**.

Our **mission** is to support broadcasters so that they can strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities. Our primary support is the provision of practical information that broadcasters can use for their rural radio programs. The scripts we develop and distribute are well-known; less familiar are the other information services we provide, such as background notes to help in the preparation of radio programs, and research services to partners seeking additional information.

Reflecting on our mission helped us with a difficult decision we made two years ago in response to growing demands for our services, with no corresponding increase in funding. Developing Countries Farm Radio Network had grown over the years to more than 1,500 participating organizations and individuals, and the costs of providing services were increasing beyond our means. While all of these organizations were using our services for rural development, not all were broadcasters. Our mission – to support broadcasters – helped us make a difficult decision about how to reduce our costs. We now directly serve only radio stations, or projects and departments of organizations that have a radio component. (Our scripts, however, are accessible to anyone on our website.)

Developing Countries Farm Radio Network now comprises approximately 500 radio partners. Of these, sixty percent are radio stations, and forty percent are community organizations, NGOs and government departments that work with stations to communicate with small-scale farmers and rural communities.

Our **values** help us to determine which organizations to partner with, as well as what information and other services to provide. These values are defined in detail on our website. We value social and economic change that includes and benefits all members of the community, and we support innovation, experimentation, and community self-reliance, local control and local solutions. We value both indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge. We support agricultural practices, policies and technologies that are environmentally sustainable and promote equitable economic development. From our partners, we request journalistic activity that is characterized by accuracy, fairness, balance and integrity. For our partners, we will advocate for freedom of expression.

We also value partnership. A good partnership is based on openness, commitment, accountability, and a willingness to work together in a spirit of cooperation. Partnerships are relationships with beginnings (and endings), and partners have specific roles and contributions they bring to the relationship. We believe that clarity of these roles, in writing, is important to the fostering of good partnerships. To that end, in the next few months, we will be sending a “partner agreement” for you to reflect upon and return to us, signed, which expresses the terms and conditions of our partnership.

We will continue to refine our program, and will always strive to provide the best service possible to our partners, within our means. We look to you, our partners, to help us determine what is “best” and to work with us to improve food security and reduce poverty in rural communities.

*Nancy Bennett*

Nancy Bennett  
Executive Director

## Partner News & Views

### Welcome to the Network!

Sharing information and building knowledge is an important way to work together for sustainable social, economic and environmental change. Partners of Developing Countries Farm Radio Network share ideas, contribute scripts and create radio programs that benefit their communities in over 70 countries around the world – and we’re growing! This spring, we welcomed 13 new partners to the Network.

 The African Radio Drama Association  
Victoria Island, NIGERIA

 Radio Buraq  
Islamabad, PAKISTAN

 Radio Odama  
Nanga-Eboko, CAMEROON

 Radio Perfovision  
Port-au-Prince, HAITI

 Radio Rurale Mali  
Bamako, MALI

 Radio Rurale & “Top Environment”  
Brazzaville, REPUBLIC OF CONGO

 Radio Veritas Asia, Burmese Service  
Quezon City, PHILIPPINES

 Radio Voice of the People  
Harare, ZIMBABWE

 Radio XELB & “La hora del agricultor”  
Jalisco, MEXICO

 Radios Campesinas Pronamachcs  
Lima, PERU

 Réseau des Radios Rurales et Locales  
du Sénégal – SENEGAL

 Sarsabz Foundation & “Our Voice”  
on Radio Faisalabad  
Faisalabad, PAKISTAN

 Trans World Radio, Côte d'Ivoire  
Abidjan, IVORY COAST

If you know of an organization working in radio and who is looking for information to produce educational programs, or if you would like to learn about ways you can connect and share ideas with broadcasters around the world, we can help. Contact Naomi Fraser, Coordinator of Partner Relations, at the Network (Email: [nfraser@farmradio.org](mailto:nfraser@farmradio.org)).

*I was very happy to receive package 67. My radio affiliate, FM Awagna, is located in a conflict zone - Casamance (southern Senegal). One of the goals of our radio station is to contribute to conflict resolution and lasting peace in the region. Your package truly responds to our immediate circumstances, especially as this is our pre-winter season and there is a seed shortage throughout Senegal at this time. Therefore, your package could not have come at a better time.*

*I received your latest package on “Conflict: resolution and reconstruction.” I am really thankful to you. I read all its files and I found it very informative. We are trying to use this valuable information in our radio program in local language.*

*Dr. Naveeda Zia, Radio Faisalabad, Pakistan*

*Many, many thanks for sending package 67 on “Conflict: resolution and reconstruction.” It’s amazing how you take such a theme (conflict), which is often discussed in the abstract, and develop it into good practical scripts with ideas that are doable by the common man in the community. We are already in the process of adapting and translating your scripts to be put on audio tapes so that community groups can listen to them at their meetings and also school children can act some of them out in drama.*

*Idem Udoekong, Director, Sustainable Development Network, United Kingdom*

- **Do you know** that you can read and comment on our scripts through the Internet? Just go to [www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org) and follow the links to the “Scripts” section. Here you will find hundreds of our published scripts organized by subject. You can also search for Network publications by keyword, package number and date simply by clicking on our “Search publications” link. If you need help with your search, follow the link to “Search tips.”

- Once you’ve linked to a script, you will notice a grey button at the top left corner of the page that reads, “Comment on script.” Click on the button to access a comment form, and send us your thoughts on what you’ve just read, information you’d like to share about a topic, or any additional suggestions or questions you may have.



**Mrs. Vicenta Congzon attends ViSCA Radio DYACs School on the Air graduation ceremony for a course on goat raising**

The following article was contributed by Developing Countries Farm Radio Network partner, Adelina Carreno, of ViSCA Radio DYAC in the Philippines. In it, she profiles Mrs. Vicenta Congzon, a successful and innovative farmer who lives in Sabang Bao, an interior village of Ormoc City. Mrs. Congzon has twice been chosen as outstanding farmer for her farming excellence and leadership. Adelina herself was the recipient of the 2002 George Atkins Communication Award (see *Voices* No. 63, April 2002).

It was two o’clock in the afternoon when my husband and I headed for Sabang Bao to pay a visit to Mrs. Vicenta Congzon. Mrs. Congzon, or Nang Vising as I fondly call her, was born in 1950. She and her husband have five children. It is through the initiative and hard work of Mrs. Congzon that a formerly barren land has become a haven of golden harvests. All of their children are now professionals, thanks to the income from their farm. At first, Nang Vising urged her husband Eduardo to plant their 1.7 hectares with rice, corn, sugar cane and fruit trees. Today, they have numerous cash crops such as calamansi (lemon), vegetables and even ornamental plants. The family also raises swine, native chickens, goats, and cows. They use the manure of these animals as fertilizer for their crops and the waste from their harvested crops as feed for the animals.

Nang Vising is energetic and innovative. She attends farmer training sessions and meetings in her area, and acts as a consultant to other farmers. Her fellow farmers have acknowledged her leadership by electing her president of three major farmers’ organizations. As a student of ViSCA Radio DYACs School on the Air (SOA), Nang Vising is always at the top. She became valedictorian in four SOAs and a member of the top 20 in the SOA on dairy buffalo production, for which she received two heads of buffalo (one heifer and one bull) as an award. When I arrived at her house, I found out that the female buffalo gave birth to a calf. The milk is used by the family and the extra is given to their neighbours’ children.

In recognition of her contributions in the field of farming, Nang Vising was voted most outstanding farmer in Ormoc City in 2000. In 2001, she received the Ugman Award for most outstanding farmer from Leyte State University in Visca, Baybay, Leyte, Philippines. Indeed, Mrs. Congzon, or Nang Vising, is a woman worth emulating — a woman who shows that Filipino women have come a long way to achieving a better quality of life.

## Using radio to promote farmer innovation... *continued from page 3*

to get listeners involved is to encourage them to write in with their own stories of innovation or how a farmer innovator has inspired them to try something new. The Gafsa radio station received 20-30 letters from listeners after each broadcast, mostly from rural areas and 90% from women. Listeners were often looking for more details about specific innovations because they wanted to try them out. Other letters included descriptions of how listeners tried out the innovations presented on the radio, suggestions for new topics, or proposals of field visits or interviews.

Remember that innovation flourishes in a constructive and productive atmosphere and that learning from mistakes should

be encouraged. You can even invite listeners to describe these lessons learned, and the steps they took to overcome certain challenges. Most importantly, by encouraging listeners to come together and support one another, you can help the innovation process continue.

### Acknowledgements

Adapted with permission from, "Local innovation and wider development in Tunisia: Gafsa regional radio," by Noureddine Nasr, El Ayeche Hdaïdi and Ali Ben Ayed. *LEISA Magazine*, volume 16, number 2 (July 2000).

## Opportunity for collaboration



On November 18, 2002, Radio Isanganiro debuted on 89.7 FM in Bujumbura, Burundi, and surrounding areas in south central Africa. Created by an association of journalists from Studio Ijambo (a project of Search for Common Ground and a partner of Developing Countries Farm Radio Network), Radio Isanganiro produces programs that promote peace and reconciliation in Burundi and the Great Lakes region. Programming includes news and music, as well as a variety of thematic programs on current local and global issues, such as human rights, children, the role of women, and the AIDS pandemic. Programs are broadcast in Kirundi, French, and Swahili and can be heard anywhere in the world via the Studio Ijambo website at [www.ijambo.net](http://www.ijambo.net).

Studio Ijambo and Radio Isanganiro are currently looking for potential partners to enhance and expand their programming through program exchange or collaboration with other radio stations (to share Kirundi, French, or Swahili language programming), and to link with community radio networks around the world. If you are interested in discussing possible collaboration, or for more information, please contact Bryan Garrett at Search for Common Ground, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC USA 20009. Tel: 202 777 2206, Email: [bgarrett@sfcg.org](mailto:bgarrett@sfcg.org)

### National Innovation Foundation Competition for Grassroots Technological Innovations and Outstanding Traditional Knowledge in India

The National Innovation Foundation (NIF) aims to recognize, respect and reward unaided innovators and outstanding traditional knowledge experts in India. Individuals or communities are invited to submit their creative ideas for innovations in machinery, creative use of biodiversity, plant varieties, herbal drugs for human or animal use, herbal pesticides, devices for energy generation or conservation, or any other aspect of living in rural and urban areas. Entries for the next biennial competition will be accepted between April 1, 2003 and December 31, 2004. For more information, contact: National Coordinator, NIF, Satellite Complex, Bungalow No. 1, Premchand Nagar Road, Ahmedabad - 380 015, Gujarat. Fax: (079)673-1903 Email: [campaign@nifindia.org](mailto:campaign@nifindia.org) Website: [www.nifindia.org](http://www.nifindia.org)



## Using radio to promote farmer innovation: lessons learned from Gafsa regional radio



Innovation is an important part of farming and rural life. A farmer innovation can be as simple as organizing a plot of land in a different way or using a new technique to store grain. Farmers use local resources and draw on a wide variety of skills and their own experiences to solve everyday problems and adapt to change. Many farmers might not even realize that they are being innovative because they do it every day! However, it is important that all farmers — men and women, young and old — receive recognition and support for their innovations. Promoting farmer innovation and communicating success stories with others encourages farmers to recognize that they have the tools to find their own solutions.

Radio is a great way to share farmer innovation stories. Listeners can learn from each other, share common experiences, and work towards common solutions in their daily lives. The regional radio station in Gafsa, Tunisia, provides an excellent example of successfully using radio to promote farmer innovation. In 1999, the station began broadcasting a program entitled "Agriculture and Innovation," as a project of the Indigenous Soil and Water Conservation Programme coordinated by the Institut des Régions Arides (Arid Zones Institute). The new two hour program replaced a program on "Agricultural Extension," airing in the same time slot and hosted by the same presenter to maintain the link with listeners. It was the first time that a radio program in Tunisia had invited farmers to present their knowledge and experience, and represented a shift from teaching and training farmers, to listening and learning from them. In its first year, the program featured presentations from 100 farmer innovators (85 men and 15 women), who shared their knowledge and experience on a wide range of topics, including bee-keeping, small livestock raising, and fruit-tree husbandry.

After follow-up visits and interviews with local farmers in the Gafsa region, project researchers found that the "Agriculture and Innovation" radio program made a positive impact in a number

of ways. The exposure and recognition that farmer presenters received on the radio sparked interest in other community members, who made visits to presenters' farms or adapted techniques they had learned about through the radio. The radio program also helped to change attitudes about experimentation and the importance of farmers' own knowledge and experience. Following are some of the lessons learned from Gafsa regional radio for successful programming that celebrates the success stories of local farmers.

### Finding solutions together

H Radio programs that centre on advice given by agricultural researchers or specialists miss out on the important knowledge and experience that local farmers can share. By inviting farmers to present their innovations on the air you can create a dialogue between farmers, scientists and other agricultural specialists and create a platform for individuals to learn from one another. By involving farmers in discussions with other agricultural specialists, listeners will better understand how researchers and scientists complement and support what farmers already know about working on the land. This kind of dialogue has proven to lead to more effective farmer innovation because it combines different insights and encourages farmers to compare options and seek out different kinds of knowledge.

H Try setting up a panel where innovative farmers can discuss their ideas with other agricultural specialists. Panelists can discuss innovations in the studio, or you can have them participate by telephone as well. This way, farmers do not have to travel long distances to share their ideas with others.

### Reward good listening skills

H Prizes and contests are a good way to get listeners more involved in your program. A small prize can persuade listeners to follow your program more closely, and encourages them to provide feedback on what they've heard. The "Agriculture and Innovation" program on Gafsa regional radio held a bi-weekly contest that asked listeners to answer a question (by mail) about an innovator or innovation that had been featured on the program, or asked listeners to write in with innovations of their own. Prizes were provided by the project, and by research and development institutions and local organizations.

### Innovation and inspiration

Learning about successful farmer innovations also gives listeners the motivation to adapt new knowledge to their own situations and to experiment with different solutions. Another simple way