FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL
TUNING IN

Fall 2017
farmradio.org



A HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

Ghanaian broadcaster Gideon Sarkodie (left) interviews a farmer

In the six years he's hosted *Thank you farmers*, Gideon Sarkodie has never seen anything like the devastation farmers are experiencing now. "Some people could not plant during the minor season because they lost their income during the major season," he says.

Farmers across Ghana are reeling from the arrival of an invasive pest: the Fall armyworm.

The caterpillar has a voracious appetite and reproduces quickly. With staple crops like maize and rice among its preferred foods, Fall armyworm poses a major threat to food security across Africa.

The Fall armyworm has been busy spreading across West Africa and into 26 African countries in less than two years. But Farm Radio has been busy too.

We created a series of two-minute radio spots with information on identifying and managing the Fall armyworm.

The spots were translated into nine languages and shared with more than 80 stations in Ghana.

Broadcasters also received a list of experts to interview on their programs. But stations wanted more programming on Fall armyworm, so we created three half-hour radio scripts for broadcasters to use.

Gideon's station, ADARS FM, has been playing the radio spots a minimum of four times a day.

"For those of them who listen to radio, they hear the information and they are able to know how they should go about it when they detect worms on their farm," he says.

The Fall armyworm is here to stay. With the continued efforts of Farm Radio and partners like Gideon and ADARS FM, farmers will have the best information to protect their farms, their livelihoods, and food security in Ghana.

Fast Facts on Fall armyworm

This voracious eater is a major threat to food security across Africa.

It's native to North and South America, thriving during the fall months.



It's been spotted in 26 African countries.



It's not a worm. It's a caterpillar that . . .

eats 80 plant species



and can cause 70% crop losses.

"I realized that what [farmers] lacked and needed most in order to improve their livelihood was not handouts of food and inputs, but simple information on how to farm effectively."

- Filius Chalo Jere, broadcaster at Breeze FM in Zambia



Congratulations to the winners of the 2017

George Atkins Communications Award!

Farm Radio International was started by the exceptional Canadian farm broadcaster, George Atkins. This year would have been his 100th birthday. Each year we pay tribute to him through an award in his name. Meet the outstanding African rural radio broadcasters who received the George Atkins Communications Award this year:



Filius Chalo Jere got his start in broadcasting in 1969, working his entire adult life to gather farmers' voices for the airwaves as part of his work with the Ministry of Agriculture in Zambia. Filius first connected with our work in 1972, joining George Atkins in a project called Rural Extension and In-Service Training. This project was so successful, it was expanded to cover the whole country and led to a new department: the National Agricultural Information Services.

When he retired from this department, Filius knew he couldn't give up his work as a farm broadcaster, and so he launched a farmer program on the local commercial radio station, Breeze FM.

Filius says: "I realized that what [farmers] lacked and needed most in order to improve their livelihood was not handouts of food and inputs, but simple information on how to farm effectively."



Hadiza Abdoul Karim was a 33-year-old mother when she began her broadcasting career in 2011 as an intern. Years of hard work led to her becoming one of the staff at Dallol FM in Niger.

Starting a career in radio was not easy for Hadiza. In Niger, women have limited opportunity to pursue certain careers, including radio. Even with her husband's support, she faced criticism. She says, "I chose a career in journalism because I intend to fight for the rights of my sisters and also to show the world that a woman can do better than men."

Hadiza speaks three languages and has a voice that effectively communicates messages. And so it's her voice that farmers hear when they call the radio program's interactive voice response system.



Josephine Adumako Akaribo has been leading a team of community volunteers discussing farmers' issues for the past six years. When she first started working with Radio Gurune, in Ghana, she had no idea how to produce a farmer program. But she has been dedicated to both learning broadcasting skills and meeting with farmers.

At just 27, Josephine is now the main liaison for farmers' groups and women's marketing groups, both of which are involved in a Radio Marketplace program. Her radio name, "Adukoma," is a household name, and she is a role model for young people interested in broadcasting or in farming as a business.

Did you know?

Farm Radio International has 670 broadcasting partners in 40 countries, delivering farm radio programming to tens of millions of farmers.

A FARMER NEVER STOPS LEARNING



When it's time to tune in to *Atota* on Oromia Radio, Jorpe Nanecha carefully unlocks a cabinet and pulls out the yellow solar radio.

She will gather several women at her home to tune in to the program, knowing just how valuable this information is.

> "There is always a risk, but I am open to losing so that I can learn from it."
>
> *- Jorpe Nanecha*

Jorpe is a mother of 11 children, and for the past 17 years she has been leading her household and farming business in Soyoma *kebele*, in Ethiopia's Oromia Region. And her farm is thriving. She has eight hectares of land that she cultivates, growing wheat, chickpea, teff, lentils, and beans. She also sells milk from her cows and is learning how to produce animal feed.

"I value education more than anything," she says. Most of her children are educated and she wishes she had studied longer. This is why she is an avid listener of the radio — so that she can continue to learn valuable information for her farm business.

She explains: "I have always been regretting stopping my education, so I am trying to compensate every way that I can. I take the initiative to learn things by trying something new. There is always a risk, but I am open to losing so that I can learn from it."

Encouraged by the *Atota* farmer program on Oromia Radio, Jorpe most recently took the risk of trying the Aybar BBM — a new type of broad-bed and furrowmaker used to create furrows for draining waterlogged soils. This made-in-Ethiopia innovation is half the weight of the older BBM, making it easier for farmers to lift and for oxen to pull.

Jorpe has seen that the Aybar BBM is good for draining water that would otherwise drown wheat seeds.

The next thing she wants to learn about? Another Aybar innovation that assists with row-planting teff.



The Aybar broad-bed and furrowmaker

Learn more

Jorpe has been listening to a farmer program on Oromia Radio that discussed the Aybar BBM. This made-in-Ethiopia innovation is lighter than the traditional plough, which weighs more than 7 kgs when it's covered in mucky, waterlogged soil.

On our blog, hear from other farmers using this new technology.



RADIO MARKETPLACE

Putting market information on the airwaves

Farmers need information about many things when they are growing crops: good seeds, soil fertility, low-cost inputs, how to recognize disease, and how to ward off pests.

All of this helps them make decisions that help them harvest as much as possible.

But to ensure they get the best return for their hard work, they also need market information.

That is why Abood FM, in the Morogoro Region of Tanzania, turned their farmer program, *Kilimo Bora*, into a "Radio Marketplace," as part of the Soy ni Pesa project (which means "soy is money" in Swahili).

June is harvest time for soybean farmers in Morogoro. So when the farmers tune in to *Kilimo Bora* at that time of year, they want to hear about market opportunities and prices.

Radio Marketplace is a market information program. The program explores a different marketing topic each week, interviewing farmers, vendors, processors, transporters, policymakers, and input dealers. Topics can include: the power of marketing in groups, the benefits and challenges of contract farming, and identifying just who the buyers and processors are for a particular crop.

These types of discussions give farmers the information they need to negotiate with buyers.

Radio Marketplace programs address the "four Ps" of marketing: right product, right place, right price, and right promotion.

By better understanding who their buyers are and what the buyers' needs are, farmers can better negotiate a fair price and make the best decisions for themselves, whether that means grading their product, growing the right varieties, or simply selling as a group.

Why community listening groups come together

Community listening groups are popular in Uganda, and contribute greatly to radio programming.

In Uganda's Mubende district, the Kasambya Twegate community listening group has more than 100 members.

The group loves Akaboozi Radio Station, and listens to programs that are vital to their farm work.

Muomesa Muyanja Expedito says they tune in because they get valuable information: "It's easy for us to get news and information regarding farming activities. And we have learned to plant on time."

Community listening groups are a feature of Farm Radio International's projects, as they provide eager participants for the radio program and are a great source of feedback for the radio station, which they can include on air.

Kevina Nabigobe Bukande explains it well: "Through exchange and discussion, the world learns from us, and we also learn from others."

The "Radio for reaching farmers with results" project involved 30 listening groups in Uganda and 10 listening groups in Kenya, each of which was provided with a radio so they could tune in. These listening groups have more than 460 members, 50% of whom are women.



But community listening groups come together for many reasons. The Kirangira Farmers' Association is a community listening group and also a savings and loans association.

As a group they are stronger than as individuals.

FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL

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

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

Donate online at farmradio.org
Tax receipts are issued for all donations of $10 or more.
Charitable Registration Number (BN) 11888 4808 RR0001

Design: Kathryn Burnham & Warren Chang | **Contributors:** Alison Sandstrom, Kathryn Burnham, Tracy Akwii.