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GROWING COMMUNITY

CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE OVER THE AIRWAVES

Matefie Meja is a single mother of three who farms a half-hectare of land in Chifisa, Ethiopia.

It's intensive work as she has no ox to plow the land. Weeding is a time consuming chore for her, one that leaves her little time to complete the other work she must do to keep her farm running smoothly.

Recently, thanks to a radio program that explained conservation agriculture to her — a farming approach that emphasizes protecting the soil and the environment in general for increased productivity — Matefie realized there was a different way of farming that puts less strain on her.

There are three main principles to conservation agriculture: minimal soil disturbance, permanent soil cover, and crop rotation or intercropping. Combining these three principles, and including other good agronomic practices, can replenish depleted soils and increase production.

For Matefie, conservation agriculture means no plowing.

Matefie learned to intercrop pumpkins and maize, and spread crops on her field to keep moisture from evaporating. The process gave Matefie more time for her other chores, while she watched her crops grow tall and productive.

The radio program that Matefie learned from was part of a collaborative project launched by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Ethiopia on conservation agriculture, in partnership with Farm Radio International and the Terepeza Development Association. The project is undertaken with matching support from Global Affairs Canada.

Farm Radio International is working with three radio stations in the southern region of Ethiopia to encourage farmers to practice conservation agriculture. The radio programs air interviews with specialists and farmers about

conservation agriculture practices, giving farmers the information they need to test the practices in their own fields.

Matefie listened to the radio programs with a group of women in her community.

"Because of the listening group, the single women farmers in our village felt, for the first time, equal to men farmers," she says.

"We were involved in the discussion about improving our farms and we felt listened to. This group brought a unity to our village and even love. There is a friendly rivalry among the farmers now — each trying to produce the best results!"

Show you care about farmers like Matefie.

Find out how you can show your support for Canadian aid on the back page.



HIGHLIGHTS

LOOKING BACK AT 2018



READ ABOUT OUR WORK IN OUR ANNUAL REPORT

We're excited to announce that we have launched our 2017-18 annual report!

In rural Africa, 2017 and 2018 saw many farmers face changing climates, a drought, and on top of that, a new invasive species attacking their crops — the Fall armyworm.

Our work in many instances, focused on just that — spreading critical information during emergencies over the radio and modifying our programs to quickly produce important radio resources for the farmers facing these issues. We changed radio topics on a dime to respond to crisis situations, and showcased the experiences of farmers themselves as they found their own solutions.

For more information about our achievements in 2017-18, download our full annual report on our website:
<https://farmradio.org/AR2018/>

We're so excited for 2019 and our 40th anniversary. But as we look forward, we're also reflecting on our success of the past year. Here's our highlights from 2018:

1. We opened new offices in two new-to-us countries: Senegal and Nigeria, as well as established a new office in Kenya.
2. Farm Radio-supported radio programs covered a total of **150 million people** across Africa with almost **50 million people** tuning in to at least one episode.
3. For the first time ever, we added resources for broadcasters in three new local languages: Amharic, Kenyan Swahili and Oromifa.
4. We added approximately **150 new broadcasting partners** to our network of more than **780 broadcasting partners across 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.**
5. Our backgrounder on the Fall armyworm — which provided key information for broadcasters to use in their reports about the invasive species — was our most popular online resource ever, **downloaded 295 times by broadcasters across Africa.**
6. We launched exciting new projects on gender, sexual and reproductive health, reducing food waste, climate-smart agriculture and health and nutrition across our 11 offices.
7. We added **671 radio broadcasters to our network**, making it a total of 2,328 broadcasters who receive our weekly newswire service which includes resources and stories that can be read on air.
8. Our digital innovation team launched Uliza Answers this year, where listeners can call in to our system and leave a question, which is then answered by experts who record the answer that farmers receive in response.
9. We ran a successful and enlightening e-discussion between 127 people across 23 countries about how to generate revenue for your farmer program.
10. We developed and launched a brand new website: **farmradio.org**. Learn more about who we are by exploring our excellent (if we do say so ourselves) site!

OVER THE COURSE OF THE FISCAL YEAR, WE:



Provided **143** resources to **713** broadcasting partners in **40** African countries.



Worked directly with **149** of these partners on **62** projects in **11** countries.



Advanced new technology solutions and radio formats that will make radio even better next year thanks to our digital innovation teams in Africa.

A MICROPHONE AND A GUINEA FOWL

A YOUNG CANADIAN SHARES VOICES OF GHANAIAN FARMERS

In a community in rural Ghana, Maxine Betteridge-Moes sits down with several farmers. Through a translator, she asks questions about the impact of a local radio program about guinea fowl, run on Radio Savannah.

Their answers vary; some farmers explain how they learned to keep their keets (young guinea fowl) warm during power outages, others how they started using the proper medicines for their animals, and still others how market information broadcast on the radio helped them sell the birds for a profit.

Maxine carefully records their answers, both in audio format for a short radio documentary she'll later produce and on paper for an evaluation report.

Maxine is a recent graduate of Carleton University's journalism program, volunteering with Farm Radio International through the Uniterra program, a WUSC and CECI initiative.

Interested in the intersection of development and media, she says she was "keen" to test her skills as a young journalist

Based in Tamale, a small city in the Northern Region of Ghana, Maxine's official title is an Agricultural Knowledge Management Advisor. She supports Farm Radio International's partner stations in their development of agricultural radio programs, as well as points broadcasters towards our collection of informative radio resources.

Tamale, with a population of approximately 350,000, is busy, but it's smaller and less developed than Ghana's capital, Accra. Maxine says it took some time to adjust to the pace and work culture in Ghana.

"At first, I was overwhelmed by the number of partner stations in Tamale alone," says Maxine. Tamale plays host to 13 of Farm Radio's partner stations.

"But once I had my introductory meetings with broadcasters at each station, I began to better understand the needs of our partners and how our resources can play a role in improving the content and quality of farmer programs across the country."

Now, having been in Tamale for the past nine months, Maxine says she's fully adjusted to life in Tamale, though it hasn't always been easy.

She says she's learned the importance and value of effective communication — especially being in touch with many broadcasters through a variety of mediums in different regions in the country.

"I've found that in-person meetings are often best and are worth the extra effort," she says, adding she's also learned how to overcome differences in communication styles.



"Being misunderstood can be incredibly frustrating, but it is rewarding to reach people in their language — both literally and figuratively."

Learning a few words in Dagbanli, a local language spoken in Tamale, has also been helpful, she says.

She's also fully immersed herself in Farm Radio's work. A valuable member of our team in Ghana, in October Maxine spent time in local communities gathering success stories and photos from farmers who had listened to radio program about guinea fowl rearing and creating economic opportunities for women and youth.

"It's a great feeling to witness firsthand how Farm Radio is having a direct impact on improving the livelihoods of small-scale women and men farmers," she says, adding that it is also rewarding to see how the resources provided to broadcasters are used, especially when many find it difficult to access reliable and relevant information about farming and radio broadcasting elsewhere.

Several stories particularly struck Maxine.

"One woman told me how the radio program united the women and men farmers in her community. She told me that with their improved income, they were able to pay their children's school fees.

"It may seem like a small thing, but for me it really drove home the critical role that radio plays in knowledge-sharing in this part of the world," she says.

"It made me so happy to be part of an organization that is committed to such important work."



Listen to Maxine's audio postcard detailing the trip at:

<https://farmradio.org/maxine/>



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF RADIO EXCELLENCE

On May 1st, 2019, Farm Radio International will be celebrating our 40th anniversary, 40 years to the day from when our founder, CBC farm radio broadcaster George Atkins sent the first package of radio scripts from his home in Toronto to broadcasters across the developing world.

George saw an opportunity while talking with radio broadcasters in rural Zambia — a need for widely accessible information about farming techniques that could help small-scale farmers.

Since our humble beginnings in George Atkins' living room, we've now sent out more than 100 script packages, and our network now includes more than 780 radio stations in 40 countries with a distinct focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

Stay tuned as we celebrate our history this year.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR CANADIAN AID

Canadian aid has made a real difference in the lives of farmers like Matefie Meja, featured on our cover. Without the support of Canadian government, we wouldn't have been able to partner with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and radio stations in Ethiopia to bring her the information that allowed her to change her life.

We want to make sure these types of programs can continue into the future through Canada's aid program.

Canadian aid allows organizations like us to do our work where it can make the biggest difference in the day to day

lives of rural citizens and help so many more farmers like Matefie.

We're partnering with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to ask the Canadian government to invest more money towards international assistance and **you can help!**

Through the I Care campaign, we're asking Canadians like you to **show that you care about international development** and you want Canada to play a key role in making the world a better place.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Show that you care about increasing Canadian support for the things we care about, such as ensuring everyone has enough food, helping those displaced by conflict, creating opportunities for women and girls, and enabling farmers and their communities to adapt to a changing climate.

- Sign a postcard and let the Prime Minister know that when it comes to ending global poverty and hunger — you care!
- Send a message to an elected official on social media, using the hashtags **#MoreCanada** or **#MoreAid4Ag** and tag us, **@farmradio!**

Order postcards, or find out more ways you can show your support by visiting farmradio.org/icare/



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

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Tax receipts are issued for all donations of \$10 or more.
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