



network

news

FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL

## Agricultural co-operatives empower small-scale farmers

*In the highlands of Uasin Ngishu district in the Rift Valley Province in Kenya, a quiet revolution is taking place. Two years ago, dairy farmers in the area decided to pool their resources and start a co-operative society. They named it Kabiyet Dairies. Two years later, farmers are producing more milk than before and getting more than twice the price for their milk.*

So begins the script entitled "Dairy farmers reap the benefits of working together in a co-operative society," one of eight scripts on agricultural co-operatives included in Farm Radio International's 94<sup>th</sup> script package. The scripts were accompanied by an "issue pack" on agricultural co-operatives which provided broadcasters with background information, as well as ideas on how to create informative and engaging radio programs on the subject.

Agricultural co-operatives play an important role in the life and work of small-scale farmers. They allow farmers to share knowledge, pool resources, and leverage scale, resulting in better livelihoods through increased food production and better incomes.

Farm Radio International's senior writers travelled within their home countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, and Rwanda to gather the true stories of agricultural co-operatives. These scripts illustrate that farmers' co-operatives have economic, social, and political benefits. For example:

A script about a group of co-operatives in Benin describes how the organization has succeeded not only in increasing farmer incomes, but also building members' confidence and encouraging them to develop skills they didn't know they had, such as facilitating groups on social and health issues.

Another script, entitled "Gender mainstreaming in farmers' co-operative: Groups in Ghana achieve food security for small-scale farmers," tells the story of how farmers' co-operatives are promoting gender equality in an area where women are generally excluded from decision making.



**A farmer uses his mobile phone in the community of Abululyec near Gulu, Uganda. His community is served by Mega FM. (photo: Mark Leclair)**

# Ward challenges Nairobi extension conference

***"It is time to combine the on-the-ground work of extension agents with the reach of radio if we are serious about helping smallholder farmers."***

That was the message delivered by Farm Radio International Chair Doug Ward at a recent world conference on extension services held in Nairobi, Kenya. "Extension" is the name of the government service that helps smallholder farmers overcome farming problems and take up improved practices.

In Canada, provincial extension agents were crucial to farmer education throughout the many decades while the family farm was king. And we are proud to have some of those very extension agents among our loyal donors!

Unfortunately extension services – along with primary education and primary health services – were severely cut in many African countries during the World Bank "structural adjustments" of the 1980s and 1990s.

But the need for extension services has not gone away. If anything, the need has increased as small farmers cope with climate change and with the need to produce food for the market as well as for the home.

In a conference keynote speech, Ward challenged participants to look beyond traditional extension methods.

*"Extension agents get close to the farmer. That was easy decades ago when each agent served about three hundred farmers. Today, that agent must serve three thousand, or even six thousand farmers. That will only work if they combine their face-to-face field work with radio broadcasting."*

Ward went on to state that extension agents must learn to be broadcasters themselves. He also encouraged government extension departments to share the costs of the rural radio stations which, in fact, "extend" the work of those departments.

Farm Radio International has started providing basic broadcasting skills to extension agents as part of its overall broadcaster training programs.



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## Introducing Barza

### A social networking site for African broadcasters

More and more African broadcasters are logging onto the Internet. Farm Radio International saw this trend as a great opportunity to connect broadcasters online, to help them share radio content with each other and develop their broadcasting skills. We have harnessed this potential with a new social networking site called Barza.

Barza is our latest service for African broadcasters. On November 11, we formally launched Barza at during an event organized by our partner, World University Service of Canada. "Barza" is a Congolese Swahili word that means 'meeting under a tree' – an apt name for this new social network.



Broadcasters can use Barza to share radio scripts and programs, access resources for their shows for farmers, participate in discussion groups, and access on-line training activities.

Doug Ward, Chair of the Board for Farm Radio International, says the launch of Barza represents a new era in Farm Radio International's support of radio broadcasters. He says: **"In the 1980's and 1990's Farm Radio International provided a one-way 'top down' service, sending radio scripts out to broadcasters for them to use in their programs. With the launch of Barza, we now offer opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing across a large network of broadcasters. It's an exciting new era."**

We would like to thank the International Development Research Centre as well as the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) for supporting this initiative. We would also like to thank Digital4Good, a web development company based in Cape Town, South Africa, who worked with the Farm Radio International team to develop Barza.

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## Fatogoma Sanogo — winner of the 2011 George Atkins Communications Award

*Wednesday is market day in the town of Fana, Mali. There's a busy energy in the air as farmers, traders, and other villagers gather together. In the middle of it all is Fatogoma Sanogo, program director of Radio Fanaka (photo on right). He uses his digital audio recorder to capture the sounds of people bargaining and chickens clucking. Fatogoma will use these recordings, along with interviews and market price information that he gathers, for his program Aw Ni Sugu, or "Thank you for being at the market."*

On November 11, during Farm Radio International's Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, Fatogoma Sanogo was awarded the 2011 George Atkins Communications Award. On hand to receive the award on his behalf was Mr. Mamadou Bandiougou Diawara, the Chargé d'Affaires for the Malian Embassy. The award recognizes rural radio broadcasters for their outstanding contribution to food security and poverty reduction in low-income countries.

Fatogoma is responsible for all programming on rural issues at Radio Fanaka. He is also a presenter. Fatogoma began producing *Aw Ni Sugu* as part of our African Farm Radio Research Initiative. He says he loves hosting the program, which helps farmers connect to discuss market challenges and solutions. After each broadcast, he takes calls and text messages from listeners with questions. He is proud that this program has informed farmers about ways to earn more money at the market, for example, by vaccinating their chickens.

Fatogoma's career in radio began in 1995, when he came to Fana to visit his grandmother. At the time, Fatogoma's uncle worked for Radio Fanaka, and Fatogoma decided he wanted to learn everything about radio production. He accompanied radio hosts (and carried their bags) when they visited villages. In the studio, he followed technicians. One day, Fatogoma was hired as a technician's assistant, and his career took off from there.

Upon hearing that he would receive the George Atkins Communications Award, Fatogoma said "I am very happy to receive this prize. It gives me more strength to work more with farmers."



Watch a video of Fatogoma accepting the award at:  
<http://bit.ly/uHL4kg>

# Tax-smart ways to support Africa's farmers

Did you know about these tax-smart ways to support Africa's small-scale farmers through Farm Radio International?

**Bequests:** A donation made through your will can generate tax credits to offset taxes payable by your estate. This can be done as either a fixed amount or a percentage of the total inheritance and will allow your beneficiaries will receive more of your legacy.

**Stock Donations:** When you donate publically traded stocks or securities, you will receive a tax receipt for the full appreciated value and you will not be subject to any capital gains tax on the donated stock. The transfer of stocks is easy and fast.

Please call Brenda Jackson, 613-761-3646 or [brenda@farmradio.org](mailto:brenda@farmradio.org) to discuss these options.

## Partner profile: Radio Ada

Radio Ada, Ghana's first independent community radio station, went on air in 1998. Its approach to broadcasting is participatory and grounded in the needs and identities of its Dangme-speaking audience. Radio Ada is located in Ada in the Dangme East District, in south-eastern Ghana. The radio station broadcasts to four Dangme-speaking districts which cover a population of approximately 600,000 people. The radio staff is made up of people from these districts.

Radio Ada broadcasts from 5am until 10pm daily. Its mission statement is:

- To support the development aspirations and objectives of the Dangme people in every sphere of life
- To give a voice to the voiceless in every context and at all levels
- To sustain the dynamic growth of Dangme culture
- In all of this, to encourage, promote and contribute to dialogue and reflective action



Philip Akafo, a farmer in the Dangme East District of the Greater Accra area in Ghana. Philip raises chickens, pigs, sheep and goats and has learned from Radio Ada's AFRRRI programs how to enclose his animals. With the help of the station, Philip was able to increase his herd from 8 – 15 sheep and from 12 – 45 goats.



*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](mailto:info@farmradio.org)  
[www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org)

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