

# Agri-Stewards Fall 2014 Update

September 2014

Tanzania, Eldoret, and Joska



## The Moss Girls

What a joy it was to spend a few days with Megan and Michelle near Arusha, Tanzania. These two sisters had travelled to Kenya and Tanzania with Agri-Stewards back in February of 2013. They now have been on the field for nearly a year. I was amazed at how much Swahili they had learned! God is doing great things through them. Our time was short, but we got a lot accomplished. Our biggest project was re-plumbing a large garden area. The plumbing was all intermixed and they were unable to water smaller sections on a rotating basis. The garden was already subdivided in four sections. We bought some T's and valves and got to work.

We also took a couple of items over to explore the possibility of using them as micro enterprise opportunities. The first was a ten bucket Chapin

drip irrigation kit. We set one kit up so Megan and Michelle could see it firsthand and can train the Tanzanians. The other item we brought over was a hand crank corn sheller. Amazingly enough, I would guess that 95% of the corn is still picked and shelled by hand in Africa. You wouldn't believe the excitement we created when we demonstrated that you could shell corn with such a simple device.

The final project was some assistance with their composting. They were trying to follow a CHE lesson as closely as they could with only one slight problem - a typo suggested you turn the pile every 2-3 months instead of every 2-3 weeks! They were heavy on their green material. We added some browns, manure, and water. Hopefully, they will have some rich compost within the next eight weeks.

Our final project in Arusha was helping BUV Tanzania add a planter to their lineup. We adapted a Yetter 71 single row unit to a 2" tube to slide into a receiver. The Tanzanian guys at the shop were eager to help reassemble it and give it a trial run behind the shop! I believe a lot of mechanization can be accomplished with the BUV including threshing, shelling, and grinding.

It will be interesting to see where all this leads!





# Eldoret by the Numbers

My second stop was back in Kenya at Eldoret. I was invited by LaRon Beemer, a DOW employee working at the AMPATH project. Ryan Boonstra, a FGW (Farming God's Way) trainer, accompanied me as well. The goal was to introduce four communities to FGW; each one we visited invited Ryan to return in February to receive the full training.

As we looked down out of the airplane window, the area around Eldoret looked lush and green. I found myself wondering how much help we could be to an area that received so much rainfall. Once we arrived to the farms, we realized a much different reality; the crops didn't look good. Ryan did a great job asking about the cost of production in comparison to the market value of the crops. Here are how the numbers break down:

Inputs Per Acre		Value Per Acre	
First Pass Plow	\$35	Average Yield	8-90kg bags
Second Pass Plow	\$35	8 Bags	\$23.50 per bag
Harrow	\$17.50	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$188</b>
Basal Fertilizer	\$30		
Seed	\$20		
Planting	\$17.50		
Hand Weeding	\$30		
Top Dress	\$17.50		
Herbicide Weeding	\$12		
Harvesting	\$20		
Shelling	\$10		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$244.50</b>		

**AVERAGE LOSS OF  
\$56.50 PER ACRE**

They were genuinely surprised to learn how much money they were losing per acre. They were eager to learn a new method that would decrease their input cost while increasing their production.

Please pray that these farmers are willing to break from tradition and seek God's ways. Many Kenyans have been taught conservation agriculture methods, but prefer to go along with the crowd and not break tradition. Only God can bring true lasting change.



# Progress at Joska



## Upcoming Trips

- January—Cambodia
- February—Haiti
- March—Kenya
- June—Burkina Faso

If you're interested in joining us on a trip please contact Brian at [brian.smith@tds.net](mailto:brian.smith@tds.net)

We look forward to continued progress at these locations and expanded participation on our trips.

Our final stop took us back to Joska. Besides my own team from the states consisting of Kathy Smith and Erin Payne, we were joined by Ryan Boonstra and Pius Mutie. Our main objective was to teach the full FGW curriculum. We planned two full days in the classroom and a full day of demonstration.

Pius had been to Joska back in March and joined up with the five farm workers to demonstrate the FGW planting method. The highest yield in the surrounding community was 20 bushels to the acre. At Joska they harvested 54 bushels to the acre! Many had taken notice of our plot and had lots of questions. They assumed the white guy had brought magical seeds. They were shocked to learn that we had used a local variety. Pius is a very gifted trainer. He taught in Swahili and I believe the participants understood the teaching at a deeper level than ever before. I look forward to my next visit to see how well FGW practices have been implemented.

Other accomplishments included harvesting some sweet potatoes that were planted



back in March. We planted these as an experiment to see how well they would do in this soil and climate. We were very pleased with the results. We learned sweet potatoes are a prized snack during their tea time!

We spread six tons of gypsum on the 24 acre farm as we continue to prepare the soil for production. We planted an acre and a half of lab lab beans at the Ndvoini boys school.



We praise God for the ministry of Missions of Hope. We have seen the Mather Valley transformed as well as many of the children's lives.

