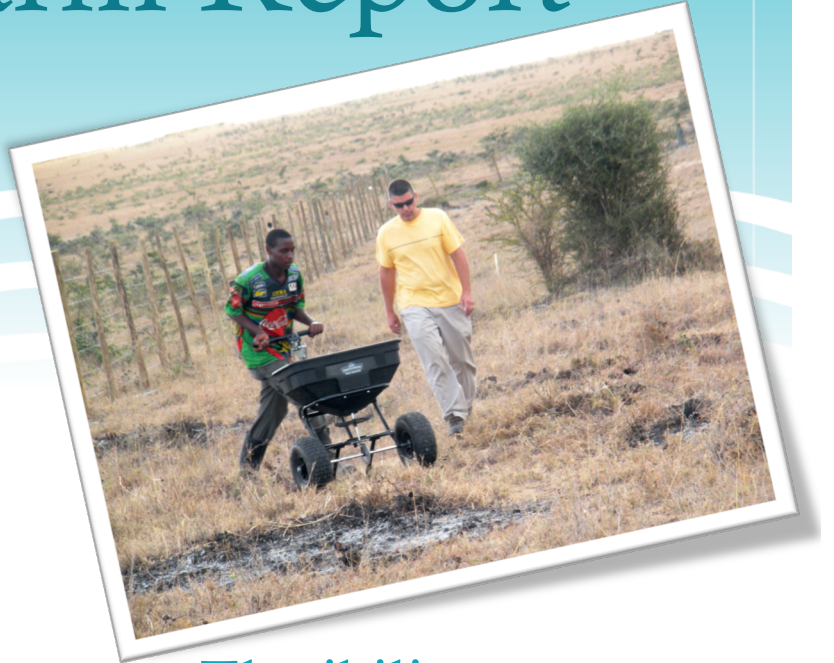


AUGUST 2012

the

Joska Farm Report



Thank You!

A huge thank you to our supporters that made this trip possible and paid for the fencing.

Lamb Farms

Markle Church of Christ

Traders Point Christian Ch

Connection Pointe Ch Ch

College Park Church

Numerous Individuals

Thank You!



Flexibility

Flexibility is a must when participating in a short term mission trip. It's important to make plans before you leave and be prepared as much as possible, but upon arrival one must be prepared to adapt to unforeseen circumstances, trust in God's leading, and do your best with what you have to work with.

Our trip to Kenya in August was no different. We planned on purchasing fertilizer and soil amendments for our 5 acre plot. It turns out fertilizer is 3 times more expensive in Kenya than the U.S. Sulphur was not available, seems it is a key ingredient in bomb making. We made alternate plans by purchasing what we could and filling in the rest of our needs with some good old manure. Next on our list was a plan to spread the fertilizers. I had brought a walk behind broadcast spreader to aid in the task. There were numerous thorns in our field and holes from where bushes and been dug up. We quickly had two flat tires. One of the Kenyans came up with a solution by cutting a seed sack and tying it to the spreader so one person could pull while the other person pushed. It took some extra effort, but we got our amendments spread pretty accurately for the conditions. Next up was to till the land and prepare it for planting. The compaction was way beyond anything we imagined it would be. We soon realized that we were not going to be able to arrive at an appropriate seed bed on this trip.



The new plan was to seed a cover crop instead of kale, spinach, and beans and let the rains melt down the concrete like soil conditions. We believe the traffic of the roaming cow herds during the rainy season combined with the sun baking the uncovered ground during the dry season created these difficult conditions. We also read that anytime you have more evaporation than precipitation it can lead to salt accumulation. The cover crop will help increase organic matter in the soil in addition to giving the soil a much needed covering to provide protection from the scorching tropical sun.

Dave Chance is a soil specialist that was part of our team. He believes the production potential for these "black cotton soils" is very high. It will just take a couple of years to knock the sodium out by increasing the ability for water to percolate down through the soils when we get rain versus running off and sheet draining on this highly compacted tight soil. Our second biggest challenge was the low phosphorus levels which can easily be overcome by applying DAP. We were able to plant one acre of cover crops and cover most of it with mulch (God's Blanket). We are trusting in the capable Joska farm managers Reuben and Livingston to locate jack bean seed for the remaining 4 acres and get it sown before the rains begin in mid September.

On our way out of Nairobi we had a meeting with Keith Hamm of CMF and the founders of Missions of Hope International Wallace and Mary Kamau. We had asked for a spreadsheet identifying what the twelve schools associated with the Mathare Valley project were currently purchasing for the nearly 8,000 students and staff on a monthly basis. Currently MOHI is spending \$52,000 US dollars a month for school food. Four of the top six items in cost include red beans, corn flour, millet, and meat which are items that can easily be produced on the Joska farm. We were encouraged by this news and felt it was a confirmation from God that the majority of their needs were a good fit for the soil and climate of the Joska region.

The Agri-Steward board will be meeting soon to determine how to proceed from here. We have been discussing the possibility of locating a tractor, vertical till plow, tiller, grinder, and no till planter to take the farm to the next level. As the students increase they have moved far beyond trying to farm entirely by hand it is now time to introduce some mechanization. The plan is to try to round these items up and ship them over in a 40' container by February to help out before the next rainy season.

Agri-Stewards is looking for both corporate and individual partners to help move this project to the next level. If you would like to learn more you can contact Brian Smith at brian.smith@tds.net If you would like to contribute to this project you can make a tax deductible contribution to:

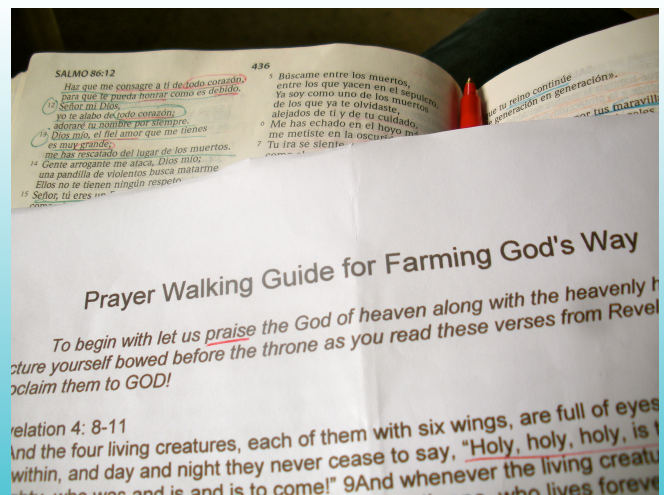
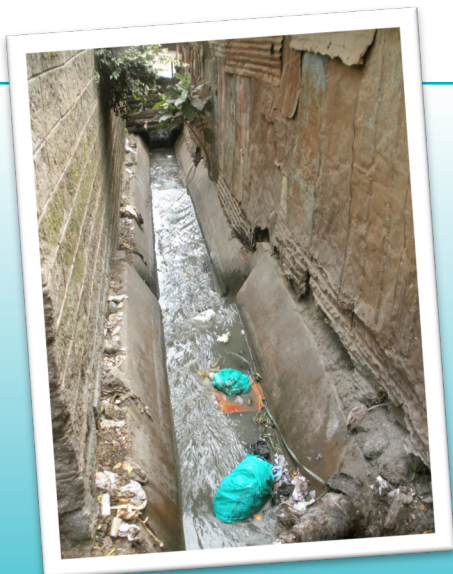
Agri-Stewards
3490 N - 500 E
Tulsa, OK 74105

1. rice
2. meat
3. beans
4. sugar
5. confflour
6. millet



What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?

This is a question we ask often in the States and get a variety of answers. A few short years ago if you had asked this question in the Mathare Valley you would have been met with a blank stare. These children were in survival mode and were just trying to survive the current day. They had no concept or opportunity to dream about the future. Because of the work of MOHI you now get a quick response of a "doctor, pilot, or teacher". Our team took note that no one answered a "farmer". Upon closer examination we realized why this was so. The farmers that we observed were trying to till these concrete soils by hand with a hoe in the tropical heat, not very glamorous work. Dave had a great conversation with the chemistry teacher at the school and explained how impressed we were that the boys could identify all the elements listed on the side of the fertilizer bag. They went on to discuss in quite technical terms how we intended to use sulphur to knock the sodium element off the clay colloid. (I have to admit I struggled to keep up with the conversation having not studied chemistry in the past 25 years) The teacher was excited to gain the new knowledge and was off to his classroom to write a problem for the students to solve that would pass this information on to them. We also showed some of the Farming God's Way DVD during our Sunday morning service and the children were excited to see combines harvesting corn for the first time in their lives. We hope to inspire a few of these children to answer a "farmer" when asked what they want to be when they grow up. We see a lot of potential in this part of Kenya, both in the potential of the soil and the potential in these kids!



Sharing Knowledge

Satan uses many tools to keep people from God. Poverty is one of these tools we see a lot in Africa. The farmers there have little hope. They are called subsistence farmers and they barely scrape by from year to year. They seldom speak in the future tense. Hosea 4:6 says "my people perish because a lack of knowledge."

One of Agri-Stewards main goals is to share practical knowledge which can sometimes triple or quadruple their production. We use a forum called Farming God's Way to help teach excellent farming practices through Biblical principles which in turn increases production of their crops as well as their faith in God.

This trip we had a two day seminar which culminated by planting a 6 meter by 6 meter demonstration garden. We had 18 in attendance and they were very engaged in the teaching. They asked a lot of good questions and were excited to learn some new methods. I am excited to return and go and visit some of their farms to see what will be implemented.

Because of this spiritual hold Satan has on these farmers I make it a point to enlist prayer warriors to help. While a handful of folks were praying in the U.S., my daughter Mariah was with me in Kenya to head up the praying. She felt God revealed a verse to her while praying which I shared with the group. We tried to explain that one of their biggest challenges with the soil in the area was the excess of salt. God addresses this problem in Psalms 107: 33-38,

He turns rivers into a desert,
springs of water into thirsty ground,
a fruitful land into a salty waste,
because of the evil of its inhabitants.
He turns a desert into pools of water,
a parched land into springs of water.
And there he lets the hungry dwell,
and they establish a city to live in;
they sow fields and plant vineyards
and get a fruitful yield.
By his blessing they multiply greatly,
and he does not let their livestock diminish.

We concluded our time together in prayer. I have confidence in this group to draw closer to God and believe He will increase their yields.



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Stop by November 15 – 17 at the
Indianapolis Convention Center.

Agri-Stewards will be at booth# 1529

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