Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

# Pack 11, Item 2

Type: Script

Date

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**Good farm records: a key to higher profits, part 2: A diary** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Information on this topic was requested by DCFRN Participants in Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, India, Lesotho, Malawi, Nepal, Philippines, Swaziland, Taiwan, Uruguay, and Zambia.

Presenter: George Atkins

**Special note**

Before using the information in this item, please read the notes at the end concerning related DCFRN items.

**GEORGE ATKINS**: The last time we talked about farm records, I told you about a farm family who keep good farm records. They think that the records they keep help them to make more money in farming. They make notes on their calendar about breeding dates for their animals and they mark the day to expect their young animals to be born. This way, they are always prepared when the time comes.

This family also keeps a diary. Indeed, some of the most successful farmers keep a diary so they'll have a record of things that will be useful to know later on. "But," you may say, "I know about marking things on a calendar; what other things do I need to record that will be useful to know later on? Why do I need to take all that trouble anyway?"

Well, remember that farm family that makes more money because their records help them in their farming?

Let's consider how keeping a diary helps them. Here are the kinds of things they record in the diary every day:

* the weather, for instance, did it rain? A lot? A little?
* the farm work they did that day, perhaps planting or cultivating
* notes about their crops and livestock
* things bought or sold, including money paid or received
* other things that will be important to remember like pest problems and what was done about them.

Now here's an example of how some records like that could help you earn more money.

Moussa is a farmer in Burkina Faso. He grows cotton, groundnuts, and millet. He normally sells all of his cotton, part of the groundnuts, and a little of his millet; he also keeps chickens and sheep and sells some of them.

He decided he wanted to earn more money—but how could he do that?

He's been carefully keeping farm records on his calendar and in a diary. He and his wife read everything they had written in their diary about weeds and time spent weeding their crops; and about the amounts of cotton, groundnuts, and millet they had harvested. They found that there were times in the past when they had allowed a lot of weeds to grow up in their crops during the early part of the growing season. They found that when this had happened, they had had poorer harvests. So, from their diary, they learned that to get the best crops, there must be no weeds in the fields when their plants are young. After that, the whole family worked harder to make sure that no weeds grew in their crops early in the growing season. The result was that they had more cotton, groundnuts, and millet to sell.

Also, by looking at their records from the past few years, they saw that when they grew the same crop in the same field season after season, there were more problems with pests, and yields went down. So they decided to rotate the crops each season, and soon they found that yields were better as a result.

Finally, they compared the records of how much millet they grew with how much they needed for themselves over the year. This helped them plan how much land to plant to millet and how much they could expect to sell.

So, for the Moussa family, keeping good farm records was very good—it helped them make good decisions about their farming business.

Perhaps you might try keeping farm records, marking on a calendar, keeping a diary. It could help you earn more money.

Serving Agriculture, the Basic Industry, this is George Atkins.

**Notes**

1. This item is the second of two items in this Package on the subject of farm record keeping and part of a series to be continued in a future Package. Please use the items in the proper sequence.

2. The information in this series is aimed at farmers who want to increase their financial returns and are prepared to make a special effort to do so. You may therefore wish to use these items in association with another related DCFRN item. It is:

Getting Higher Prices for Farm Products ‑ DCFRN Package 10, Item 7

3. While the main purpose of these items is to encourage farmers to make a serious start in keeping farm records, examples used may not be as appropriate for the farmers you serve as others that you or an agricultural extensionist who works with you may think of. The best examples to use, of course, would be examples with which your farmers are familiar.

4. In this series, references are made to good practices in both crop and animal husbandry. Because of this, some of the information may also be used in association with other DCFRN items on crops and livestock. They are:

Weeds ‑ DCFRN Package 5, Item 1A

Crop Rotation ‑ DCFRN Package 7, Item 1A

Keeping Farm Animals Healthy and Productive ‑ DCFRN Package 10, Item 1

Care of a Newborn Calf and Its Mother, DCFRN Package 10, Item 2

**Sources of information**

1. Better Farming Series No. 26 ‑ The Modern Farm Business (55 pages), available from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, Italy. (Published by arrangement with the Institut africain pour le developpement economique et social (INADES), Abidjan, Ivory Coast.) <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bp062e.pdf>