Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

Pack 12, Item 1

Type: Script

Date

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**Good farm records: A key to higher profits, part 3 - Records help in cropping decisions**

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Information on this subject area was requested by DCFRN participants in Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Lesotho, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria,Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Philippines, Swaziland, Taiwan (Republic of China), Tanzania, Uruguay, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Presenter: George Atkins

**Special note**

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

**Suggested introduction**

We at this radio station are part of a world-wide information network that gathers farming information from developing countries all over the world. It's the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency, Massey-Ferguson, and the University of Guelph.

Through this Network, we bring you information on ways to increase food supplies for your family, or to sell—ways that other farmers have used successfully.

Today, more on how you could become a more successful farmer. Here's George Atkins.

**ATKINS:** You are a farmer, and I'm sure that you work hard to earn as much money as you can from the work that you do. In spite of all that hard work, however, it may be that you can think of other farmers you know who are more successful and make more money than you do.

Well, you may remember that not long ago we talked about this very thing, and we decided that these successful farmers are always thinking about and looking for better ideas and ways to make more profit from their work.

My question for you now is, “Do you do that?” Are you interested in finding better ways to do your work? If you should hear of a crop variety that might be better than the one you grow now, would you be interested in finding out more about it and perhaps in trying it? I think you would, otherwise you wouldn't be listening to me now.

But if you decide to try out this new variety—even in a small way to begin with, how can you be sure of whether it's better than the kind you usually grow, or whether it isn't?

Well, of course, the only way you can be sure is to try out both varieties at the same time so you yourself can properly compare them. You will also need to compare how much money the two different kinds of seed cost you.

To compare the yields, prepare two small plots in your field—perhaps 3 metres (10 feet) wide and 5 metres (15 feet) long—or any other size that's convenient for you to try out. Mark the location of the plots with a stake in each corner, plant your regular seed in one plot and the same amount of seed of the new variety in the other. The important thing about a test like this is that both plots must have the same soil and moisture conditions, they must be the same size and must be treated exactly the same—the same amount of preparation of the soil, the same amount of seed in each plot, the same amount of weeding while the crop is growing, and so on.

At harvest time, if it's grain, gather up and thresh the grain from one plot, measure it and weigh it if you can. Then do exactly the same with the crop you get from the other plot—but do it separately.

Be sure to write down in your farm record book how much each plot yielded. If you also wrote down the cost of the new seed when you bought it and if you know whether your other seed cost you any money, you can now decide on what to do about this new variety nextseason. You can do this by carefully looking at all of the figures in your record book, and thinking about whether growing the new variety is better or not so good.

Now did you notice, I've just mentioned your farm record book?

We've talked before about how valuable that record book can be for keeping good farm records; here's a perfect example. While you may be able to remember how much seed you bought and how much it cost—and now you know exactly how much each plot yielded, will you be able to remember all those things next season when you have to start thinking about this again? You will, if you have it in your record book!

And here's another good reason for keeping a good record book—What about two or three years from now? Suppose you want to buy some more of that special kind of seed then. Will you remember the name of it and when and where you bought it if you don't have it written down in your record book?

When you think about it, this farm record book you keep is very important because there are lots of things you may need to know later—the kinds of things we're talking about that you may forget if you don't write them down when they're fresh in your mind.

Many successful farmers keep good records; another thing they do is to try out new ideas; they discard the poor ones and keep on using the good ones.

All of these are things you can do to be a more successful farmer.

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