Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

Pack 12, Item 2

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**Trying a simple new idea**

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

Presenter: George Atkins

Interviewee: Rev. Terry Orchard, Evangelical Baptist Church, Liwonde, Malawi, Central Africa

**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 we'll talk about the many farming ideas you hear about and what you might do about them. Here's George Atkins.

**ATKINS:** For the next few minutes, let's just sit and do a littlethinking about farming—and how it is that some farmers seem to be more successful than other farmers. Perhaps their crops or livestock are just a little better; they get a better yield from their plants or from their animals and poultry. They may make more money than some other farmers do and maybe they are able to buy more things to help them in their farming. I'm sure most of usknow farmers like that.

Now let's think a little about those farmers. What is it that makes them more successful than others?

Well, perhaps you've noticed that they are always interested to hear about new ideas that may help them to be more successful in their farming. When somebody tells them about an idea they haven't heard before, they listen carefully; they ask questions; they try to find out as much as they can—and then they decide what to do aboutit. They decide whether or not to try out the idea.

Now think about all the new ideas you hear on the radio, from agricultural extension workers, livestock people, salesmen, teachers—and even from other farmers. Surely some of those ideas would be good for you to try—in a small way at first, so you don't lose much if they're not successful.

Let me give you a simple example. Not long ago, Terry Orchard told me about an idea he tried out in Issa, in southeastern Malawi. In this village, he had noticed two things about the fruit on everybody's papaya trees. He'd noticed how much fruit there always was on each tree, but that because there was so much, when it was harvested, the papayas were always very small. He told one of the people that if he would thin out the papayas on his tree, the fruit that were left on the tree would get much bigger. The man who owned the tree didn't want to try it himself because he was afraid of what people might think if it wasn't a success. However, he told Terry Orchard that if he would like to thin out the papayas on the tree, that would be fine. Terry thinned them out and here's what he told me:

**ORCHARD:** I spaced them out because, with the papayas growing soclosely together, there was no way they could grow any bigger—there was no room for them.

**ATKINS:** So you just thinned them out.

**ORCHARD:** Yes. I selectively picked about half of the papayas. But I picked them so that I left space on the tree—space for those papayas to grow bigger.

A couple of weeks later, I asked him how his papayas were. He said "bigger"; and he said that the following year, he was going to start selectively picking (thinning) his papayas early in the season because he had seen the result of the selective picking (thinning). He was able to harvest bigger fruit; and he told me that some of the other people in his village who have papaya trees were also interested in doing the same thing—because they had seen the good result of doing it.

This method is a good one for people who have papaya trees—and I'm not just saying this is good for papayas, but there are other fruits in other parts of the world where the same idea can be used to get better fruit.

An idea like this is very simple; it's very practical; it doesn't cost anything; it's something anyone can do.

A lot of practical ideas like this, that farmers hear about on the radio, or they hear someone talk about or even that they may read about, can be helpful.

**ATKINS:** Now if you are a farmer who really wants to be moresuccessful than you are, you must always be looking for good ideas that will be helpful. The only way you can know if they'll be helpful for you is to try them. Of course there is some risk in anything you try so the best thing to do is to try it first in a small way. If it's thinning out papayas to get bigger better fruit, try it on just one tree. If the result is good, next season you can try it with two trees and so on.

 My message then for today is this:

Whenever you hear of a new idea that might be helpful to you or your family, think about it. If it seems to be a good idea, find out as much as you can about it. You might even want to talk about it with other people, perhaps a neighbour you respect. Then consider carefully how you might try it out on a small scale—and then try it. But at first, be sure to try it out in a small way. Depending on how it turns out, you can then decide what to do about it next time. This could be your first step toward becominga more successful farmer.

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