Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

Pack 15, Item 1

Type: Script

August 1989

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**Hannah: A model woman farmer in Kenya, Part 1 - a real success story**

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**Content:** Hannah is a successful farmer. Her husband has a job in a nearby town. With a family of nine children, she has taken full charge of the 1/3 acre (about 1/10 hectare) family farm. She is a model farmer who clearly demonstrates to others how well she uses no-cost, environmentally-safe farming methods.

Information of this type and subject matter was requested by DCFRN participants in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of China (Taiwan), Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad, and Uruguay.

**Special notes**

1. This success story (Part 1/Item 1 and Part 2/Item 2) is a new feature of the DCFRN package. It is completely different from all other material produced so far. DCFRN has always recognized the important contribution made by women. This story is the first of a series intended not only to continue serving all farmers, but also to:

\* recognize the contributions of women in society

\* enhance their ability to contribute more fully

\* encourage and assist them to achieve their potential

DCFRN welcomes success stories in detail of other rural women in non-traditional roles for reporting in future packages.

2. Items 1 and 2 are really the same item divided into two equal parts. They may be used separately in the proper sequence or together in one presentation.

3. DCFRN information is not intended to be offensive in any way to your rural people by promoting ideas or practices that directly oppose any cultural values held by your people. You are well aware of these cultural customs and practices in your area. Please keep them in mind when preparing to use DCFRN material.

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

**Suggested introduction:**

From all over the world, the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network gathers information that may be helpful to you. Today we have some special information that should be interesting to everyone, both men and women. Here's today's story from the Network.

**The item:** In most communities, there are one or more people whom everybody likes. People like this are usually happy people; they're friendly; they like their neighbours and are always ready to help others in any way they can. Today I'm thinking about one particular farmer like this—a successful farmer who grows very good crops, who has healthy children, and who is able to buy some special things that perhaps others may not be able to buy. But listen to this—this farmer started out with no special advantage over the neighbours, only the desire to be a really good farmer and to have a healthy, happy family. Now if I tell you a little more about this farmer, it’s just possible that you'll hear something that may help you to become a better farmer than you are already.

To begin with, the farmer I'm thinking about lives at Kange in the tropical highlands of Kenya in East Africa. Her name is Hannah Njeri. She's a happy person, 40 years old, with a few grey hairs and the mother of nine children. She's a little bit shy, but is always willing to share her experience with others. In addition, she's always interested in learning of even more ways to improve her farming and the nutrition and health of her children.

Hannah's husband works away from home and her oldest son is a schoolteacher in another place. The rest of her children live at home with her and her husband who comes home every evening. Like most of her neighbours, Hannah grows and cooks the food, looks after the family and makes their clothes. She spends three hours a day fetching water; she walks a long way getting firewood (3). She's busy all day, every day from 5:30 in the morning until 8 o'clock at night. Let me tell you about her farm that's about 1/3 acre (about 1/10 hectare) in size.

The soil is sandy and her farming conditions are probably a lot like yours. Her house is in one corner of the farm. She keeps a cow (4) in a shed she built out of bush poles; she also keeps six chickens (5)—and rabbits in a rabbit hutch (6).She has a number of pear and plum trees and two or three garden plots where she grows maize and other grains (7) and lots of vegetables as well as some flowers and other plants.

Hannah's crops are healthy, there are no weeds—her farm is beautiful—and lots of people come to see it. They come to find out why her crops are so good, her children look so healthy (8) (9), and how it is that she's able to buy some things that other people too would like to have.

They come to look at Hannah's compost pile (10) that gets better every day because of the chicken and rabbit droppings she puts on it and the cow's manure and urine she adds—also the wood ashes from her cooking fire, the crop residues, weeds, and other things she keeps adding to the compost pile. People also come to look at the garden plot that now produces a lot more vegetables than it used to. You see on this plot, Hannah tried out the technique called double digging (11). With it, you loosen the subsoil while you turn over the top soil and mix in good homemade fertilizer from the compost pile (10). It allows you to at least double the production of vegetables and other crops.

Another thing the people come to see on Hannah's farm is the way she deals with insect pests. She does that three ways. For one thing, she plants a special kind of flower called Mexican marigolds close to her tomato plants. Not only do they add to the beauty of her garden but they also ward off tomato pests. The other two ways she does it are with the tobacco plants and the wild nettles she grows in her garden. For different garden pests, she uses them to make up her own home made pesticides. In each case, she chops up the leaves of the tobacco or nettle plants, stews them in water for five or six minutes and lets the stew ferment for five days. She uses these no-cost insecticides (1) to attack the pests in her garden.

One thing that people who come to Hannah's farm particularly notice is what a healthy family she has. All the children are well fed; they have proper nutrition. That's because just about all the food they eat comes from their own farm: they grow several kinds of grains, fruits, and vegetables and they have milk, eggs, and meat regularly. The visitors are able to see, first hand, how it is that Hannah provides this good nutrition for her family and what a lot of good food can be produced at little or no cost on 1/3 of an acre (about 1/10 of a hectare).

And there you have at least part of the story about a particularly successful farmer. I'll tell you the rest of Hannah's story next time.

**Notes:**

1. Information on many of the farming techniques used by Hannah Njeri has been provided in detail in other DCFRN items. A programming possibility for any DCFRN participant, regardless of the medium of communication might be to present the information in Items I (this item) and Item 2 as the basis for an information series. Subsequent presentation in the series could then include the information in the other DCFRN items mentioned, referring back to Hannah's story in each case.

2. Numbered designations throughout the texts of Items I and 2 [for example, (3), (4), etc.] are references to the other items in this package. If the suggestion in note 1 is followed, all items would provide information useful to your farmers on the designated aspect of Hannah's story.

**Information source:**

DCFRN evaluator Ruth McRae, who visited Hannah, accompanied by DCFRN participant John W. Njoroge, Director, Kenya Institute of Organic Farming.

Hannah Njeri, a successful farmer, in Kange, Kenya.