



A woman farmer harvests water and grows vegetables in the dry season

Notes to broadcaster

In every society, water is the source of life. But many people are now facing a water crisis. Overcoming the world's water crisis by achieving water, food and environmental security is one of the most formidable challenges on the road to sustainable development. Progress, however, must start at the household level and slowly move outwards.

In today's programme a farmer whose life has been changed through rain harvesting will tell us how she has managed to keep a vegetable garden throughout the year because of clever utilization of harvested water.

In addition to the benefits illustrated in the script, rainwater harvesting also helps farming families by greatly reducing the amount of time used to fetch water from other sources. Harvested rainwater is cleaner than water from unprotected sources. Though the poorest families are unlikely to have large iron roofs like Beatrice's, those who can afford to build them will have their investment returned in a relatively short time.

It should be understood that the farmer in this script is able to collect a lot of rainwater because there is a good amount of rainfall in her region. Farmers in very dry areas will not be able to collect 18,000 litres of water annually. Broadcasters whose audience lives in a very dry area should modify the story accordingly.

Start of program

START SIGNATURE TUNE THEN FADE OUT SLOWLY.

Host: Welcome to today's program.

FADE UP SIGNATURE TUNE, HOLD UNDER HOST, THEN FADE OUT.

Host: Today we'll hear from Beatrice Asimwe, a farmer from Mbarara in Western Uganda. Beatrice has developed new innovations in water harvesting and conservation. The water she has harvested has allowed her to start new enterprises in her home besides growing food. Stay tuned and learn how she has made her home a comfortable place to live even when water is scarce.

Host: Welcome to the show, Beatrice. How long have you been practicing water harvesting?



Beatrice: Good evening listeners, I am glad to be here today. Speaking on the radio gives me the opportunity to share my experience with many people, even though they have not visited my home to see how I harvest rainwater. I am 44 years old and I have practiced rainwater harvesting for seven years. I have 12 acres of land on a hill and sometimes our spring water runs dry. Because of this, I had to invent some way to bring water to my home throughout the year.

Host: What did you do when you realized you needed water all the time?

Beatrice: After building our iron-roofed house, we put gutters around the roof. Then we placed an eight thousand litre water tank at the front of the house and a ten thousand litre water tank at the back. So I have eighteen thousand litres of clean rainwater.

Host: Eighteen thousand litres of clean rainwater! That must make a big difference to your life.

Please stay with us, listeners—in a moment we'll be back to hear how Beatrice uses the rainwater that she harvests. Beatrice will also tell us about other ways to catch and use water.

SOUND OF WATER GUSHING OUT OF A TAP, THEN FADING UNDER VOICE AND OUT

Host: Welcome back. We're with Beatrice—a farmer who is using new ways to catch and store rainwater. Beatrice, are there any other ways that you are catching rainwater?

Beatrice: We have built trenches between our terraces in the gardens on the hills. The trenches trap run-off water. Then a ditch brings the water down to the valley where we grow vegetables throughout the year.

Host: Very clever. But what do you do with all this extra water you are catching?

Beatrice: Having extra water has allowed us to start new ventures. First, we have set up a zero grazing enterprise. So far we have seven cows and three oxen. We grow the fodder along the side of the trenches, which act as an embankment for the runoff water. Also, two years ago we started an apiary down in the valley, with seventeen beehives.

Host: How does water help with beekeeping?

Beatrice: Without water you cannot keep bees. Bees need water, just like we do.

Host: How do you ensure that there is enough water for the bees?

Beatrice: During the rainy season, there is enough water in the valley. But during the dry season, we take water from the tanks and place it in basins down in the valley for the bees.

Host: Is that not a lot of work?



Beatrice: It used to be. Now we use a long hosepipe. Gravity moves the water down the hose to the gardens. We fill the basins every evening when we are watering the vegetable gardens. We also use the harvested water for the cattle and poultry and for our household needs. We even sell some water during the dry season.

Host: How has water harvesting changed your life?

Beatrice: I see a very big change because I have started new enterprises. I have expanded my vegetable garden and now I supply our local market with vegetables throughout the year. My community benefits too. They can now buy clean water for drinking.

Host: Dear listeners, we have had a nice chat with Beatrice, and this brings us to the end of the program. Thank you, Beatrice, for coming to share your experience with us. Until next time, good-bye.

FADE UP SIGNATURE TUNE, THEN OUT

Acknowledgements

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