

# Pack 102, Item 4

Type: Drama

November 2015

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**Feed your birds right: How the King of guinea fowl farmers won his crown**

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**Notes to broadcaster**

In northern Ghana, nine of ten households raise guinea fowl, and the birds play a significant role in ensuring that households have enough to eat, and earn a little income. Most farmers let guinea fowl forage freely. The birds forage for their own food and sleep in trees around houses.

There is high demand for both guinea fowl meat and eggs. For families in northern Ghana, guinea fowl are the first item to be sold to meet immediate needs such as farm inputs, or food during the June to August lean season.

Rural and suburban households in northern Ghana typically raise five guinea fowl and one guinea cock. Poor households sell their stock early, while better-off households retain their birds longer, then harvest eggs until October or November and replace their birds with new stock.

In most of northern Ghana, both men and women can own guinea fowl.

There are a number or challenges to raising guinea fowl, including: high keet mortality, lack of supplementary feeding, and differentiating between male and female keets. The following four-episode drama deals with the challenges of feeding guinea fowl.

You might choose to present this drama as part of your regular farming program, using voice actors to represent the speakers. You could also use this drama as inspiration to research and develop a radio program on guinea fowls in your own country.

If you choose to use this item as inspiration for creating your own program about guinea fowls, you could talk to extension agents and farmers in your area, and ask the following questions:

* Are guinea fowl raised in your area?
* Do farmers use free-range systems, or do they confine their birds for part or all of their lives?
* What are the major challenges to raising guinea fowl in your area? What solutions have been found for these challenges?
* What feeds are given to guinea fowl in your area?

Apart from speaking directly to farmers and other key players in the local agriculture sector, you could use these questions as the basis for a phone-in or text-in program.

Estimated running time for this item is 20-25 minutes, including intro and outro.

**CHARACTERS**

**KISHA:** Kisha wants to win the crown and doesn’t want to change his traditional ways of farming. He is 35 years old, husband to Lami and father of Abdul. He is serious and quick to anger.

**ABU:** Abu is a braggart and is mistrusted by many in the community. He is 27 years old, a big talker and has a great sense of humour.

**LAMI:** She is the 25-year-old wife of Kisha, beautiful and witty. She tricks Abu and discovers the information that will help her husband and the entire community

**NANCY:** She is a thirty-year-old agricultural extension officer from the city of Tamale, Ghana. She visits the townsfolk after receiving a phone call from Lami.

**WOMAN:** She is 40 years old.

**NARRATOR:** Welcome to our drama about feeding guinea fowl, entitled *Feed your birds right: How the King of guinea fowl farmers won his crown*. Today’s drama takes place in a small, fictional town in northern Ghana called Vakpahi. In Vakpahi, guinea fowl are very important. But guinea fowl farmers are worried because their birds are dying! Today you will hear how a whole town learned the secret of feeding their birds correctly, and raised big, healthy birds. Which means a much better income for the farmers! Maybe you can learn the secret too!

Because raising guinea fowls is so important to Vakpahi, the community celebrates an annual festival to crown the farmer with the most keets and the fattest guinea fowls in town.

Kisha and Abu are farmers and both raise chickens and guinea fowl for a living. Kisha is the reigning champion at raising guinea fowl. Everyone in the village knows that this is a family heritage that he intends to keep and pass on to his children. Abu is a big talker and a braggart, which makes people a little sceptical of him. But he has discovered a secret that will improve his life as a farmer and his chances of winning the crown. His secret will also bring a change to the townfolk, who have been suffering because so many of their keets have been dying.

Who will win the crown this year? And will the winner’s knowledge help farmers in his community? Stay tuned to find out!

**SCENE ONE**

**LOCATION: KISHA’S COMPOUND**

**CAST: KISHA, LAMI, ABU**

**SFX:** BIRD SOUNDS AND THE DRAGGING OF A CHAIR

**KISHA:** (WORRIED TONE) Lami, my wife, sit down and let me tell you what’s been on my mind for the past two weeks. (PAUSE) The time to crown our next king of farmers is drawing near, and I am worried because I have lost most of my keets this season. Most of them hardly ever come home from wherever they feed, and the ones I have left are not growing well. Just look at those ones over there – how small they are.

My ancestors will be very disappointed in me if I lose the crown. It is my responsibility to pass on this family heritage to my son Abdul when I am no more.

**LAMI:** My husband, don’t worry your head too much. Just concentrate on how to make the keets live longer. That is the way to the crown you want so badly.

**KISHA:** The thing that worries me most is that almost all the farmers in this town are losing their birds—and I don’t have answers for them. I am sure that I am doing better than everyone else, but I worry that I cannot help myself or my people. My father left me to pursue the honourable position as the best guinea fowl farmer in this town. He must be very disappointed in his grave.

**LAMI:** Don’t speak like that. You are never a disappointment and I am sure you will win this crown.

(SHREWDLY) I will do my best to ask around. I might be able to help you with a solution.

**KISHA:** My wife, you have spoken well. Thank you. Please go and catch one of these guinea fowl and prepare some food for dinner. Be careful—you know how vicious they can be when they run free.

**SFX:**  Running footsteps, bird sounds, flapping wings and chattering. Lami breathes hard trying to catch a bird.

**ABU:** (COMING ON-MIC) Kisha, why is your wife running around like a mad woman? I have been watching her from a distance.

**KISHA:** (SHARPLY) Abu, learn to keep your mouth shut and stop referring to my wife in that manner!

**ABU:** Eii … you have been raising guinea fowls all your life, yet you cannot catch your own bird? (LAUGHS) As for me, all I have to do is snap my finger and my birds surround me like puppets.

**KISHA:** Abu, Abu … everybody in this village knows that you can talk. You’re the only magician who always talks his magic ... but no one has seen you perform (LAUGHS)!

**ABU:** I will surprise you all very soon. Aha! The bird has finally crossed into my territory. (PAUSE THEN SHOUTS) I caught you! (BIRD VIOLENTLY FLAPS ITS WINGS AND SCREAMS) Here you go, my lady.

**LAMI:** Thank you, Abu.

**KISHA:** (SHARPLY) Stop staring at my wife like that! The next time I catch you flirting with her, I will take matters into my own hands. (SHOUTS IN FRUSTRATION) Sit down and stop staring, I said!

**ABU:** Ah, what a beautiful woman you have for a wife. And she is very soft-spoken too.

**KISHA:** (FRUSTRATED) Just listen to yourself. You are getting on my nerves!

**ABU:** Come on, I am just appreciating God’s creation. By the way, why are your keets still following the mother hen and her chicks? See the way they are lined up, as if they are the same breed (LAUGHS).

**KISHA:** Ah, but they are all birds, and we treat them all the same here. They eat the same food, drink the same water and marry each other too. (THEY BOTH LAUGH)

**ABU:** It’s no wonder your guinea fowls look so sick and thin.

**KISHA:** (SHARPLY) What are you saying, Abu? Did you come here to insult me?

**ABU:** No, I did not. All I know is that guinea fowls are supposed to be heavier than chickens, but yours all look the same. I’m just telling you what’s true —you should stop seeing them as the same breed. I have a very prominent friend in the city who told me that.

**KISHA:** Don’t insult my intelligence, Abu. This is what my great-grandfather taught my grandfather and my grandfather taught my father and my father taught me. And you want me to listen to a big talker with no works like you? Man, if you want to build castles in the air, you can build those castles somewhere else, not in my house!

**ABU:** There goes another unbeliever ... You people will have the shock of your lives at the crowning. (GOING OFF-MIC) Just wait and see.

**KISHA:** (RAISED VOICE) We all know you are a braggart. Stop boasting and go home. I will always be the king of farmers; my family has held this legacy for ages. You will see how my ancestors help with feeding these fowls. By the time of the crowning, I will have the best and biggest guinea fowl ever.

**ABU:** (CALLING FROM OFF-MIC) Who is the braggart now?

**KISHA:** (IMPATIENTLY MUTTERING TO HIMSELF) Abu, go home and mind your own business!

**SCENE TWO**

**LOCATION: ABU’S COMPOUND**

**CAST: LAMI, ABU**

**NARRATOR:** Two weeks have passed.The crowning ceremony is over. Everyone in the community is shocked. Abu the braggart is now the King of all farmers. Kisha has been sulking at home, embarrassed by his failure to win the crown. Lami goes on a mission to find Abu’s secret. She is determined to help her husband and the entire community.

**SFX:** FADE INSOUNDS FROM FOWLS AND WIND

**LAMI:** Abu, tell me — what is your secret? You blew us all away with your success. I’m curious. Come on … I won’t tell anyone, not even my husband (GIGGLES COYLY).

**ABU:** Okay, beautiful Lami, come, let me show you something!

**SFX:**  RuSTling of a polythene bag

**LAMI:** (INNOCENT VOICE) What do you keep in this black polythene bag?

**ABU:** Look (unfolding a sheet OF PAPER). This is the contact of the resource person I met in Tamale. Her name is Nancy, and she raises guinea fowls in Tamale. She actually gave me a lot of advice the last time I followed my brother to the city for his son’s graduation. (BOASTING) You see, I have a lot of contacts.

**LAMI:** Yes, I see. You must be a very intelligent man.

**ABU:** (AFFECTED BY HER PRAISE, BOASTING) I see that you are perceptive as well as beautiful, Lami. (LAUGHS)

**LAMI:** Oh yes ...Eeii ... so a woman can be good at raising guinea fowls?

**ABU:** Yes, and she is very smart too. She is an Agricultural Extension Officer in Tamale. She told me that it is important to prepare a supplementary feed for my keets so that they grow well and healthy.

**LAMI:** (ADMIRINGLY) Wow ...

**ABU:** Follow me (PAUSE). Have you seen this heap I created? This generates food to feed my keets. I told your husband not to feed his keets the same as his chicks—because they are two different kinds of birds. Nancy told me that the keets are more fragile than chicks and can die if you don’t feed them well. She also advised me to build a small shelter that will ensure that they are not made a meal by snakes and dogs and other animals.

**LAMI:** (INNOCENT, SPEAKING SLOWLY AS IF SHE DOESN’T UNDERSTAND) But I don’t understand. How does this heap generate food for the keets? Please explain it to me.

**ABU:** (EXPLAINING SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY) Well, termites come to feed on the heap after an hour or two. Let me explain. Do you see the termite mound over there? Nancy told me to dig a hole in the side of the termite mound and fill the hole with a mixture of sand and fresh tree leaves, and then leave it. After an hour or two, the termites come to feed on the leaves, and then I can harvest them and feed them to my keets. My keets always return to the house I built for them because of this feed. The small housing I built for them helps me keep an eye on their growth and their health. They do not die so easily because they are eating more protein.

**LAMI:** Wow, this looks and sounds really good. (SOUND OF LAMI snatchING the rubber bag with the contact sheet from ABU. Sound of plastic as she runs.) (SUDDENLY AND IN A BUSINESSLIKE TONE, WALKING OFF-MIC) My husband must hear this. In fact, all the farmers in this town must hear this …

**ABU:** No, you don’t have to … You promised you wouldn’t tell anyone, not even your husband ... (SHOUTING) Woman, that is Nancy’s contact! Bring back my thing! Bring it ... hey! I said bring it! (pause and breathING hard) Eii, wonders shall never end …

**SCENE THREE**

**LOCATION: KISHA’S COMPOND**

**CAST: KISHA, LAMI, ABU**

**SFX: MURMURINGS FROM CROWD.**

**LAMI:** You are welcome, Madam Nancy. We are all happy to have you here in Vakpahi. Like I told you on the telephone, we are very eager to listen to your teachings on how to feed our guinea fowls, especially the keets. My husband here and all the townfolk have been worried because we’ve been losing so many keets. Abu was crowned our best farmer this year because he practiced the good advice you gave him. He gave us your contact because he wanted all of us to benefit from your good counsel too.

**ABU:** Liar, you snatched it. (Lami ignores him and continues)

**LAMI:** We are happy that you have made the time to see us today. You are warmly welcome!

**NANCY:** Thank you very much, Lami. You have spoken well. I am also very glad to be here to help you understand your guinea fowls.

**SFX:**  APPLAUSE from crowd

**NANCY:** First of all, it is important to remember that, even though you are practicing the free-range system, you should still keep an eye on your keets. Do not treat them the same as your chicks. Chicks are stronger and have a higher survival rate than keets. Your keets need more protein than chicks. Keets need a lot of energy and protein when they are one day old to about six weeks old.

**WOMAN:** So, madam, apart from the termites Abu showed us, what other source of protein can we use to feed the keets?

**NANCY:** Good question! You can feed them with maggots and white worms! You also have to provide your keets with fresh, clean water all the time and make sure that the water you give to very young keets is warm and not cold. If your keets are exposed to too much cold, they will not survive, so you need to keep them in a warm place.

**KISHA:** So are you saying our keets should be kept in a special place? Are they not better off getting to know their surroundings?

**NANCY:** Well, keets are fragile and can easily fall prey to other animals, so it’s good for them to have a little shelter until they are older. But if you want them to live free-range, make sure that they are not exposed to too much cold. You must also give them supplementary food all the time. This will provide them with the right nutrients.

**KISHA:** What should we use for supplementary food?

**NANCY:** After talking to many good guinea fowl farmers, I have learnt that you can feed them local maize, millet, sorghum and even rice. One possibility is a mixture of maize and soya. You should mix four cups of maize with no more than one cup of soya, then fry it and grind the mixture. This is a good source of energy for your guinea fowls.

**LAMI:** Ok, four cups of maize with no more than one cup of soya. Good. Madam Nancy, are there any other mixtures I can make with local foods?

**NANCY:** Lami, you can also mix soya beans and millet with *amane* (*Editor’s note:* Amane *is the name of a kind of dried fish in Ghana*). You should fry it and mix it together to make a food supplement with lots of protein. This will keep your birds healthy and they will grow well.

**KISHA:** Madam, is there an easier way than Abu’s style of catching termites? We tried it once and my wife complained! She did not like the mess she created when harvesting the termites from the ground.

**NANCY:** Good question. You can also mix cow dung and sawdust in a pot and place it in a pit like I taught Abu. After an hour or two, the termites will be captured in the pot. I am sure this will be a lot easier. You can then help your wife to take the termites from the pots to feed your keets.

**KISHA:** Yes, that would be easier. Thank you.

**NANCY:** You are welcome, and I am very glad that you have been attentive and responsive to me. I’m sure that the next time I visit this town; there will be many masters in guinea fowl farming. And then I can come to you for advice!

**CHORUS:** (All laugh and clap). Thank you very much, madam.

**SCENE FOUR**

**LOCATION: KISHA’S COMPOND**

**CAST: KISHA, LAMI, ABU**

**SFX: KISHA IS WHISTLING A LOCAL TUNE**

**ABU:** Good morning. Why are you so happy this morning? What are we celebrating?

**KISHA:** A man cannot be happy in his own home?

**ABU:** Ah, you don’t have to tell me. I already know; it’s the talk of the town. They say you will win next year’s crown. (A LITTLE LAUGH) But you should thank me; I’m your saviour!

**KISHA:** Abu, sit down. My wife deserves my gratitude, not you.

**ABU:** Don’t be silly, my friend. Have you forgotten already? I told you not to treat your chicks the same as your keets and you got angry. You were so proud of how your great grand-father taught your grandfather and your grandfather taught your father and …

**KISHA:** (INTERRUPTING) That’s enough, Abu ... it’s in the past. I now know it’s okay to change old farming methods and adopt new ones that will benefit me. My keets are growing well. They don’t die like they used to, and they are very big and healthy.

**ABU:** This is what every guinea fowl farmer in Vakpahi says now. We are making a lot of money from selling our guinea fowls. Demand for guinea fowls from Vakpahi has really grown.

**KISHA:** Yes, very true.

**ABU:** (JOKING) You must all pay homage to me.

**KISHA:** Ah, never! I already pay homage to our king and my clever wife. She is the one who saved us all.

**ABU:** Yes, your beautiful and cunning wife.

**KISHA:** Abuuu ... I have warned you about the way you refer to my wife.

**ABU:** Don’t worry. The next time I see her, I will close my eyes and ears to avoid her beauty tricks. Relax; you don’t have to worry about me anymore.

**KISHA:** Ah, talk of the devil, there she comes.

**ABU:** I am leaving; goodbye.

**KISHA:** (LAUGHING) Stop walking with closed eyes. If you fall on the mound I have created, those termites will not spare you at all!

**SFX:** ALL LAUGH, INCLUDING LAMI.

## Acknowledgements

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**Sources of information**

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Interviews:

Theodora Kubaje, farmer, Paga, Upper East Region, Ghana,

Appialora Alawuga, farmer, Banyoro, Upper East Region, Ghana

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