

# Pack 104, Item 14

Type: Script

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**Cowpea haulms to the rescue: Using cowpea residues to feed livestock**

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**Notes to broadcaster**

Cowpea is a very important legume crop in Ghana, and elsewhere in West Africa. It’s an important and cheap source of protein for rural and urban families. Indeed, cowpea is often referred to as “the poor man’s meat” because it contains a lot of protein.

Livestock production is a very important aspect of agriculture in Ghana, and a major source of income for farmers. Livestock provide quick income that helps individuals meet their financial needs. There are very few feed manufacturers in Ghana, and most focus on poultry. Feed prices vary from one shop to another, but prices range between GHC10 to GHC50 for a back of animal feed, depending on the quantity and nutritional value of the feed. In rural areas, there is little or no supply of feed, and feed costs may be double because of the cost of transportation from urban to rural areas. As a result, rural farmers tend to release their animals to find food for themselves, which does not guarantee adequate and balanced nutrition for the animals.

This script gives a detailed account on how to feed goats and sheep with cowpea residues, the benefits and challenges of doing so, and the solutions to these challenges. It also describes how to carefully prepare cowpea residues for the animals in order to maximize their growth. How well the animals grow determines the wealth of a farmer, and the ability of individuals who raise and sell animals to support themselves and their families.

You might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

You could also use this script as research material or as inspiration for creating your own programming on sources of nutritious and affordable feed for domestic livestock. Talk to farmers and experts who are dealing with these challenges. You might ask them:

What difficulties do you experience with feeding livestock in this area?

Do farmers ever feed cowpea residues to their domestic animals? What has been the result?

Are there challenges to feeding cowpea residues to animals in your area?

Have some farmers or experts suggested or tried solutions to these challenges?

As well as 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: 15 minutes, with intro and outro music.

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**CHARACTERS**

WAREWAA: 41-year-old small-scale farmer who raises goats and sheep and owns a cowpea farm

NANAAMA: 35-year-old cowpea farmer and Warewaa’s close friend

NANCY: extension officer posted to Beduase

KOOFORI: 55-year-old small-scale farmer.

NANA (CHIEF): 67-year-old chief of Beduase town

SPEAKERS: Voices of townsfolk

**SCENE 1**

**SETTING: WAREWAA’S HOME**

**CHARACTERS: WAREWAA, NANAAMA**

**SFX:** BIRDS CHIRPING

**WAREWAA:** I don’t appreciate such incompetence; they should have the decency to inform me about …

**Sfx:**  approaching footsteps UNDER WAREWAA`S VOICE

**NANAAMA:** (INTERRUPTING) Warewaa, what’s the matter? You look worried. Why are you talking to yourself?

**WAREWAA:** Hmm … it’s my suppliers. I haven’t heard from them in weeks!

**NANAAMA:** Which suppliers—fertilizer?

**WAREWAA:** Feed suppliers for my sheep and goats!

**NANAAMA:** Oh, *mponkye maame* [*Editor’s note*: mother of goats], you are worried about goat food? Release them and let them graze!

**WAREWAA:** Stop calling me *mponkye maame*! You and I know very well there isn’t much to rely on in this community, and grazing around won’t be enough. I wasn’t crowned queen of success for nothing!

**NANAAMA:** I warned you about raising farm animals. It’s a man’s job—why don’t you leave it to them? Our men are very angry. I hear they want to overthrow you and …

**WAREWAA:** (INTERRUPTING) Oh, Nanaama, please don’t start. I have done them no wrong. I am a hard-working woman. Every worker has a time of crisis, but it doesn’t make them failures, and neither am I.

**NANAAMA:** Of course, but …

**WAREWAA:** (INTERRUPTING) No buts…. What I need to do now is find a solution to my problem. Tomorrow, we will go to the information centre to meet the new extension officer. I will be at your door at sunrise, so be prepared.

**NANAAMA:** We have a new agricultural officer? How do you know—Nana hasn’t announced it yet, has he?

**WAREWAA:** A friend told me about her arrival, and I want us to meet her before anyone else.

**NANAAMA:** You never fail to amaze me! I take my leave now. Goodbye, my friend.

**WAREWAA:** Goodbye.

**SCENE 2**

**SETTING: NANAAMA’S COMPOUND**

**CHARACTERS: WAREWAA, NANAAMA, NANCY**

**SFX:** LOUD KNOCK ON DOOR

**WAREWAA:** *Agoo*, Nanaama (*Editor’s note:* Agoo *is a word that is equivalent to knocking*). Are you ready?

**NANAAMA:** Yes, give me a second ... (pause) Here I am.

**WAREWAA:** Good, let’s go.

**NANAAMA:** You still haven’t told me how you knew about the extension officer.

**WAREWAA:** Have you forgotten that my sister works at the Ministry of Agriculture in Accra? She arranged for the extension officer’s posting and told me when she would arrive. She will be introduced soon, but I can’t wait. I need help!

**NANAAMA:** How can she help?

**WAREWAA:** Months ago, my friend suggested that I feed my livestock from my cowpea farm. But I didn’t pay any attention to her because my suppliers were always on time.

**NANAAMA:** But how would you survive if you fed your farm products to your livestock?

**WAREWAA:** That is why we are here! You have no idea what happened to my animals when I fed them with cowpea. They got dehydrated—I almost lost two of them.

**NANAAMA:** But who on earth would feed goats and sheep with cowpea!

**WAREWAA:** Hmmm ... I probably didn’t hear what my friend was saying correctly. The phone line was breaking up.

**SFX:**  knocking

**NANAAMA:** *Mponkye maame*, don’t break the door. The sign on the door says “knock and enter.”

**WAREWAA:** (they both laugh) I told you to stop calling me *mponkye maame*.

**SFX:**  Door creaks open

**NANCY:** Hello.

**WAREWAA:** Good afternoon.

**NANCY:** Good afternoon. I am Nancy; sit down.

**WAREWAA:** Thank you. My name is Warewaa and this is my friend, Nanaama.

**NANCY:** You are welcome. What brings you here?

**WAREWAA:** My livestock are not well, and if I don’t act fast, I won’t sell any of them this year. They weigh a lot less than normal.

**NANCY:** Sounds like malnutrition. What do you feed them?

**WAREWAA:** I was okay until my suppliers disappointed me. All I do now is send them out to graze, but I know it’s not enough to meet their nutritional needs. A friend of mine suggested I feed them with cowpea, but I don’t understand her. How can I do that without losing my cowpea crops?

**NANCY:** You won’t lose your cowpea crops by feeding cowpea residues to your livestock.

**WAREWAA:** Oh … I thought she wanted me to feed my goats and sheep with my cowpea *grain*. I did exactly that some weeks back and it was a disaster. I’m sure that word of this incident has already gone around in our community.

**NANCY:** Feeding your livestock with cowpea haulms will not hurt your crops. When I say *haulms*, I mean cowpea residues (PAUSE FOR EFFECT). That means cowpea vines and dried stalks. It’s a shame you misunderstood your friend. (GIGGLE)

**WAREWAA:** Oh, so I was supposed to feed them with the residues from my farm, not the crops! (LAUGHS)

**NANCY:** Exactly! (LAUGHS) Cowpea haulms are a delicacy to goats and sheep. They can provide enough protein and energy to sustain them during a long dry season. You need to be cautious, but the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

**WAREWAA:** Why cautious? Is it dangerous for them?

**NANCY:** No, it’s only that goats and sheep are slow to digest the haulms. So don’t overfeed them, and try your best to cut the haulms into small pieces to make it easier for your animals to digest. Also, don’t store them for more than four weeks, because they are likely to lose nutrients.

**WAREWAA:** Does that mean I can’t store everything I gather from my cowpea farm to give to the sheep and goats? Isn’t four weeks too short?

**NANCY:** I recommend four weeks. You can extend it to eight weeks if you wish, but don’t go any further than eight weeks. It’s better to store just some of the haulms, and sell the rest to other farmers at a good price.

**WAREWAA:** I didn’t think of that. Thank you. Are you saying that if I feed them with the cowpea haulms, they will grow well and fat?

**NANCY:** That will depend on how well you feed them, but I know they will eat more protein, which will help them grow. It could also cause their weight to shoot up—that is, if you follow my instructions.

**WAREWAA:** Wow, that would be good for business! I have wasted so much money on feed suppliers. Thank you, madam, you have been very helpful. I will be on my way now.

**NANCY:** You are welcome. Once I’m settled, I will come around to see you and monitor your progress. Your farm will be the envy of all in no time.

**WAREWAA:** I can’t wait.

**EPISODE 3**

**SETTING: THE CHIEF’S PALACE**

**CHARACTERS: WAREWAA, NANAAMA, KOOFORI, NANA, TOWNSFOLK (SPEAKER 1, 2)**

**BACKGROUND SFX:**  **BIRDS CHIRPING, BLEATING GOATS AND SHEEP**

**NANA:** (AuthoritativelY) Quiet!! Speak, Koofori; we are all ears.

**KOOFORI:** Nana, I will go straight to the point. We all know that Warewaa was crowned queen of success because of her farm. I represent all the men in this community who are disappointed because our position was taken from us. Yet it has yielded no fruit.

**NANA:** What do you mean?

**KOOFORI:** All I am trying to say is that this woman dared to raise farm animals in this community, but she has failed! (Pause for effect) We want our crown back!

**SFX:** NOISE AND CHEERS FROM CROWD

**NANA:** Quiet, everyone! (pause) Warewaa, what have you got to say to this? Are they telling the truth?

**WAREWAA:** Thank you, nana, for granting me your audience.

 It is true that my farm suffered a crisis, and I have been struggling for some time. But things are very different now. I can see that the men gathered here did not do their homework well. I want to ask if any of them has been to my farm lately. (Pause, no answer) I thought as much.

 My farm has improved drastically over the past three weeks. My sheep and goats are well-fed, and they have fully recovered from their hunger crisis.

**KOOFORI:** She is lying!

**WAREWAA:** No, I am not. Here is my proof. Nana, elders of this land, and all the people of this community, here is my gift to you. Look at them—they are very healthy and well.

**SFX:**  GOATS AND SHEEP BLEAT LOUDER

**NANA:** Oh, this is a big surprise! I was beginning to wonder whose animals were tied up in my palace.

Thank you, my daughter. We all know how difficult it is to find food for our livestock. Even the strongest men in this village struggle to get nutritious food for their farm animals. Now tell us: how did you do it?

**WAREWAA:** With all due respect, this is the question our men should have asked me.

**SPEAKER 1:** Not all men—it is this shameless Koofori who can’t mind his own business.

**KOOFORI:** Hey, are you referring to me?

**NANA:** Shut up and listen to a wise woman. Continue, my daughter.

**WAREWAA:** The secret is simple: my cowpea farm.

**NANA**: Are you saying that you feed your livestock with your harvested cowpea?

**KOOFORI:** What a shame. She is wasting food.

**WAREWAA:** No, I am not. On the contrary, I am killing two birds with one stone. What I mean is that I feed my livestock with the haulms from my cowpea farm.

**SPEAKER 2:** Excuse me, please, what are haulms?

**WAREWAA:** Good question. Cowpea haulms are cowpea vines and dried stalks. They are basically residues.

**CHORUS:** Ahhh ...

**WAREWAA:** We know that our animals can find feed anywhere they can graze, but we have no control over the nutrients they gain from feeding like this. We have to provide them with additional nutrients that will help them grow.

**SPEAKER 2:** Are you saying that we should feed them with the cowpea as well as take them out to graze?

**WAREWAA:** Cowpea *residues*! What I am saying is, we can allow them to graze for food, and we can also feed them with cowpea haulms from our farms. This will give them a good source of protein. Your farms will be flourishing in no time.

This is good for us; everyone here owns either a maize farm or a cowpea farm—or both. The women with cowpea farms can sell the feed to the men who own livestock for a good fee.

**KOOFORI:** I told you she is up to no good. She is empowering our women to exploit us!

**WAREWAA:** No, I am not. If you care to know, it can be a lot of work to gather and chop the residues into pieces. You don’t expect all that work without a fee.

I only said *women* because most of the women in this community own a cowpea farm, while most of the men raise livestock. Not many men raise both crops and livestock like I do. But anybody can do this work for a small fee.

**KOOFORI:** She is bragging! Cowpea residues are good for the soil, not animals!

**CHORUS:** Oh, Koofori, shut up!

**WAREWAA:** I am not bragging. It’s true that cowpea residues are good for the soil. They help to reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizer because they are rich in nitrogen. But the residues are good for animals too.

I didn’t get all this information on my own. I spoke to some people who advised me to see the new extension officer for our community. You can visit her for confirmation.

**SPEAKER 1:** I know about cowpea and its benefits to the soil. I was told by an extension officer in Accra that cowpea residues add nitrogen to the soil, plus phosphorus and many other nutrients. This helps improve the soil, especially its ability to hold water. I have been adding residues to the soil, and it has been fruitful.

 But let’s not drift from the topic at hand … Warewaa, how can we use cowpea residues as a source of income?

**WAREWAA:** Like I was saying, what you need to do is chop the residues into small bits to reduce wastage and make them easier to digest. This is because goats and sheep don’t usually digest cowpea very well. Depending on the cost, you can pay your supplier to chop them for you, or you can do it on your own.

**SPEAKER 1:** Wow, does that mean that I can store as many haulms as I can and feed my livestock with it?

**WAREWAA:** Yes, you can, but you must be careful. If you store a large quantity of haulms, they can lose their nutrients over time and be wasted. I would advise you to store as little as possible and get fresh haulms from time to time.

**SPEAKER 2:** But why can’t I just feed the haulms right away to my animals!

**WAREWAA:** Most of us who raise goats and sheep know this is not a good idea. Goats and sheep don’t usually eat much cowpea, and don’t digest it well. That’s why chopping it is very important. Chopping the residues into smaller pieces encourages the animals to eat more.

**NANA:** Can I feed my livestock with cowpea haulms alone?

**WAREWAA:** No. They are most effective as a supplement to other feeds because they don’t contain all the nutrients needed for growth.

The good news is that we no longer need to buy protein-rich feed from other communities; the cowpea haulms can be a very good source of protein. Cowpea residues may not be available all year round, but they can be supplemented with other sources of livestock feed—like maize residues.

 But I will not take any more of your time. You can visit Madam Nancy for more information.

**NANA:** Who’s she?

**WAREWAA:** She been posted here as our new extension officer. You can find her office at the Information Centre.

Nana, this is my reply to our dear Koofori. I rest my case.

**NANA:** Well done; you are wise. I couldn’t have chosen a better queen of success. Now ... does anyone else think she is not fit for the position bestowed on her?

**SFX:**  SILENCE

**NANA:** I thought as much! Do you have anything else to say, Koofori?

**KOOFORI:** No, nana, only that I am sorry for causing so much trouble. Warewaa, I am very sorry.

**WAREWAA:** Don’t worry, Koofori, you were only having a hard time with your male ego. (LAUGHS) But it’s ok. Women can also be hardworking or lazy just like men. It’s a matter of choice for us as individuals.

**SFX:**  Applause from crowd

## Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Abena Dansoa Danso, Farm Radio International, Ghana office

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**Sources of information**

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Danley Colecraft Aidoo, Department of Agricultural extension, University of Ghana, March 3, 2016

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