



**FROM THE FIELD
AUTUMN 2021**

 **FARM AFRICA**

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: PETRONELLA HALWIINDI

Petronella joined Farm Africa six months ago as Country Director for Uganda. With a longstanding passion for agriculture, she gained her Bachelors degree in Agriculture Economics. After some hands-on experience working with rural farming communities in Malawi, she went on to gain a Masters in Poverty Reduction and spent 15 years at Heifer International before joining Farm Africa!

What attracted you to work for Farm Africa?

I was keen to apply my skills within the set-up of an organisation the size of Farm Africa, and the opportunity to work within the ever-growing and robust East African agriculture sector was extremely attractive.

Describe a typical day at work...

I joined Farm Africa at a time when Covid-19 cast a shadow on 'normal' work life. My typical day at work starts with checking my emails and messages, a cup of steaming Ugandan coffee in hand! After that, I have phone conversations with my team... I'm hopeful that the current crises shall pass and that my team will be able to connect physically soon. I make a point to punctuate my work with lots of hugs from my two-year old daughter!

How do you feel when you hear about the impact of Farm Africa's work?

The wonderful results and impact I see every day, whether it is in one of our projects in Uganda or Ethiopia, Kenya or Tanzania,

confirms that I made the right decision to join Farm Africa. I am where my passion connects with my work and this makes me very happy.

What message would you like to share with Farm Africa supporters?

The confidence and trust you have placed in Farm Africa's work is helping to build networks of resilient farming communities. From providing technical expertise on how to raise better crops and livestock, to ensuring that farmers can access better services and markets for their produce, Farm Africa is helping communities to drive their own development agenda. We are truly grateful for your support and for being part of our story.



THE SECRET TO GROWING ETHIOPIA'S BEST COFFEE

For many years the Aba Gemta coffee cooperative, in Ethiopia's Oromia region, thought success in the coffee industry was a myth. But it turned out that with the right tools and knowledge, growing the best coffee in the country was brew-tifully simple!

There's no argument that some of the world's best coffee comes from Ethiopia. This should provide an opportunity for coffee farmers to establish profitable businesses and tap into rewarding markets. But in reality, very few are able to realise this potential.

Without specialist tools and access to markets, many coffee farmers are unable to make a profit, let alone provide for their family's basic needs. But Farm Africa's Coffee Value Chain project is helping 10,000 farmers in coffee cooperatives to boost their incomes.

Cooperatives supported by the project have received crucial equipment that enhances coffee quality including sacks, mesh wire beds and bamboo



mats. With better quality coffee, farmers are able to gain access to lucrative international markets which pay them a fair price for their produce.

Abebe Adem (pictured) is Chairperson of Aba Gemta Cooperative. He told us: "We used to believe that the country's best coffee brands were gifted with some kind of coffee that has a better natural flavour. But now we know the secret lies within proper coffee management. As a result, we identified our gaps and successfully addressed those drawbacks.

"We were thrilled to learn that coffee from our locality is now designated as one of the highest quality in the country! We have proven that our coffee can compete in the national and international market if we focus on quality... It would have taken us years to reach this point had it not been for the project."

We are truly inspired by the determination of the members of Aba Gemta Cooperative and are proud to share in their amazing success.



Farm Africa's Coffee Value Chain project is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

REGENERATING KENYA'S FOOD BASKET

Embu County, in the highlands of Kenya, is known as one of the country's main food baskets. Here, agriculture provides the main source of food, as well as being the backbone of the economy. But a growing population and extreme weather pose a huge threat to the future productivity of the county.

Seventy per cent of Embu's population earn an income from growing crops or keeping livestock. Until recently, the region's regular rainfall patterns allowed farmers to grow staple foods such as maize, bananas and beans in abundance.

However, the combined pressure of growing demand and changing weather patterns has led to erosion, soil degradation and over-cropping. Something needed to be done to help protect livelihoods in Embu, and in turn the food security of the country.

Through technical training, Farm Africa's Regenerative Agriculture project has helped over 10,000 farmers in Embu to reform their agricultural practices, so as to improve soil health and make their businesses more resilient to climate change.

Farm Africa set up 134 demonstration plots so that farmers like Silas could take part in practical training sessions and gain valuable skills in sustainable land management.



Silas (pictured, right), a maize farmer, was encouraged by Farm Africa experts to grow a bigger variety of crops such as spinach and capsicums.

Rotating crops can dramatically improve soil fertility, as well as creating an opportunity for farmers to diversify their incomes.

Silas was beaming when he told us: "I recently sold my capsicums for £67! We are also earning a



daily income from selling kale and spinach to our neighbours and I'm looking for more buyers to take our surplus vegetables."

Farmers taking part in the project also learn about grain quality, seasonal marketing strategies and production plans - all of which help to preserve their farms, and their businesses. Motivated by his success, Silas also set up his own irrigation system to ensure that he can continue growing a variety of vegetables, even during dry seasons.

"My wife and I would struggle to make ends meet. We have two school going children and paying school fees for them became a challenge...our financial situation has now improved, we are able to buy food and take our children through school comfortably."

Equipped with the skills and knowledge that they have gained through this project the farmers of Embu are not only improving the lives of their own families, they are confident that through regenerative agriculture they can also keep Kenya's food basket full.



A gift of £112 could help more farmers like Silas learn how to diversify their crops, ensuring more success stories like his across eastern Africa.

LEAVING BEHIND A GIFT FOR A MORE PROSPEROUS RURAL AFRICA

“...chillies will change my life so much! The extra income will help me send my children to school and increase the produce we have in our shop.”
- Anyes, Uganda



Photo: Farm Africa/Jumba Martin

In eastern Africa, 70% of the population make a living from farming. Farmers work tirelessly to combat the threats of drought, pests and crop failure, in a climate that is becoming increasingly unpredictable.

But without access to the right tools and specialist knowledge, these communities are steadily growing more vulnerable. Many families struggle to produce enough to eat, let alone grow a surplus to sell and pay for school fees or healthcare.

Leaving a gift in your Will is a wonderful way to help communities in eastern Africa build resilience to climate shocks and safeguard the future for their children and grandchildren.

Gifts in Wills also allow us to make plans for the long term and ensure that we will be there support those who need us the most, no matter what challenges the future might bring.

We know that writing a Will is a personal decision and that everyone's situation is different. That's why our team is on hand to answer any questions you might have about leaving a gift in your Will to Farm Africa.

Large or small, your gifts really do go a long way in helping farmers in rural Africa to achieve the success they deserve. We are extremely grateful for your support.



Please do not hesitate to get in touch by telephone: 020 7430 0440 or email: remember@farm africa.org. You can also visit www.farm africa.org/remember for more information.

PROTECTING THE FOREST PAYS IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's Central Rift Valley is an area known for its diverse wildlife, freshwater lakes and lush forests; for many communities, these resources are their livelihoods, and their lifelines. But for decades, climate change and deforestation have threatened these resources, and the futures of the people who depend on them.

In 2019, Farm Africa began a forest-friendly business project in the Rift Valley with the aim of giving communities a financial incentive to protect the landscape.

Our expert teams are delivering training to smallholder farmers, cooperatives, and community groups in how to set up businesses selling non-timber forest products, such as honey, incense and fruit. Bee-keeping is one initiative that has certainly created a buzz!

The project has supported 434 farmers to use modern beehives and beekeeping practices, resulting in a threefold increase in honey production. And on average, households have seen a 75% increase in income.

Forty-three-year-old beekeeper Gebre Beshno used to use traditional beehives that each produced around 6kg of honey per season. After joining Farm Africa's project, Gebre started using improved beehives



and is now producing six times more honey than he was previously, averaging 36kg per season!

Farm Africa also helps farmers like Gebre build links to markets, so they can sell their produce for the best price.

Since the project started, deforestation has almost halved in the areas that Farm Africa is working in.

Although the road ahead is long, the success of this project goes to show change is possible, and that protecting forests really does pay off!



A gift of £29 could mean more farmers like Gebre receive a helping hand, which in turn helps the environment!

FARM AFRICA'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2021- 2025

Farm Africa has launched an ambitious new 2021 - 2025 strategy to increase our impact over the next five years! Our approach will continue to be based on three thematic pillars:



Agriculture

Farm Africa will support one million smallholder farmers and agro-pastoralists per year to increase their productivity, household incomes and resilience to shocks. We will boost livelihoods and increase farmers' participation in market systems, while exploring solutions that promote responsible environmental stewardship.



Market engagement

We will support at least 200 farmer groups, cooperatives and small and growing businesses to grow sustainably and support 12 private sector lead firms to transition to sustainable supply chains.



Environment

Farm Africa will implement integrated landscape management projects in all countries of operation, supporting the sustainable management of forests, rangelands and coastal ecosystems.

These three thematic pillars will be underpinned by five cross-cutting themes:

**Climate action • Gender equality
Youth employment • Resilience • Agri-tech**

We are so excited about our plans for the future! To discover more, go to:
www.farmafrica.org/strategy



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