

# FROM THE FIELD

## SPRING 2023



**FARM AFRICA**

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MEET DR DIANA ONYANGO

Diana is a qualified veterinary doctor with over 20 years of experience working in the Horn of Africa. That's why Farm Africa was delighted to welcome her on board to lead the Livestock for Livelihoods programme back in 2020. Since then, Dr Onyango has become one of Farm Africa's key technical experts, providing support to teams across the organisation.

### What does a typical day look like for you?

My work involves providing technical support to the project teams so I regularly hold regular meetings with them and work on various project documents and reports. I am also engaged in developing partner relations so I will also be holding meetings with various partners we are keen to collaborate with in various projects in the region.

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

Learning new things and expanding my knowledge. My background and education is in livestock and rangeland management but since joining Farm Africa I have learnt a lot about agriculture, especially climate-smart agriculture practices.

### What are your hopes for Farm Africa in the future?

I hope to see us expanding our work and increasing our projects so that we can engage with more communities in the region. With

this, Farm Africa will continue contributing significantly to the development of sustainable and resilient agriculture and livestock production systems across eastern Africa, improving the lives of millions of smallholder farmers.

### If you could share a message with Farm Africa supporters, what would it be?

I have a great appreciation for your support. Without you, we would not be able to achieve what Farm Africa has achieved over the years. Your continued support will allow us to reach many more farmers in Africa. I would also like to ask you to spread the word about Farm Africa's great work so that we can join hands with more people and make lasting change together.



## SAVING TIME WITH SAFE WATER IN BALE ECO-REGION

**Water shortages are a serious challenge in the Bale Eco-region of Ethiopia. Deforestation in the highlands and erratic rainfall are putting pressure on the area's already scarce water resources. It's common for families of seven people to get by on just five litres of water each day.**

This dire situation places a heavy load on the lives of women especially, as they are responsible for collecting water. Women often have to endure long and dangerous trips on foot to find a water source; some walk for as long as eight hours a day. And often the water sources they reach are unsafe for drinking.

Rabila and Deko are neighbours who told us about the struggles that women in their village face:

*"There were many incidents where pregnant mothers from our village gave birth on their trip to fetch water. Others were attacked by wild animals. We were fetching water from a river. The water is not clean. For this reason, our children*

*suffered from diarrhoea and abdominal cramps."* - Rabila

*"Going on foot while carrying water jerry cans on your back under a scorching sun or on a rainy day makes you desperate. It leaves you with no energy."* - Deko

Farm Africa knew something had to be done to support women like Rabila and Deko. So last year, with funding from the European Union and Jersey Overseas Aid, our teams began construction of three communal water ponds that provide easily accessible, and safe, water sources to 1,050 households.

*"Thanks to the project, now our women won't waste their time and energy in search of water,"* said Rabila. Agreeing with her neighbour, Deko said *"I am glad it will only take us five to 15 minutes to get water from the pond."*



**No one should have to face danger in order to meet their family's basic needs and thanks to your support, women like Rabila and Deko no longer have to!**

## FARMING MEANS FAMILY FOR THIS YOUNG KENYAN COUPLE

Like many other young Kenyans, David entered a depleted job market after graduating from college. Unable to find reliable work as an electrical technician, he decided to work with his wife, Joy, to pursue an alternative path... one that ended up being truly transformative.

*"After finishing my course, I looked for an alternative career because in my field the work is unreliable, but life must continue. So we began farming in 2018. We decided to be serious farmers," David explained.*

David and Joy began by planting maize, which is a staple crop in Kenya. But maize takes a long time to grow and produces small yields so the couple's harvests, and their incomes, were very small.

Farm Africa's Growing Futures project was designed to help people exactly like David and Joy. **Our staff know that with the right support, young people - who would otherwise face unemployment - can build thriving careers in agriculture.**

*"When Farm Africa came, they told us if we farmed other crops, especially French beans and spinach, we could earn a good income. These crops*

*are the major league; they are good because you can get a healthy harvest after just three months." - David*

Farm Africa helps ambitious young farmers to learn which vegetables are in high demand and fetch the best price at market. Our expert staff also provide agricultural support and helped David and Joy learn about which crops grow quickly and produce the highest yields.

By putting the knowledge they gained into practice, the couple was



able to transform their business:

*"French beans have made us proud. From the sale of the French beans we were able to make savings. This type of farming has got us somewhere in life. We have built a house and now we are comfortable. Farming has also improved our lifestyle because we have been able to gain food security. Because we have a lot of vegetables we have a balanced diet now."*

*"We've also been able to buy a sewing machine - Joy is a tailor and so when she has free time, she also earns an income from this."*

But for David and Joy, farming has changed their life in one more very special way...

*"We were without a child for five years. But because of this farming Joy was able to have some surgery that meant today...we are a family."*

We've said it before but David and Joy have proven it again; farming really can transform lives!



Just £28 could help more young families like David and Joy's to earn a good living from farming - one that matches their dreams of a better life together.

## £101,000 RAISED TO HELP END HUNGER AND GROW FARMING!

On behalf of everyone we work with, we would like to say a sincere thank you to our amazing supporters who have so far raised £101,000 in response to our winter appeal. Your generosity is helping farmers across eastern Africa to grow healthy harvests, no matter what.

Farmers in regions that were once considered the bread baskets of Kenya are struggling to produce enough food to feed growing populations. Nutrient deficient, over-cropped soil, and unpredictable weather patterns are making conditions extremely challenging for farming.

But Farm Africa's Regenerative Agriculture project, funded by the IKEA Foundation through AGRA, is supporting communities in northern Kenya to restore the nutrients in their soil, helping to increase their yields and improve food security across the region.

Justus is just one of the determined farmers who, with the support of Farm Africa, has boosted his production thanks to regenerative agriculture techniques:

*"Whatever the season, I always have food on my farm. Farm Africa has helped my family a lot. They taught me how to incorporate soil and water conservation techniques into my farming practice. They helped increase the yields on my*



*farm by bringing certified maize seeds and manure for the coffee plants. And now, I have been able to teach others too."* - Justus

A crucial part of Farm Africa's project is training farmers like Justus to become Village-Based Advisors, so farmers can learn from each other and pass on the regenerative agriculture techniques they've learnt to their communities - ensuring the impact of our work is as far reaching as possible.

**With the support of people like you, farmers like Justus are bridging the gap between demand and supply of essential food.** So thank you once again to everyone who gave a gift to help end hunger, and grow farming.

## IMPRESSIVE ARABICAS: VIRUNGA PRODUCES MILLION DOLLAR COFFEE

Despite extraordinary challenges, farmers in North Kivu, DR Congo, are producing some of eastern Africa's finest Arabica coffee. With Farm Africa's support, farmers here have boosted their production and gained access to international markets, putting the country on the coffee map!

In partnership with Virunga National Park and with funding from the European Union, Farm Africa is helping coffee growers living on the borders of the Park to increase the quality and quantity of their coffee and gain certifications needed to trade internationally. We support coffee cooperatives to refine each step of their coffee production process, from enhancing their agricultural practices, to improving their processing techniques.

Farm Africa also supports cooperatives with business planning and helps them gain access to financial services. Cooperative members learn how to negotiate contracts and how to market their produce.

Until recently, coffee from DR Congo was relatively unknown, but Virunga's farmers are now selling their coffee for premium prices in countries including Japan, Germany, France, Belgium, the USA and the UK. In one year, 404.4 tonnes of coffee was exported at a value of \$1.35 million!

Farmers in eastern DR Congo work in extremely difficult circumstances. Ongoing armed conflict makes the area highly insecure. And climate change is threatening the ecosystems of the Virunga National Park where the majority of the country's arabica coffee is grown. These combined factors mean growing and exporting coffee here is no mean feat. And that's why the success that they have achieved is all the more impressive!





# THANK YOU!

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