

NEWSLETTER – September 2010

Growth Has Great Challenges And Great Rewards!

The Latest Developments in Sudan's battle against hunger:

I have just returned from what I see as the most encouraging developments yet on the farms we are building in Sudan to feed the hungry.

The United Nations World Food Program announced, in February 2010, their dire predictions of the food crisis in southern Sudan. Sudan is the largest program of food aid for the World Food Program.

They estimate that close to 4 million people will need aid this year in Sudan alone! International support for such programs is withering. There is only one answer to the crisis: Develop production of food *WITHIN* Sudan to establish future food security. **And that's exactly what we are doing!**

As I looked at the vast fields we already have maturing, and contemplate the increased hundreds of acres our managers tell me will be growing next year, my heart leaps with joy. **Just look at this picture of maize alone! Hundreds of acres!**



Aerial view of the maize fields at Bori, September 2010.

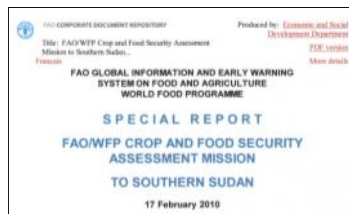
We have been sending truckloads of egg plant to Kajokeji nearby. Onions, beans and other vegetables are thriving.

When I told the team in Sudan that two newer bulldozers were now on the way, they had themselves a 'happy dance', grinning with anticipation. These two bulldozers will be able to clear six acres of bush a day each. That could be as much as 1,300 acres in the coming year. With 100,000 acres available, we have a great deal of work ahead of us (you and I).

The General Manager of the Savannah Farmers Cooperative pointed to distant hills and said, "This time next year, we will be planting up to that higher point!" He was pointing at hills five kilometres away; lush and fertile land which needs clearing before the ploughing can begin.



Eggplant for market



UN World Food Program Report on southern Sudan.

The increase in produce has forced us into some other developments for handling the crops before processing and distribution. I wish you had been able to stand with me and watch as thousands of egg plants were picked and loaded on our old seven tonne-Isuzu truck for shipment (our fourth truckload.)



Bori Mill under construction.

We are well on the way to building the first industrial grinding mill factory in southern Sudan. That is a \$200,000.00 project in itself. It has already been covered by a donation from one person. Praise the Lord!

We have to build at least six massive corn cribs for drying the maize. No longer can we hand carry it out of a warehouse to lay in the sun to dry. These cribs are essential. Cost? \$5000.00 USD each.

The closest repair facilities to Bori are over 500 km away. Being able to do repairs and maintenance on site is essential. We must construct a mechanical workshop to maintain and repair all our vehicles and machinery. It should hold at least four machines at any given time. It will cost us another \$42,000.00 (USA)



We need at least 6 cribs like this one to dry maize.



Guest house for farmers under construction at Bori.

We need to finish a "Guest House" which will make the living conditions for our volunteer farmers just a little more comfortable. One two room building is now finished, having used our new "block-making machine" which reduces our building costs by 35%.

Our volunteer on-the-spot right now is Rev. Gary Giles, preacher/farmer, on his second volunteer stint in Sudan at the Bori farm. Our last two volunteers came back with very valuable recommendations which we have implemented during a Board of Directors meeting of the Savannah Farmers Cooperative.



Rev. Gary Giles



Water drilling rig at Bori.

We have sent a water-well drilling rig which will be in operation by the time you read this letter. We have the potential to drill 100 wells over the coming many months. Clean water is an essential for the health of people who now get water from sometimes filthy sources. Each well will cost about \$5,000.00 USD.

One of our biggest on going challenges has been fuel. There is nowhere in southern Sudan to buy fuel in bulk. We have been buying fuel in Uganda at retail prices by the drum. These drums are often not very clean. We have had major equipment problems and failures that are directly traced back to contaminated fuel. We have just finished the installation of a 60,000 litre fuel tank for our diesel tractors, bulldozers and generators. The tank is paid for. Now we have to fill it at a cost of about \$60,000.00 USD. We will now be able to buy fuel directly from the refinery in Kenya. It will be cheaper and cleaner than the fuel supplied in the dirty drums. The decreased repair costs will be significant.



Making our own blocks for the buildings at Bori.

Success in the growth of produce brings its own pressures, most of which are temporary until we get all the buildings and processing facilities in place. When they are built, they will be able to handle an almost endless supply of newly grown raw produce.

One of the happier aspects of our project in Sudan is what we call our "Out-Growers" program. We help small farmers to increase the size of their fields and thus their crops and thus their standard of living. We will also guarantee to buy their produce and market it for them.



Margaret is one of many taking advantage of the Out-Grower program to increase her fields.

We have had requests from over 340 farmers (Out-Growers) to plough their enlarged fields which they have hand cleared. Others are also coming to us from many kilometres away. Thus far, only about 150 of them have been able to register with the Savannah Farmers Cooperative – and, unfortunately, we have been unable to plough for all of them, making some of them quite upset with us. Our inability to serve them all centres around one simple fact. Too many of our tractors have succumbed to the terribly rough conditions in Sudan. They can be repaired of course, but we need more highly qualified mechanics, and also the proper workshop in which the work can be done. We need volunteers to go, repair, teach and organize proper preventive maintenance.

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It's really impossible to express the great optimism I have for the future of the farms in Sudan. Bori Farm is well on the way, the next 2,000 acre farm will start as soon as the two bulldozers arrive on site in late November.



One of the farmers we helped who has over 10 tonnes of excess maize for sale!

Our Managing Director, Zamba Duku, estimates that in the next eighteen months our farms will be covering all the operational expenses including salaries, fuel, seed and maintenance etc. from the sales of produce. But that's down the road 1 1/2 years. It's difficult to believe we've come this far from nothing but poverty in a land stricken and starving, with no financial resources. Seven years from now . . .

Meanwhile, we are under a great deal of financial pressure to keep the other aspects of the farms developing fast enough to keep up with food production. Buildings, record systems, office furniture and equipment as well as transportation of the food are essential. When all that is in place, we will be at a place where we can start more rapid field expansion for increased food production without having to provide interim operational costs.



Cal and Zamba with one of the many farmers whose fields we are helping to enlarge.

In other words, now, more urgently than ever, we need your support.

"Behold, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and look at the fields, that they are white already to HARVEST."

Matthew 9:37-38

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