



PRESS RELEASE

Winners announced in scriptwriting competition on smallholder farmer innovation

Ottawa, Canada, Jan 25, 2010 – Congratulations to John Cheburet, a journalist from *The Organic Farmer*, a magazine and a radio show aired on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, who won first prize in an Africa-wide scriptwriting competition on smallholder farmer innovation. Fourteen other radio broadcasters and producers also won prizes for their entries.

In July 2009, radio professionals from across sub-Saharan Africa were invited to submit a radio script about an innovative smallholder farmer in their area. To help participants develop their scripts, they were encouraged to participate in a free two-month online training course on scriptwriting. Eighty-two entries were received from 20 countries across sub-Saharan Africa.

The first-prize winner impressed an international panel of judges with his script about an innovative Kenyan farmer who uses sawdust to lengthen the storage period of Irish potatoes. His prize is a study visit at the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy. This award is sponsored by FAO.

Lydia Ajono from the Ghana Community Radio Network won the award for the best entry by a community radio broadcaster for her script about a woman farmer who grows henna plants and sells them for processing into dyes and cosmetics. The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) will sponsor her trip to the AMARC 10 conference, to be held in Argentina in November 2010. Rosemary Nyaole-Kowuor from Shine FM in Kenya received the Marie Coulibaly Award for the top entry by a woman for her script on sack farming. Sack farming involves putting soil and composted materials into a plastic bag and growing vegetables in the “sack.” This is a very useful innovation for those without land. She will receive a certificate recognizing her achievement.

All 15 winners will receive high quality digital audio recorders. Winners will also work with Farm Radio International’s managing editor, using feedback received from contest judges, to improve and finalize their scripts. The 15 winning scripts will then be published in French and English and distributed by Farm Radio International to approximately 500 radio organizations across sub-Saharan Africa. They will then be transformed into a wide variety of programs and shared with a rural audience of millions of farmers.

The winners and script titles in alphabetical order by country are:

- Felix Houinsou, Benin – *Using weaver ants to protect fruit trees from pests*
- Issakou Yagui Assouma, Benin – *Crush the maize stalk to preserve the grains*
- Adama Zongo, Burkina Faso – *The pump mill*
- Lydia Ajono, Ghana – *The miracle local plant “zabila/lelle” or henna plant: The turning point for food security for a smallholder woman farmer in northern Ghana*

- Gabriel Adukpo, Ghana – *A farmer suffocates stem borers to death and saves his cocoa farm*
- Rosemond Ohene, Ghana – *A farmer protects his young oil palm seedlings from rodents with jatropa*
- John Cheburet, Kenya – *Sawdust prolongs the storage life of potatoes*
- Stanley Nyakwana Ongwae, Kenya – *Women re-invent hanging gardens technology to solve land crisis*
- Rosemary Nyaole-Kowuor, Kenya – *Sack farming: Unlimited vegetable harvest*
- Fredrick Mariwa, Kenya – *A local farmer in Kenya uses water hyacinth to produce chicken feed*
- Andrew Mahiyu, Malawi – *Innovative farmer uses animal dung to protect his crops by fending off hungry goats*
- Gladson Makowa, Malawi – *What fattens pigs is still a mystery*
- Lamine Togola, Mali – *Composting, the best practice for improving soil fertility: The case of Dien*
- Assétou Sidibe, Mali – *Scarecrows and cassette tapes protect rice fields from predatory birds*
- Lazarus Laiser, Tanzania – *Transforming bicycles into a vehicle of innovation*

Farm Radio International carried out the scriptwriting competition in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Donner Foundation, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), Inter Press Service (IPS) Africa, and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).

-30-

For more information about the competition and winners, contact:
 Blythe McKay, Development Communication Coordinator, Farm Radio International,
 bmckay@farmradio.org or 613-761-3652.