Upcoming Events

Farmers Helping Farmers Annual General Meeting 2012

The AGM of Farmers Helping Farmers will be held on June 11, 2012
Location: TBA

Farmers Helping Farmers Beef BBQ

Date: Saturday, August 11th
Time: 4:00 PM - 6:30 PM.
Place: Harrington Research Centre

This year promises to be a great one with Local Steak, potatoes, salads, rolls, vegetables and strawberry shortcake.

Tickets will be available from Farmers Helping Farmers members, or call Emily at (902) 393-8663 and leave a message.

Members: Please remember to bring two containers of crushed strawberries and two shortcakes.

We are always looking for volunteers to help out with the BBQ.
Please contact us at info@farmershelpingfarmers.ca if you are interested in volunteering.

The Village Feast

Date: Sunday, July 8th
Place: Eastern Kings Sportsplex Activity Field

The Village Feast was just featured on a Food Network Documentary hosted by Chef Michael Smith.

Tickets available by calling Harbour View Training Center, 902 687 3032.

Tickets are $39.00 each.
Ticket inquiries can be made at sourisvillagefeast@gmail.com

A portion of the proceeds will go to Farmers Helping Farmers to build a 5th cookhouse in Kenya.
Greetings from the Education Committee. It’s been a busy productive time for us. Six UPEI teachers; Shannon Hood; Jeff MacDermid, Ashley MacIntyre, Douglas Martin, Emily Murray and Amy Stark are reporting “amazing opportunities and experiences” as they complete their International teaching practicums at twin schools in Kenya. They are currently teaching at Ithanji, Tambaya & Matuto Primary Schools. Be sure to check out their blogs on our website.

We were pleased to receive generous donations from students at Lucy Maud Consolidated School and West Kent Schools. Thank you to Island teachers, Emily Tublin and Lydia MacKay for overseeing this fundraising. The UPEI teachers delivered these funds to Tambaya School as well as letters from all Island twin students. Its’ exciting times for children in both countries to give and receive letters.

The generosity of Island school children, The Rotary Club of Charlottetown Royalty, The Dunes Café, Church groups and Islanders who support our Christmas campaign continues to amaze us.

This year close to $30,000 has been sent to Kenyan Schools. These funds have been well spent on priority needs as identified by the schools. Some of these needs are classroom sets of books, library books, trunk storage for books, blackboard paint, latrines, a building for a cookhouse and water tanks with gutters for rainwater collection. We are proud to say that every twin school now has at least one water tank. The twinned schools are grateful for all gifts.

Dr. Rosemary Herbert, UPEI School of Nursing, visited Kenya during January 25 to February 10, 2012, and had carried out a health assessment of students at all twinned schools in Meru as well as the children of Muchui and Ruuju Women’s Groups. Among other things, it was noted that malaria is still an issue for children at the twin schools.

Based on her report we have decided to start a fundraising campaign to provide mosquito netting for all the children in the Meru Area. In total, a need for 1,500 malaria bed nets was identified, to meet the needs of newly twinned schools and of new primary enrolment at twinned schools which had received bed nets in past years. At a cost of $10, this would require total funding of $15,000. You will be hearing from Rosemary, Lloyd Dalziel and Emily Brown as they get set to organize this fundraising effort.

A big THANK YOU goes out to Carolyn Francis, who again this year will be travelling to Kenya at her own expense to visit all the twinning schools and check out new applicants. She will be travelling May 12th to the 30th. Her face to face interviews with the headmasters at the twinning schools keeps them and us well informed and is invaluable for the accountability and smooth sailing of school twinning in both countries. Carolyn will also check out some school gardens and help set the wheels in motion for a new cookhouse at Ithanji Primary.

Good luck Carolyn!
Submitted by: Margie Loo

The focus of my time in Kenya was to provide support for kitchen gardens and screenhouses in the Ruuju and Muchui Womens groups. The first two weeks were spent visiting as many shambas (farms) as possible, familiarizing myself with crops, disease and insect pressures, fertility issues, and watering strategies.

I did workshops with 120 women on soil fertility and crop rotations. There was a lot of interest and it will be of benefit for future production. However there will need to be followup done with the women as there were a number of new concepts and building soil fertility is not easy or quick.

Gikundi, (Muchui horticulturist) is a great asset to the Muchui Womens Group. He is committed to his work, and being from the Kirua area he has a deep understanding of the community. He also demonstrated a strong interest in learning and exploring new approaches to crop production and pest management.

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Horticulturists visit Women Groups

Health Assessments a Success

Submitted by: Charlie Van Kampen

My role during this trip was to inspect the green houses at the Muchui and Ruuju Women, evaluate and provide technical help suggestions for a better future. I have visited most of the green houses in both areas at various stages of production. The crop of choice here is invariably tomatoes. It provides the larger return for farmers. Structures here provide protection from rain and insects.

I spent considerable time with the horticulture extensionist in both areas. I have also met with local greenhouse product suppliers, discussing concerns and making plans. I gave three presentations to the women’s groups during this time.

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Dr. Rosemary Herbert at the Marinya-a-Ruibi Primary School

Submitted by: Dr. Rosemary Herbert

The focus of my visit to Kenya was to explore opportunities for senior UPEI nursing students to complete community clinical experiences in Kenyan schools and to conduct a preliminary assessment of children’s health needs. To accomplish these goals, I visited eight twinned schools in Meru and I held two focus groups with mothers of school-aged children.

I had the pleasure of visiting the following schools: Kiirua Girls Secondary, Kiirua Boys Secondary, Kamuketha, Kieni-Kia- Ndege, Ruuju, Marinya-a-Ruibi, Kinyenjere, and Ndunyu. During each visit, I interviewed the Head Master/Head Teacher, Deputy Head Master/Teacher, or twinning teacher about health concerns for their students.

I also conducted two focus groups with mothers. Ten women from the Muchui Women’s Group and eleven women from Ruuju Women’s Self-Help Group participated.

Farmers Helping Farmers has made a huge impact on children’s health. Everyone I spoke with at the Schools praised the work that has been accomplished.
“My belly is full, my families bellies are full and this week I got 2000 shillings from the vegetables I sold” one Muchui member told Ken when he visited her kitchen garden in February. She was very pleased with the vegetables she is producing in her kitchen garden growing in her screenhouse.

Vegetables are growing in the 70 screenhouses set up for 70 members of the Muchui Womens Group. They are growing kales, cabbage, onions, egg plant, spinach and tomatoes in the space covered by the screenhouse.

Each screenhouse is 250 square meters and is covered with bird netting to keep the birds from eating the vegetables. Each screenhouse has drip irrigation. The drip irrigation helps to even out the variation in weather. During the past year, this area has been through a drought. In November they had torrential rainfall.

Muchui horticulturist, Mr. Douglas Gikundi, provides horticultural advice and helps market the vegetables. We bought him a motorcycle so that he could visit more women each day to help with controlling pests and diseases.

Margie Loo worked with him during her visit there in January and, among other things, recommended that more water be applied to the screenhouses.

These screenhouses have been funded through a partnership with the Andreas Baur Foundation. The Foundation has recently agreed to fund another 11 screenhouses so that each of the 100 Muchui members will have a screenhouse or be a partner in a greenhouse.

**Muchui and Ruuju Womens Groups elect new Executive**

Grace Rukaria was elected the new Chairperson of the Muchui Group in December.

Jennifer Murogocho was elected as Patron.

Grace Kamaitha was elected as the Chairperson of the Ruuju Womens Group.

We wish to thank the outgoing Chairpersons, Jennifer Murogocho and Damaris Kiminya, for all their good work. And we look forward to working with both the new Chairpersons.
Seven greenhouses in Kiirua are producing tomatoes for sale. They are being sold in the community and at the markets in Kiirua and Meru.

Each greenhouse is owned by a team of four Muchui members. They share the work and each gets ¼ of the profit after setting aside ½ of the profits to buy more greenhouses.

Manly of the greenhouses located in the Marega area have bacterial wilt – a disease present in the soil.

When Charlie van Kampen visited the greenhouses in January, he recommended practices to manage the bacterial wilt.

These greenhouses were built with support from the Canadian International Development Agency under a project called: Improving food security and health for farm families in Kenya.

Seven more greenhouses will be built soon. They will be owned by 7 teams of four women who live in the greater Kiirua community. Their training will start soon.

Eight UPEI students to work in Kenya this summer

During late May eight UPEI students will leave for Kenya to work for 90 days on Farmers Helping Farmers projects. Seven students have funding from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Three students, Janet Gamble, Samantha Smith and Fergie Wallwin, are in the human nutrition program. They will be accompanied by UPEI nutrition professor, Dr. Jennifer Taylor, who will work with them to get them oriented on their nutrition work with the Muchui and Ruuju women and twinned schools.

One AVC vet student, Jennifer Huizen, will be traveling with Dr. Jeff Wichtel and Dr. Maureen Wichtel, both from AVC. She will be carrying out a research project on cattle nutrition with the dairy farmers of the Mukurwe-ini Wakulima Dairy Ltd. She will be joined by Morgan Findlay, a vet student from Saskatchewan whose funding comes from Vet Without Border.

Two nursing students, Christine Cassidy and Melanie Coffin, will be working from St. Theresa’s Hospital in Kiirua. Their work in the hospital will focus on maternal and child health. They will also teach the children at the twinned schools about hand washing and they will distribute malaria nets. They will be accompanied by UPEI Dean of Nursing, Dr. Kim Critchley.

This year for the first time, two UPEI Business students, Haley Beer and Janell MacDonald will work with the Muchui Business Centre to help work towards their financial sustainability. They will be accompanied by UPEI Business professor, Dr. Edward Gamble. Colleen Walton will also work with them.
Dairy Project Update

By: Ken Mellish

We went back to visit our Kenyan Dairy partners in February. These are always exciting visits with an opportunity to renew friendships and to meet new farmers.

John Vanleeuwen from AVC and three of his third year student had visited most of these dairies the week before. It was very interesting to hear them quoting “Dr John” on advice for cow care!

We do some seminars at these dairies to teach the farmers and also to update our Kenyan staff. We had good attendance with thirty five to one hundred and fifty farmers attending.

We hold these sessions at their farms where we can show practical things about cow feeding and care.

The most exciting thing about these sessions is when a farmer tells you that he or she has attended in earlier years and had benefited from something which was recommended earlier years.

Ken teaching at a seminar

Calf care needed a lot of improvement and we now are seeing better calves reared. Also, we are seeing cows giving more milk and families benefiting from the changes.

After we finished we put in place a program which will keep our Kenyan staff busy for the next year.

Membership Update

Membership renewals are now due on April 30th of each year.

This is to ensure consistency in the membership approval process and to have one renewal date for all members.

Membership is $20 Individual, or $30 for Family.

To renew your membership, please visit our website at www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca and click on 'Membership'.

It is now easy to renew online and pay online as well through Canadahelps.

You can still apply by mail as well by sending your application to:

Farmers Helping Farmers
P.O. Box 2623, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada C1A 8C3
The January 2012 trip was a very successful trip again. Over 600 farmers received health management information and/or treatment/prevention services from the vet team efforts. This visit, we worked with farmers of the Ex-Lewa Dairy Co-op, Muthiru Dairy Co-op, Mukindu Dairy Group, Podago Dairy Co-op, Gakindu Dairy Co-op, and Wakulima Dairy Ltd.

We left for Kenya with 5 suitcases of veterinary medicine. Prior to leaving, various veterinary pharmaceutical companies, including Pfizer, Merck, Boehringer, Vetoquinol, and Merial, again provided product support for the project. These products were greatly appreciated by our veterinary team to enable us to provide suitable treatments for the animals that we encountered.

The vet team included myself and Dr. Fabienne Uehling (another vet professor), and seven veterinary students (Marissa Steinberg, Russ Campbell, and Melanie Mallet from Kenya, and 2 sets of 2 Kenyan vet students at different times).

All of the students received practical experience on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of common animal diseases and dairy management problems encountered in East Africa.

They also learned a lot from each other socially and cross-culturally, as they lived together in the same house or hotel and shared meals and stories. It was inspiring to see the two groups of students work together on sick cow cases, and work together to answer questions from farmers during the seminars.

The students from the two countries have exchanged addresses, and have promised to keep in touch after graduation.

It is always wonderful to go to Kenya to work with the Kenyan people. They are so appreciative of what we offer, and such happy people, despite living in poverty. This attitude certainly helps us to put things in the right perspective, and to really appreciate what we have in Canada.
Congratulations to the 2011 winners:

Caitlin McCarthy
Florenceville, NB

Chef Emily Wells,
The Dunes Café

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Crops and Livestock Research Center

Harry Baglole

Have you nominated someone yet for a Farmers Helping Farmers Award?

The deadline is fast approaching for nominations: April 30th, 2012

It is that time of year again! Nominations are being accepted for the 2011 Farmers Helping Farmers Awards. The three categories include:

**Honorary Life Member:**
Recognizes members who have made an outstanding and substantial contribution to the organization and its purpose. They have inspired and encouraged others to be engaged, and have served as an example within the organization.

**Farmers Helping Farmers Youth Award:**
Recognizes individuals (25 years and younger) and youth groups (classrooms, 4-H, AY, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, etc.) who have made outstanding contributions to public awareness about Farmers Helping Farmers and its work in Kenya. The successful nominee will be recognized for their extraordinary spirit that makes their contribution an inspiration to others, and exemplifies citizenship and volunteerism.

**Friend of Farmers Helping Farmers Award:**
Recognizes individuals and businesses who are not members of Farmers Helping Farmers, but who have made a lasting and extending contribution to the association. Contributions may be in the form of financial or in-kind.

Nominate someone today!

**Deadline is April 30, 2012.**

Nomination forms can be found at:

[www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca](http://www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca)

or by calling 902-626-7856.

Farmers Helping Farmers Awards 2012

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Late last fall, I was very fortunate to have been selected to participate January 2012 team to Kenya in the role as project monitor.

Since becoming a member of Farmers Helping Farmers, and even before that, I was always very interested in what work was being done by FHF in Kenya. I would hear the presentations, visit the website and blogs, and listen to FHF members who had travelled there. But as it is so often when trying to imagine a far off place, it is only once you are there that you really begin to appreciate what you have heard about that place. What I experienced over the 3 weeks I would be there would serve as one of the most humbling experiences I will ever have.

FHF and CIDA constructed 63 maize cribs for each of the members of the Ruuju Women’s Group. I was asked to visit each crib over the period I was there, in addition to conducting a number of surveys to access what vegetables and field crops were being grown this season by the members. I left feeling very honored to be participating in this FHF team, as I would be repeatedly invited into member’s houses in Ruuju and Muchui for African tea, water, or mangoes.

My amazement would not only be the friendship and kindness of the women, but would continue be what FHF has been able to achieve with projects like the water tanks, kitchen gardens, screen houses, kitchen stoves, vegetable and crop diversification, and school cook houses.

Lloyd speaking with a member of the Muchui Women’s Group

These were the material things that I could see, and yes they were and are making a huge difference in the lives of the members and their families. Perhaps what is harder to see and is truly sustainable development, which will leave even longer impacts in the community, is the education and training that FHF are delivering with their projects.

Women in both groups have learned many new agricultural practices such as composting, crop rotation, seed spacing, and what a drought tolerant crop is. These are the skills and knowledge that will help feed and ultimately improve the lives of these families long into the future.

Again, I felt I was particular fortunate in my role to have also visited many of the schools in the twinning programs. It was a chance to see the school gardens, screen houses, cook houses and feeding programs. Assistance from the twinning programs are making incredible differences in these children, providing them with healthy food for proper growth and development, and a chance to go to school with proper facilities.

I would also have to comment on the professionalism and expertise demonstrated by Charlie, Margie, and Rosemary. It was a pleasure to watch them work both with their Kenyan counterparts and the women’s groups. The knowledge that they imparted to them during their stay, contributes to the sustainable knowledge development that I mentioned earlier.

I would also like to thank Teresa for all her hard work and patience and of course, all the FHF volunteers on PEI for making such a huge difference.
in the lives of so many so far away from our own homes.