Can you imagine if the world focused on hunger the way we have on COVID-19?

This pandemic is unprecedented and the damage inconceivable, but one thing is for sure, COVID-19 will also increase hunger for millions. Even before this crisis, every day 25,000 people worldwide—die of hunger, adding up to 9.1 million people dying every year!

We’ve been asked to STOP and stay home to stay safe. I hope that is exactly what you are doing. But what if we also START (and for you CONTINUE) to focus on holistic solutions that are proven to address the issues of hunger, disease, and poverty, including slowing or preventing infectious diseases like COVID-19.

In this Special Edition Quarterly Donor Newsletter, we share FARM STEW’s response, the response YOUR gifts have made possible, to this crisis. We pray that it may also be a blessing to you and your family and help you to have abundant life, even now in this painful time.

FIGHTING COVID-19 IN AFRICA!

You are doing a great job! by Daniel Ibanda, Team Leader, FARM STEW Iganga, Uganda

The greatest gift that God has given to the human race is His only begotten son Jesus Christ, who saved us from sin (John 3:16). This fact moves us as FARM STEW trainers to continue our work despite all the challenges brought on by COVID-19.

Even before the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Uganda, our trainers were sharing with the people guides about COVID-19, developed by FARM STEW International, which explains what it is, how it spreads, signs and symptoms, as well as preventive measures. We shared the guides and glued them on electric poles, people’s gates, and other public areas for people to read. Local business owners donated glue!

Of course, we trainers have covered ourselves with masks and gloves to prevent transmission. We are also calling our rural community contacts and trying to reach people through social media, such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Praise God; people are reading the information and are so encouraged by our calls.

“In such a time when everyone is surrounded by fear; we do not know what is next. We thank every person who is trying to help people and great thanks go out to the management of FARM STEW Iganga for the work they are doing to sensitize people about this pandemic COVID-19. You are doing a great job!”

Resident District Commissioner made this statement on Public Radio in Iganga, Uganda on April 2nd, 2020.
You Helped Water Flow Just In Time

God has poured showers of blessings on the people of Uganda through FARM STEW just in time. In January, FARM STEW trainers conducted community water surveys which revealed many of the existing wells are broken and people are walking long distances, up to 10km, to look for water. Often villagers are getting water from swamps and shallow wells, resulting in illnesses such as diarrhea, typhoid, and bilharzia. They end up spending a lot of money seeking medical attention, though earning very little.

It is against this backdrop that FARM STEW partnered with Freedom Drillers and Water4 to repair broken pumps and establish new wells. Six communities, including Wanyange, home of Norah who was featured in our December 2019 letter, are now very happy to have access to an abundant water supply.

Your gifts to FARM STEW that made this possible!

Our pre-COVID-19 plans for April included geological surveys, water-quality testing, drilling 7 new wells, and rehabilitating 6 old pumps. We have the funds for 6 of these projects (average price of $4,600) and are hoping for 38 more wells this year!

Although there will be COVID-19 delays, we would love your help to pour (literal) showers of blessings on more communities!

Please mark the donation slip: Water: Freedom from Disease & Drudgery.

Beets, Blood & Your Breath

By David Okoya, FARM STEW trainer in South Sudan

Sarah became so sick that she had to be carried to the health care unit in Oboo, South Sudan. She was diagnosed with malaria and anemia. Sarah was so weak she could not even sit up in bed. I met her there and advised her about hygiene and meals. I instructed her family how to pound beetroot in a mortar and make a juice from it that she could drink. I shared some from my garden.

After two days, Sarah was feeling better and able to walk. Soon Sarah asked a friend to help her travel to see the miracle plant that made her well. She visited my garden and asked for seeds, so that she could plant them at her home. I let Sarah pick some of my beetroots, and taught her about the value of the leaves too.

I also promised to give her some seeds once she recovers and has prepared her land for planting.

Why did beetroot help Sarah?

Beets and their leaves are rich in iron and many micronutrients. Also, they are a great source of nitrates—a compound that helps to dilate blood vessels which in turn, helps them move oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. That means better circulation, making every breath count, even yours!

In South Sudan, FARM STEW is working with 700 families. Most, like Sarah’s, don’t have garden tools. Will you help us buy $15 worth of farm tools for each family before planting season in late April with your designated gift today to “South Sudan Garden Tools.”
The humid afternoon air began to collect in the back of our van as we sped along the road passing through villages and fields of sugar cane. Our wheels bounced in and out of the omnipresent potholes, splashing the brilliantly red-colored clay onto the sides of our car.

We were traveling to Kalungami Village, one of our FARM STEW communities in Jinja, Uganda, to oversee the installation of a series of new wells and pumps. As we hastily made our way through the tropical countryside, we couldn’t help but notice the streams of uniformed children walking along the road beside endless fields of sugarcane. The young girls and boys, seemingly unphased by the high afternoon sun, beamed huge grins and excitedly waved to us as we passed by. Each of the children chewed sugar cane stalks as they walked, drinking the sticky juice that flowed out from its fibers.

It was lunchtime for the schools in the area, and the children were released to go home and eat before returning to their afternoon classes. I was told that if a child was seen running home, it meant that there was food to eat; but no one was running. All of them walked slowly along, indicating hunger at home.

Many Ugandan families have rented out their properties to sugar companies for a period of 5 to 10 years for a very minimal payment. The payment that is collected for the property is used long before the rental time is over. This poor decision leaves a household without any farmland to grow food or make an income, thus leaving children to scavenge to fill their stomachs.

In rural Africa, the ability to farm and provide from one’s own land is paramount. One of our roles as FARM STEW trainers is to educate communities on how to use their resources wisely. We teach communities how to efficiently operate their farmland to produce an overwhelming amount of produce to feed their families and sell the surplus at local markets.

Even if a family’s properties are sold off to sugar companies, with FARM STEW there is still hope! There is a wealth of wild greens and fruit that lay untouched around families’ homes. In addition, inexpensive grains and legumes can supply a family with adequate nutrition. FARM STEW teaches how to prepare these simple foods in delicious and tasty ways! If only we could reach all of the communities in this sugarcane-choked region!

We finally arrived at the FARM STEW Community and enjoyed a lunch hosted by a family. They were thrilled to show us the new well installation near their home. This small pocket of homes had begun putting the FARM STEW agricultural message into practice and even agreed to establish a Farmer Field School to train others in its community about the FARM STEW recipe for success. Touring their land, we came out into a wide-open patch of juxtaposed garden beds with rows of green and deep purple cabbages, carrots, lettuces, onions, and bell peppers. Nursery beds were full of bright green tomato plants, ready for transplanting.

Our Ugandan FARM STEW trainers showed these families a simple recipe for creating a life-giving bountiful garden. The children of these families will not be stunted by malnutrition and hunger. Our dream is that all children will run home from school on their lunch break to eat the life-giving fruit and vegetables of their parents’ gardens.
You Prepared Refugees!

When rumors of COVID-19 reached the refugee camps in Northern Uganda, FARM STEW trainers were ready. The local Baptist church pastor invited the FARM STEW Refugee Team to educate his members about the deadly disease. Previous classes on nutrition, sanitation and farming helped to prepare this group for the coming challenges. They say “Thanks!”

Young & Old Alike Can Share

Young and old alike can share the FARM STEW recipe of abundant life through gifts of time, talent and treasure. Youth are capturing a vision; from siblings who give offerings from their allowance to a six-year-old baker in Michigan, who sells bread and donates her profits. Students from Andrews, Southwestern Adventist, and Southern Adventist Universities have all engaged in meaningful ways. FARM STEW has a young volunteer serving in Zimbabwe and plans to send Wyatt back to Rwanda. A board member and his son, Edwin and Paul Dysinger, are teaching people gardening around the world through webinars at: www.bornntogrow.net. They donate a percentage to FARM STEW.

A few older folks have remembered FARM in their estate or legacy planning, assuring that the recipe will be passed on after they pass on. Whatever your age, we invite you to engage!

Your gifts can be sent to: P.O. Box 291 • Princeton, IL 61356
or give online at: www.farmstew.org

Unprecedented!

The word “unprecedented” now seems common as our planet is united in the fight against COVID-19. The challenges began in early January 2020 when locust swarms arrived in East Africa. The locusts are not making headlines now but their threat to the food supply is growing daily.

FARM STEW started 2020 with unprecedented hope and we continue to hope in the midst of these battles!

Your gifts in late 2019 made this quarter’s highlights possible. Together we:

• Trained 13,773 participants, now totaling over 90,000!
• Provided 2,400 people with clean water through 3 new and 3 rehabilitated wells.
• Hired 5 new FARM STEW trainers to work and live in the refugee camps in Uganda.
• Hired 2 new FARM STEW trainers to reach an additional 1,400 people in South Sudan.
• Certified 15 FARM STEW volunteers and 12 trainers in an intensive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene training.
• Advanced the April wages for our 30 African staff to buy food before banks closed and prices spiked up to 300%.
• Began contacting the 1,000 FARM STEW community leaders with telephone numbers so we can reach out even during lockdown.

We believe God was preparing us for the present challenges. FARM STEW has increased its commitment to providing safe water, farming and sanitation training in an effort to prevent the spread of not only COVID-19, but also the many other infectious and hunger related diseases that affect African communities.

Both locusts and COVID-19 make FARM STEW’s holistic and sustainable life-saving work more important than ever. Thank you for being part of our collective response through your generous gifts and prayers. I claim this promise for you!

“Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.” Psalm 41:1