



# GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

[www.brethren.org/gfi](http://www.brethren.org/gfi)

Fall 2020



## Ecuador: Welcome Matilda

**P**lans changed quickly for Fundacion Brethren y Unida (FBU – Brethren and United Foundation) with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. FBU’s board decided to pivot away from hosting secondary and university students, and towards increased production of native grains and fresh produce for families facing hunger in the community. FBU received a \$10,000 grant from the Church of the Brethren’s Emergency Disaster Fund to address short-term needs.

Alfredo Moreno, FBU’s executive director, challenged the board to think about the organization’s longer-term program possibilities. FBU enhanced its educational programs over the past three years with support from the GFI including the construction of two greenhouses. The farm operated by FBU also contains a small dairy herd. The board reached out to the GFI and received an \$11,000 grant for a two-fold proposal. Part one calls for the addition of two new dairy cows to the FBU herd. In late July, the first new Jersey cow, Matilda, was welcomed to the farm. Part two of the plan calls for the formation of a micro-company (like a cooperative) with young local farmers who are provided necessary tools and training for organic crop production.



---

Church of  
the Brethren  
1451 Dundee Ave.  
Elgin, IL 60120

800 323-8039,  
ext. 332.

Jeff Boshart,  
Editor

---

## Burundi: Farming Success

**T**he following excerpt is taken from a report sent to the GFI by David Niyonzima, executive director of Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS) in Burundi. THARS is in its fifth year of a GFI-supported project promoting a mulch-based farming system.

“I am happy to share a progress report on the project; we call it ‘Farming God’s Way.’ We had a festival in which we invited guests to hear the impact the project has made on the community. The event was covered by national television. Both the THARS staff and guests were impressed with the change that the program has made in lives of families involved in the project. Beneficiaries gave vivid testimonies that left the invitees moved and convinced that this is a program to spread in other parts of the country. We shared food that was brought by those who were part of the project. We had joyful moments of gratitude and praised God.”



## Haiti: Vegetable Seeds

**F**inding quality vegetable seeds in Haiti is just one challenge that Haitian farmers must confront each growing season. For farmers connected to Eglise des Freres d'Haiti (Church of the Brethren in Haiti) that might be changing. The GFI recently gave a grant for the purchase of vegetable seeds from Seed Programs International (SPI). A \$2,000 grant covered the purchase of 60 pounds of seeds of various varieties that will supply 100 farmers with quality seeds. Each year SPI receives donations of seeds from U.S. seed companies that it repackages and makes available at minimal cost to non-profit organizations working to alleviate hunger.

Eglises des Freres d'Haiti plans to sell the seeds at a small profit. Agronomists working for the church are hoping to open an agricultural supply store to serve farmers and help support the work of the church. To learn more about SPI go to <https://seedprograms.org>.



## Maryland: GraceWay International Community Church of the Brethren in Dundalk

**A**s a church planter, Yakubu Bakfwash faced many challenges when starting a new congregation in an older church building that had closed its doors. In 2017, with a desire to get to know the neighbors, he decided to dig up part of the church lawn and start a vegetable garden. Comments from passersby ranged from, "That will never work," to "You are doing it the wrong way." Pastor Yakubu, along with his wife and gardening partner, Diana, persisted with a little help from three small GFI grants. For three years they have

been planting, harvesting, and sharing their produce along with the good news of Jesus. Recent updates show that both the garden and the church are yielding much fruit. The congregation now hosts both a multi-cultural and a Spanish language service.

## USA: Hoop Houses (Kansas, Ohio, Maryland)

**I**n the past year, the GFI gave grants for hoop houses or high tunnels to three churches partnering with schools in their respective communities. Hoop houses are typically unheated greenhouses that allow for extended, if not year-round, growing seasons for vegetables. Osage Church of the Brethren in McCune, Kan., worked with various community groups to help construct and maintain a hoop house for the Project Alternative school that serves five local townships. Community of Joy Church of the Brethren in Salisbury, Md., helped construct a hoop house in conjunction with staff of Choices Academy. In Ohio, members of New Carlisle Church of the Brethren joined with community groups to complete a hoop house on land owned by the Tecumseh school district. Students and staff will engage in hands-on learning opportunities in these new structures once in-person learning resumes in each location.

