



GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

www.brethren.org/gfi

Summer 2021



South Sudan and Uganda: Two New GFI Partners

A grant of \$5,000 from the Global Food Initiative (GFI) was added to a \$24,500 allocation from the Emergency Disaster Fund to support agricultural development, trauma healing workshops, and emergency food distributions in South Sudan. GFI funds will go specifically to establish a demonstration orchard with fruit species including avocados, mangos, citrus, pineapples, bananas, pears, apples, and plums. Global Mission staff Athanasus Ungang

will work with an agronomist, Taban Patrick, to aid families and individuals facing acute food insecurity with both immediate relief and long-term development programming.

The Church of the Brethren in Uganda is the recipient of a \$5,000 grant for the purchase of a grain mill and a structure to house the unit. Ugandan Brethren leaders plan to train 500 participants in the production of maize flour products, offer micro-financing, seed, fertilizer, and marketing support. The mill will be available to non-program participants for a fee to help support other ministries of the church.



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Jeff Boshart,
Editor

Haiti: Vegetable Growing

Nurses and Agronomists working with the Church of the Brethren's Haiti Medical Project (HMP) are teaching women and youth to grow vegetables in a holistic approach to address health and hunger in Haiti. In rural villages, mothers of children two years old and under meet monthly with community health nurses to track the growth progress of their babies. Nutrition and cooking classes are provided during these consultations. In 2020, an agronomist working with HMP, Mirelande Antoine, used seeds donated by the GFI to begin kitchen gardens. Meanwhile, two other agronomists, Jean Bily Telfort and Adias Docteur, worked with youth and farmers to produce vegetables near the towns of Bombardopolis, St. Raphael, and Bohoc. The seeds were purchased at discount prices from Seed Programs International (<https://seedprograms.org/>) in Ashville, North Carolina, and shipped to Haiti with the help from members of Miami (Fla.) Haitian Church of the Brethren.



Jean Bily Telfort



Nigeria: Soybean Value Chain Update

The agriculture department of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria's Integrated Community Based Development Program (ICBDP) is now into its fourth year of promoting soybean as both a cash crop and protein-rich source for home consumption. Throughout the past two years, ICBDP staff trained and sent out 15 volunteer extension agents (VEAs) to farm both soybean and maize on demonstration fields spread across northeastern Nigeria. These VEAs (13 men, 2 women) are tasked with consulting for farmers in their villages. Their goal for 2021 is to reach over 4,000 new farmers. The GFI co-sponsored this project along with Brethren Disaster Ministries last year, but in 2021 will be the sole sponsor of this community outreach through a recent grant of \$15,000.

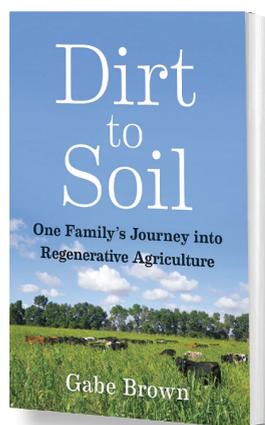
In 2020 travel was greatly restricted due to both insecurity from insurgents and COVID-19 regulations instituted by the Nigerian government. VEAs became resourceful and added virtual consulting to their work, utilizing cell phones and social media to provide advice to farmers instead of actual field visits in some cases. Yakubu Peter, ICBDP's executive director, reports that soybean prices remain high, rainfall amounts were adequate in 2020, and increasing numbers of farmers are producing soybean year over year. Trainings cancelled for 2020 will be rescheduled for 2021 if travel restrictions ease.



Dennis Thompson

Book Review: *Dirt to Soil* by Gabe Brown

When farmer/rancher/regenerative agriculture guru, and self-proclaimed "city boy" Gabe Brown married into a farming family, he had no idea what God had in store for his life. After four disastrous years of trying to farm the way his neighbors farmed in North Dakota, he began making radical changes. In his book, *Dirt to Soil: One Family's Journey into Regenerative Agriculture*, Brown invites the reader to think deeply about the connection between how we grow our food and our individual and societal health. His influences come from farmers across time such as the Hidatsa people of North Dakota, and across the world (Brazil, Africa, and Europe).



One of Brown's favorite quotes comes from Canadian rancher, Don Campbell: "If you want to make small changes, change the way you do things. If you want to make major changes, change the way you see things." On Brown's ranch, it's all about the carbon, and what goes on below the soil surface is even more important than what goes on above it. Pulling from soil science and biology, the book makes the case for the power of regenerative agricultural practices to combat climate change through carbon sequestration, however the book's greatest contribution may be in showing how these practices can be profitable and good for the environment at the same time.

Above all, Brown is a keen observer, and he believes much can be learned by paying attention to God's creation. He writes as a practitioner and ventures a few theological reflections along the way. Throughout the book, Brown shifts easily from farmer philosopher to mundane musings on soil and animal management practices, providing something for readers of wide-ranging experiences.

