

Serving in His Love

May 2019

In early February I had the pleasure of attending the 5th Biennial Symposium on Sustainable Agriculture & Appropriate Technologies presented by ECHO East Africa. It was a three-day symposium covering a wide range of agricultural topics including the basics of conservation agriculture, incorporating Bible study into agriculture work, using farm radio programming to disseminate information, research reports, various approaches to stimulate farmer ownership of new methods, and much more. Since I have a research and development sort of mind and personality, I found the talk on developing evidence-based local knowledge intriguing.



Developing evidence-based local knowledge amounts to local farmers developing experiments to test local methods, which are often very deeply entrenched traditions, and which may or may not be valid. The main points that I took away were the importance of having a valid control, keeping good records, and coordinating experiments among farmers. The attendees at this talk were divided into groups which were charged with formulating a test to see how traditional crop residues compared to newly introduced forage grasses as a goat ration. We had to minimize variables like gender, age, stage of lactation, availability of water, type of housing, internal & external parasite load, and nutritional supplements given. Our group assignment included developing a form to record observations. It was fun! I look forward to sharing this approach with Tanzanian farmers.

One of the biggest benefits of attending such a symposium is the networking that takes place. Meeting and sharing experiences and ideas with other people having similar goals and similar challenges is edifying. At this symposium, there were two other women veterinarians who are serving through Christian Veterinary Mission in Africa! It was great to have our own little mini-reunion!

In March I was able to return to the States to meet my then six-month-old granddaughter for the first time and reconnect with other family and friends. Of course, Becca Ann Maxwell is adorable! It was a quick trip, full of visits with people dear to me. It didn't take me long to realize that there was no way to visit everyone that I would have liked to visit. If I didn't get you squeezed into my itinerary, know that I would have been delighted to visit you, too. There simply was not enough time!

My ongoing prayer requests:

- That God will guide the ministry of Food for His Children
- That more of the goat recipients will apply the things that they have learned
- That God will be glorified through FFHC and my work here

Thank you for supporting with me in prayer as I serve “on the ground”, in His love!

Margaret

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