



**SC-IDEAL-MG-RFA-2019-01: “Using podcasts as part of a collaborative learning approach to bring about social behaviour change within the farming communities of Karamoja - a pilot study”**

## **Podcast Scripts – English**

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*These podcasts were made possible by a grant from The Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Activity. The IDEAL Small Grants Program is made possible by the generous support and contribution of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of the materials produced through the IDEAL Small Grants Program do not necessarily reflect the views of IDEAL, USAID, or the United States Government.*

## **PODCAST SCRIPTS**

**Notes:** Each podcast is based on the story of a farmer, Betty/Lucia, who is beginning to use farm recording on her farm. The podcasts follow her as she discusses her progress and the impact the recording has had on her enterprise, with an extension officer, who also gives out specific key information to assist farmers in record keeping.

As the podcasts are scripted, it is anticipated that actors will provide the voices of Betty /Lucia and the extension officer.

There are 4 podcasts in total, approx. 10 minutes each in length.

The podcasts will be played during **listening sessions**. These sessions should be facilitated by an experienced field officer, or “trainer”.

Each session shall be divided into sections. At the end of each section, the podcast will be paused for demonstration/discussion, led by the trainer. Sections can be replayed if required.

The trainer will be provided with a trainer manual, which describes the structure of the listening sessions; the content of the podcasts; and provides advice and ideas for the demonstration/discussion slots. Farmers will be provided with simple farm recording books for their records; and illustrated key information sheets to aid revision.

### **Podcast 1 - Why do we need to record?**

#### ***Narrator:***

Welcome to the AgriTechTalk podcast on farm recording. This is the first in a series of four podcasts about farm recording and how it can be used effectively, by even small-scale farmers, to help manage their farms better. Farm recording means keeping a record of daily **activities** on your farm. These may include buying seed, preparing land for planting sowing seeds or selling produce, as well as many other activities.

When these activities are recorded in an organised way, normally in note books, at the end of the season these records can help you understand how will your farming year has gone, and plan for the next season.

On your farm you may grow different types of crops and keep different types of livestock. Each of these is called an **enterprise**. You may have several different enterprises on your farm, for example, goats, sheep, sorghum, maize and so on.

Farmers who are starting up with farm recording may just note down the activities for each of their farm's enterprises in small note books. As they develop their farm recording skills over time, they will be able calculate their profits using "**gross margins**". Gross margins show how much money an enterprise has made or lost. An enterprise that earns more money than it cost to produce has made a "**profit**"; but an enterprise that has earned less money than it cost to produce has made a "**loss**".

This series of podcasts has been prepared to guide any farmer who is new to farm recording to be able to do it.

Joseph, our friendly extension officer, will help you learn how to keep farm records. So let me hand it over to him to guide you through the process.....

### ***Extension Officer:***

Hello, I am Joseph, an extension officer, and I have recently been working with farmers to help them develop their farm recording skills. I hope you will find this useful. Farmers who are already recording find it very helpful in keeping track of everything they do, so they can plan better for their future.

Some of the farmers I have worked with are confident in writing and carrying out calculations. Other farmers I have worked with are not able to write or do calculations - but they are using a simple recording system with symbols instead of writing; and tallies instead of numbers.

So, as you can see, farm recording can be used by all farmers. I have with me one of the farmers I am working with. Betty is starting up on farm recording. She is going to share her story of how she is progressing during the podcasts.

Betty – please tell us a bit about yourself.

### ***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Well, I live in a Manyatta in Katikekile sub county. I am married and have two small children. We farm about one acre and grow maize and vegetables. Most of what we grow we eat, but we also sell some produce to get money for other things. We also have some goats and chickens.

### ***Extension Officer:***

Why have you started farm recording?

### ***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Last year I heard about farm recording from a friend. She told me how it can help me understand our farm's progress over time, helping with decision making, which sounds useful. So this year I started noting down whatever we do on our

farm, such as how much time and money we spent on preparing and sowing our land. But, my records are not very organised!

***Extension Officer:***

I will help you organise your records better during the coming podcasts. But it is great that you have made a start!

I know that a lot of farmers are always very busy and it is easy to ignore farm recording. Ideally farm recording is something which would be done every day, or several times a week, and could become part of your daily or weekly routine - but I know how lots of things can get in the way.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

That's very true. My days are always very full as it is! I am very busy - tending the crops, while looking after my children. And then I take some of the produce, like eggs and milk to market. I also make skirts to sell, so that takes a lot of my time, as well as all the cooking and cleaning.

But I try to make room for the farm recording as I know it will be good to understand how my enterprises have done financially, without having to remember the figures. I have got better at remembering to record now too – it is now part of my weekly routine.

***Extension Officer:***

That's very good.

I have met some farmers who started to record and then felt they didn't have any support or training when they wanted to ask questions or had doubts about things. Hopefully I can give you the support you need to keep good farm records.

Also, in many households where farm recording is used, the husband does most of the farm recording, but does not have time to record everything, or does not have information on activities that his wife has been carrying out. But many of the women I have worked with would like to share the role of farm recording with their husbands. Working as a team in this way leads to much better quality records which are therefore of more use in farm planning.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

That is a good idea. Working as a team will be very helpful.

***Extension Officer:***

Going back to something you said earlier – that your records are not organised. Let's talk more about how you can organise your records better:

We talked before about enterprises having activities. These activities can be separated into **inputs** and **outputs**:

**Inputs**, or **expenses** are anything which has cost money or time from the enterprise, such as buying seed, paying somebody to plough your land, the cost of fertiliser, livestock medicines and so on....Because these costs change according to the scale of the enterprise (such as how many hens are kept; or how much land used to grow a maize crop) they are called **variable costs**.

**Outputs** mean what is produced by that enterprise.

*Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)*

That would include maize cobs, grain, milk, eggs, calves and so on?

*Extension Officer:*

That's right Betty.

Now, there are other sorts of activities which may cover the whole farm, like rent, machinery, buildings, or equipment for storage, like granaries. Unlike variable costs, these are **fixed costs** and need to be paid no matter what enterprises the farm is involved with. For, example, rent for land may need to be paid whether or not the farmer uses part or all of it, and will be the same if the farmer keeps chickens, goats, grows maize or so on. Because these fixed costs are not connected to a single enterprise, they should be recorded in a separate book which is used just for these "fixed costs".

Let's start with your maize crop enterprise Betty. What sort of activities do you have going on with this at the moment?

*Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)*

Well, because we are getting ready for harvest, we are buying sacks for our maize. We also recently paid for some fertiliser for that maize.

*Extension Officer:*

How about earlier in the year? Did you buy maize seed for example?

*Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)*

Oh yes! I wrote this information down. We bought seed with the money we got from selling our produce last year. We also had to pay someone to plough the field, so that cost quite a lot. I have also done lots of weeding myself.

***Extension Officer:***

So these are all inputs - activities which have cost you time or money to grow your maize. As you have not harvested your grain yet, you won't know about your maize outputs for this year yet.

But what about your livestock? How are these going? Have they been earning you any money this year?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Yes - I have sold lots of eggs and some milk. I go to the market most days to sell them, along with the vegetables we have been growing.

***Extension Officer:***

Well it sounds as if you have lots of activities to record for your different enterprises.....

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

And I have been writing some of it down. But as I said it is hard to keep organised!

***Extension Officer:***

You might want to try writing it down in a notebook so that all of your records are in one place and harder to lose. Writing your information in a notebook also means that they will be in sequence. This means that you can study your records month by month, and see how your farm is performing over time.

When recording your activities it is also good practice to keep the records for each of these enterprises separate, making it easier to organise them and compare records later on. So, ideally, you need a notebook for each enterprise. Or if this seems expensive you can have different sections of a thick notebook for each enterprise.

For example, you keep chickens and goats, as well as vegetables and maize. These are different enterprises, so you will need four notebooks or one thick notebook. Will you be able to get those?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Yes I think so.

***Extension Officer:***

You will also divide your notebooks by time, so that you can compare them over different growing seasons in the future. Because you start clearing land for

sowing maize in February/March, this is the time to start your records for your maize crop. Then you can start another set of records for your maize the following February/March.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

This seems like a lot to do! Will it really be helpful?

***Extension Officer:***

It does sound like a lot of work but it really only takes ten or fifteen minutes a day and you will get faster at it. As we talked earlier it can be easier if you and your husband both record. And yes it will be helpful! As your records develop, you'll be able to see which years had the best results, and if you think these results have been helped by certain decisions you made – such as if using more fertiliser helped produce a higher yield.

By the way, lots of farmers I speak to do record some activities, but not all of them. It is best to record all activities for each enterprise. Then you will have the best information for future decisions. Betty, I think you are doing very well so far. Please continue to write down any information on inputs and outputs. Let's talk again soon and I will show you how to record all of your activities effectively.

***Narrator:***

Joseph and Betty will be back in our second podcast from Agri-TechTalk.

The role of Joseph was played by .....

The role of Betty was played by .....

And my name, the narrator, is .....

Thanks for listening. We hope you have enjoyed this podcast.

The podcast material was developed by AgriTechTalk International and AgriTechTalk Africa, with technical support from Farm Radio International. Ateker FM also provided technical support; and translated and recorded the podcasts.

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Or..... you can search online for Farm Radio International's Barza Wire service. Its resource section will link you to our podcasts and supporting materials.

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## **Podcast 2 -First steps to farm recording and farm recording books.**

### ***Narrator:***

Welcome to the AgriTech Talk podcast on farm recording. This is the second in a series of four podcasts about farm recording and how it can be used effectively, by even small-scale farmers, to help manage their farms better.

In the first podcast we met Joseph, an extension officer, and Betty, a small-holder farmer. Joseph explained to Betty about why farm recording is important. They talked about how farms often have different enterprises and that these use inputs – activities which cost time or money – and produce outputs. In this podcast we'll look at how these inputs and outputs can best be recorded.

Joseph and Betty are back to continue their conversation. Let's listen in.....

### ***Extension Officer:***

Hello Betty. Good to see you! I see you have kindly brought along your papers, where you have written about this year's activities on your farm.

### ***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Hello Joseph. Yes I brought them along but I am afraid they are all mixed up in a long list. I plan on doing what you told me last time, to separate records into four new recording books.

### ***Extension Officer:***

Good for you Betty. That's excellent!

How are you feeling about getting started with your new record books?



***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I am looking forward to starting up an organised recording system!

***Extension Officer:***

Great! Let's get you started. Now, there are different things to think about when setting up your farm recording book.

Firstly, you need to decide the way you want to record your information. You must choose a method that suits you. Some farmers may use symbols to represent their different activities. For example they may draw a can for a can of maize they sold, or a square for a sack of grain. Other farmers may write down what they have sold.

Also, if you are not confident in writing and adding numbers, you can use tallies instead of numbers. Tallies are where you record numbers by drawing lines in groups of five – four vertical lines with one drawn across.

If you are selling lots of produce at a market you could even put tokens or stones in a pot for each item sold, then count and record this number in your record book later.

Some farmers use a combination of numbers, tallies, words and symbols. Any system is fine, as long as it allows you to record all your inputs and outputs for each of your enterprises. What's important is that the method works for **you**.

Of course, you may change your way of recording as time progresses and you learn new skills. Adapting and improving the way you record is fine.

Now, I see that in your old notes Betty, you have drawn symbols as well as numbers

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Yes. I am not good at writing – so I have been making up simple symbols when recording my different activities. For example, I draw a bag to represent chicken feed; an egg to record sales of eggs; cups to record sales of goat milk; some dots to represent seed and so on. The symbols suit the activities so I don't forget them!

I can write numbers though.

***Extension Officer:***

That sounds good. You can carry on using your symbols and writing numbers in your new notebooks.

Let's now decide how detailed your records should be.

What have you been writing down in your old book?

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

I have been writing down the items I have bought or sold, as well as how many and the total amount they cost me, or the amount I sold them for.

**Extension Officer:**

That is excellent. We can use all this information in setting up your new record books.

Before we start doing this, it is also important to separate the inputs from the outputs for each enterprise. A simple way to do this is to record the inputs on one page; and the outputs on the opposite page.

Let's set up your notebook for your chickens.

Open it so that you have two clean pages to write on in front of you. You are going to write information about your inputs on the left; and about your outputs on the right.

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

Would it help if I divided up the page into sections or columns?

**Extension Officer:**

Absolutely! Draw lines from the top to the bottom of each page. The number of columns depends on how detailed your records are.

You will need four columns on each page Betty... like this.

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

Oh I see. The lines create the columns.

**Extension Officer:**

Right, so, let's start by entering your inputs into your new notebook. I shall take you through what you write in each column one by one.

Firstly, at the top of your page, write down the time period that the figures are for. We normally work in months. You started your chicken records in January, so write this month, and the year, at the top. Leave a gap at the bottom of each month - you will need this later.

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

OK. Let me do that.

***Extension Officer:***

Well done Betty

Now, underneath this, in the first column, you need to record your inputs. Remember that the input costs (which are called variable costs) don't include fixed costs which would occur whether or not the enterprise existed.

I can see your symbol for chicken feed which is a bag.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Yes – a 5kg bag.

***Extension Officer:***

OK, so draw the bag symbol in your first column; and let's write a 5kg on it too, so that you have this information in future.

In the second column, let's write down the price of one bag of feed– that is 5,000 shillings.

Now, in the third column, write down the number of bags you bought (that's 2);

Last of all, in the fourth, column write down the total amount you spent on the grain (that's 10,000 shillings).

I see you have more records on chicken feed lower down your list. Let's enter these too.....

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

So column one will have the chicken feed symbol. Column two is the price I paid for each bag. The third column is the number of bags I bought; and the last column has the total price I paid.

I can see how recording items in columns will help to keep the data organised and easier to read.

***Extension Officer:***

Yes it is helpful - also if you want to show your records to your family or friends it will be easier to follow and understand.

Ok, so I also see that you bought 4 young hens at the market last week for 5,000 shillings each. Write these down underneath the last entry for chicken feed. What symbol are you going to use for a hen?!

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I will use a simple chicken shape

***Extension Officer:***

That works well and you will remember what it means. When you are choosing symbols it is important to choose symbols that you will remember!

So, draw the hen in the first column. Now, in the second column record the price you paid for each hen, that's 5,000 shillings.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

And in the third, the quantity of hens I bought, which is 4. And finally, in the fourth column I'll write down the total amount I paid for the hens, that's 20,000 shillings.

That already looks much more organised than my old records.

***Extension Officer:***

Any more inputs to add Betty?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

No, but my hens have produced a lot of eggs –especially since I bought the extra hens!

***Extension Officer:***

So those are outputs. Looking at your old notebook, I can see that you have been keeping a record of the number of eggs your hens produced, as well as how many you sold at the market and how much you sold them for. That is really good.

So this has to be written on the opposite page, under outputs.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I'll divide this page into four columns as well.

***Extension Officer:***

Right. The first column for the activity, or type of produce; the second for the value that each item was worth; the third for the number that were produced; and the fourth, final column for the total value of the output produced.

So let's add in the eggs you produced...

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

OK. In the first week of January my hens produced 7 eggs and I sold these at the market for 500 shillings each and earned 3,500 shillings from them.

***Extension Officer:***

So, in the first column of the outputs page (on the page opposite where you wrote down your chicken inputs), at the top, write in your symbol for an egg. Now, in the second column, record the value of each egg. You said you sold these for 500 shillings each. Now, in the third column, record the number of eggs, which is 7. Finally, in the fourth column, write down the total you earned from selling these eggs, that's 3,500 shillings.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Shall I enter the information for the other weeks of January beneath this at home?

***Extension Officer:***

Yes, that would be excellent.

Next time we meet we are going to learn about how it is important to record everything you produce, not just what you sell. But for now, let's look at your other enterprises, before we run out of time....

Let's look at your maize. Do you feel ready to talk me through the steps?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Yes! Here is my new maize notebook. So.... I'll write the month that activity started, February, at the top. I'll use the left side page for inputs and the right side page for outputs. I will draw 4 columns each side.

***Extension Officer:***

Great

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I purchased 2 packets of maize seed in February, each weighing 1 kg. These cost 4,000 shillings each. So I'll draw my symbol for seed in column 1. That is a bag with some dots. I shall write 1 kg onto it too.

In the next column I shall record the price I paid for each bag, that's 4,000 shillings. Then I record the number I bought, that's 2. Finally, in the last column, I shall write the total cost of the seed, 8,000 shillings.

Underneath this I'll write in the fertiliser I bought in March. I can't remember how many containers of DAP and Urea I bought, just that I spent a total of 30,000 shillings.

***Extension Officer:***

That's OK. Just draw your symbols, then the total you spent in the last column. You can leave the second and third columns blank if you need to.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

OK, so here is my symbol for fertiliser- a triangle - and then I write in the total I paid, that's 30,000 shillings.

***Extension Officer:***

That's really good. You will not have anything to write in your maize outputs yet, as you have not yet harvested.

Are you happy to write the entries for your goats and vegetables in the other notebooks on your own?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Yes I am!

***Extension Officer:***

Great. You now have the skills you need to start recording and can organise your records in different books. Remember, one for each of your enterprises, with the inputs and the outputs separated.

This will allow you to compare your inputs and outputs for your chickens, goats, maize and vegetable garden.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

So is that all I need to write down?

***Extension Officer:***

Over time, you may want to add more detail into your records, such as where you bought your inputs; what the price of a single bag of seed was; how you sowed your seed; and even information about the weather. But for now it's best if we keep things simple. But do remember to record all of your activities.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Joseph, this has been so helpful. I can't wait to show my husband. And I think I will show my sister as well. It would really help her and her husband on their farm.

***Extension Officer:***

Please do pass this on. It is a great skill for every farmer to have. See you next time Betty.

***Narrator:***

In the next podcast Joseph and Betty will look at some other inputs and outputs, as well as shared activities on the farm.

They will also look at weekly and monthly totals and what these totals can tell us about our farm inputs and outputs.

The role of Joseph was played by .....

The role of Betty was played by .....

And my name, the narrator, is .....

Thanks for listening.

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## Podcast 3 - Making sense of farm recording books

### *Narrator:*

Welcome back to the AgriTechTalk farm recording podcasts. This is the third podcast in a series of four. In the previous podcasts we have looked at why farm recording is important and at the different inputs and outputs that should be recorded in a simple recording system.

In this podcast we will look at:

Firstly, how to record the value of what your enterprise has produced in more detail.

Then we'll look at how to enter the cost of labour into your inputs.

And lastly, we'll look at dealing with inputs that are shared by different enterprises.

To do this we once again join Joseph, an extension officer, and Betty, who is a small-holder farmer.

### *Extension Officer:*

Hello Betty. Very nice to see you again.

Do you want to tell us how you are getting on with your recording? Looking at your records, you seem to be managing to record your farm activities nicely.

### *Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)*

Hello Joseph. Yes I think so. I try to record when I come home from the market or when I come in from the field. That way I remember it, otherwise it is easy to forget with everything else going on.

### *Extension Officer:*

I know what you mean. Life can be quite hectic.

### *Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)*

I am still using a book for each of my enterprises, just like you suggested last time. In each I have one page for inputs and one page for outputs; using the left hand page for inputs and the right hand page for outputs; and I separate these by month.

As the season progresses I am recording new things and so I'm having to think up new symbols, so that when I look back I know what the activity was. My husband and children help me come up with ideas.



My sister and several of my friends have also started recording so we compare records and can learn from each other. I have been helping them to get started.

***Extension Officer:***

That sounds good. I am glad you are helping each other.

Have you had any problems or worries about your farm recording?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Well, I was wondering how to record the value of the eggs that I produce but do not sell, because we have eaten them.... For example, this week we produced 10 eggs. We ate four of them and sold six of them for 500 shillings each.

***Extension Officer:***

That is what I wanted to talk about – that is, how to record the value of **all** your outputs.

If you had not eaten those four eggs at home, you would have needed to buy eggs from someone else. Similarly, if you grew some grain and put some of it into storage to eat later, this would save you buying grain later on. This means that you need to include the value of all your produce, not just what is actually sold.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Putting a value on some of our produce may be difficult I think.

***Extension Officer:***

When giving your products a value, try to ensure that it's of similar quality to what you're basing its value on, otherwise you may be under valuing or over valuing your produce, which will reduce the accuracy of your farm records. The value could be based on similar produce you have bought or sold that day, or the value of produce for sale at the market.

So, looking at your eggs again. You should record the value of each egg you ate at the same as the price you sold an egg for.

You can also add on a symbol for whether the produce was sold, eaten, stored or given away, so that you can make comparisons between these quantities and values in the future.

So, for your egg records, draw your symbol for eggs, enter the price you sold each egg for; then add the number of eggs; and finally the total value of the eggs. Do the same for the eggs you ate underneath.

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

I find it hard making some of those calculations Joseph.

**Extension Officer:**

Do not get concerned if you are faced with calculations you're not confident in carrying out. For example, if you are unsure about how to work out the total value of the four eggs you ate, see if you can find a family member, community officer, extension officer or VSLA group to help you. Do not let the worry of not being able to do these calculations put you off farm recording, as even without these totals, you will still be able compare your activities and what they produced.

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

How about if the produce is damaged and so cannot be sold? For example, a lot of the eggs we eat are those which were broken.

**Extension Officer:**

You can record these also, as you would have needed to buy them somewhere else if you did not produce them.

Don't forget that you should also record any milk or any vegetables or maize that are eaten or given away. And also any produce you have in store.

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

I will try to remember!

**Extension Officer:**

So let's talk about labour costs. Have you been recording the cost of labour Betty?

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

Well, I paid a friend 5,000 shillings for helping me prepare my maize field for planting for a day. I entered this as an input. Otherwise it is all my own labour so I didn't record that.

**Extension Officer:**

But, if you could earn money for that time doing something else, you **should** include a value for your time.

For example you told me you also make skirts. So the time you spend on the farm could be spent making skirts.

**Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)**

Yes that's true! My time is valuable isn't it?

***Extension Officer:***

It certainly is. But if you don't know what value to put down for your own labour, you could still note down the hours you spend working on each enterprise. Over time, you might decide to include a value for your labour, as this can help you understand the efficiency of your different enterprises. Knowing which of the farm activities is taking most time is a useful indicator for some farmers.

Here is something important Betty. The key consideration with labour is that you should be **consistent**. If unpaid labour has not been recorded for several months then do not suddenly start recording it for the rest of the season – wait until the next season. Likewise if you do want to record a value for your labour, make sure you include it for all of the relevant activities.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Do other farmers forget to include the value of their labour?

***Extension Officer:***

Many farmers feel they do not need to include labour for themselves, or unpaid labour from their family. They only include labour that they have paid for. That is their decision and it is fine as long as they are consistent.

Another question some farmers ask is how to record outputs and inputs if they are shared between different enterprises.

For example if a farmer has a field of maize and a field of sorghum, they may pay someone for a day to plough their fields. This may include both fields.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

That sounds like a difficult calculation to record.

***Extension Officer:***

Here's how to do it. To record this activity as accurately as possible you need to divide the cost of the activity between the two enterprises. In this case, this is done by estimating how much time was spent on each of the enterprises.

It may be that the fields are the same size and took the same time to plough, so the cost could be divided equally. However, if the sorghum field was much larger than the maize field, an estimate maybe needed to divide the cost.

Do you have any shared costs Betty?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

We do have to spend money repairing the fencing for our chicken run and vegetable garden – this cost about 100,000 shillings last year.

***Extension Officer:***

So you could split the fencing costs between your chicken and vegetable enterprises – that is, 50,000 shillings each. Your figures do not have to be exact, a good estimate will do.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I understand.

***Extension Officer:***

Now, we have talked about all the inputs and outputs that are included in your farm records. Remember that these are being kept so that total costs and outputs can be compared over time. To do this, you have to **add up** all your costs and inputs values for the period of time you're looking at, so this does of course involve some calculations.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

My neighbour is very good at that. She can help me. I can help her with other parts of recording.

***Extension Officer:***

Very smart, Betty. You know by keeping your farm records on a **monthly** basis, you can compare monthly inputs and outputs through the year, as well as for the same month over different years. Or you might just want to compare your records on a yearly basis. But remember, it will be easier for you to do calculations regularly, rather than saving them all for the end of the year. You might even decide to break your records down by week – you need to decide what works best for you....

You may be unconfident in working out your totals. But remember not to give up if your neighbour is busy and you cannot do these calculations, your farm records are still going to be useful.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I also have a friend from a VSLA group who has helped me – my family has helped me too. This is even better Joseph - my husband has got a phone with a calculator on now. My daughter showed me how to use it to do calculations on bigger numbers.

I have written in the total inputs and outputs values for each month, in the space I left at the bottom.

***Extension Officer:***

Great. You are in good shape then! At the end of the year you should add these monthly totals up to find the total for the whole year.

You can compare the monthly totals before the year is finished though. You will be able to see which enterprises cost or earned the most over different months; what inputs were the most expensive; what enterprises produced the greatest value and so on.

There are many different ways to compare and use your monthly and annual records. This also includes looking at profit and loss, using what are called **gross margins**, which are often used as an indicator of how well an enterprise is doing.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

That sounds very interesting. Can you teach me about that?

***Extension Officer:***

We will look at gross margins in more detail next time. See you then Betty

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Goodbye Joseph. Thanks!

***Narrator:***

You have been listening to the third of 4 podcasts on farm recording from AgriTechTalk.

As Joseph said, in the next podcast he and Betty will look at, gross margins.

The role of Joseph was played by .....

The role of Betty was played by .....

And my name, the narrator, is .....

Thanks for listening. We hope you have enjoyed this podcast.

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## **Podcast 4–Comparing outputs and inputs to determine profits and losses**

### ***Narrator:***

Welcome back to the AgriTechTalk farm recording podcasts. This is the final podcast in a series of four. In a moment we will be joined by Joseph, an extension officer and Betty, who is a small-holder farmer from Katikekile sub county. She will be updating us on how she is progressing with her farm recording and sharing her thoughts and experiences. In the previous podcasts Joseph and Betty have discussed the importance of farm recording; which inputs and outputs should be included; and how best to organise farm record books. In this podcast, Joseph will help Betty learn how to compare inputs and outputs to calculate a gross margin.

The two of them are standing by so let's join them for this final instalment.

### ***Extension Officer:***

Betty, it is good to see you again. How is the recording going?

### ***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Thank you Joseph. I am feeling much more confident about my farm recording now. My family are interested to see the different inputs and outputs and we are now working out monthly totals for each of the enterprises.

I have a book for each of my enterprises so it is really easy to see what my inputs and outputs are for those different enterprises.

I think that all of the enterprises are making some money, but I am not sure....

***Extension Officer:***

I want to show you how to figure out your Gross Margins. That will help you. **Gross margins** can show the profitability of an enterprise. A gross margin is calculated by taking away the **variable costs** of producing an enterprise (that is, the **inputs**) from the value of what is produced...

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

That is the output right?

***Extension Officer:***

Exactly. The gross margin equals total outputs minus total variable costs.

If the value of what is produced is greater than the input costs, you will have made a profit. But if your input costs are higher than the value of what is produced, you will have made a loss.

Gross Margins are normally calculated each year. This enables you to compare your enterprise from year to year.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Does that mean I will have a lot of paper work and calculating to do at the end of each year?

***Extension Officer:***

Good question Betty. If you have been doing your recording regularly it should be quite easy. You will have all the information you need in your notebooks.

To find your total outputs for the year you will need to add up all of the totals for each month.

Likewise for your inputs, you need to add up the monthly costs to find the total for the whole year.

Now, we take away the total inputs from the total output value for the year. This will give you a figure for your annual gross margin.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

What happens if I do not have a complete year of data?

***Extension Officer:***

You can still calculate your gross margins even if you don't have a full year, as you will be able to see how each enterprise is performing over these months, but it is better to have a full year, especially for crops as these are seasonal. You will be able to do this in the future as your records develop.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

And for my chickens?

***Extension Officer:***

With animal or livestock enterprises, you may wish to calculate the gross margin every 3 months, or every 6 months as these are not seasonal enterprises.

And remember that, though there are a lot of calculations, you should try and get help from your friends and family – or an extension officer like me. Shall I help you calculate your gross margins with the data you have collected so far Betty?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Yes, that sounds good.

***Extension Officer:***

OK. Starting at the top, we are going to add up the value of all inputs and outputs for each month, for each enterprise. Let's list them on a separate piece of paper, so we do not accidentally count them twice. Or, we could mark them as we add them up, so we know we have counted them.....

So starting with your chicken inputs, that's 30,000; 15,000; 20,000.....

OK, so we have finished adding up your inputs and outputs now. You have a total of 130,000 shillings of inputs and 215,000 shillings of outputs for your chicken enterprise. The output total is bigger than the input value so you have made a profit, as you thought. This is good as some enterprises do not make a profit.

The gross margin is 215,000 minus 130,000.....

Which equals 85,000 shillings.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

That is such good news and such valuable information!

***Extension Officer:***

Even if it is not good news, if you had made a loss, that is also valuable information to know. If you calculate your gross margins and find that your enterprise has not



made a profit you can look back at your records and see what may have caused the business to make a loss.

For example a farmer may have made a profit on one enterprise but made a big loss on another. He will be able to see from his records what has caused this loss.

It may be that in some months he had a lot of inputs which were unexpected, for example, needing to buy more seed from having to replant. This may lead to an overall loss for the year.

It may also be that the outputs were very low due to a poor rainy season.

Some of these variations are unavoidable, but there may be certain costs that the farmer could reduce by thinking carefully about his or her management and practices. This is when it is particularly helpful to share ideas and records with other farmers, so that you can learn and share knowledge between farmer groups.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

This is interesting Joseph. I have already been sharing these new skills with my neighbours and family and found that, by sharing our records, we can learn from each other.

***Extension Officer:***

Good. And here is something else. Keeping records of your farm, year by year, will also enable you to compare the inputs and outputs between different years. This can be beneficial if you introduce a new farming practice as it will help you to see the impact of that practice on your enterprise, providing of course there have been no extreme events like flooding or drought, or very large price changes.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Can you give me an example?

***Extension Officer:***

Of course. One year your labour costs may increase due to introducing a practice of planting your seeds in rows, because you have had to pay some people to help you plant them. But the amount you paid for the seed might be less, because planting in rows is less wasteful than broadcasting seed. If in that same year your outputs increased, due to greater harvests, then it is likely that the row planting has had a positive impact on the business, providing other conditions, like weather, levels of fertiliser and so on, were similar.

There are many factors involved in farming, as you know Betty, such as the weather, so when interpreting your farming records think carefully about all of the things which may have had an impact on your enterprise.

If you do have an extreme event you can note that down as well. Or if you change farming practice, or buy a different variety of seed. Any information like this will be helpful when you are looking at planning in the future.

But let me ask you Betty, how do you think your farm records will help you in the future?

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I will be able to see the amount of time I spend on each enterprise if I record the time for my labour, although I will not put a cost for it. This will help me to see which one is performing better in terms of my time inputs.

I will also know how well the chickens or the goats are performing, not just in terms of what is sold but also the value of the eggs and the milk we consume at home. I would like to start making cheese in the future, so I will be able to see if that is profitable.

***Extension Officer:***

Betty, I can see you are planning for the future which is important and shows you are confident with your farm recording.

You said you also make skirts. You can use the skills you have learnt from the farm recording to record your skirt enterprise.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

Really? How?

***Extension Officer:***

You will need to think carefully about your inputs and outputs but you can use the same layout for the recording book as you use for your farm recording to make it easier.

Farmers often have other enterprises separate to their farm, and their recording skills can be used for these other enterprises too.

***Farmer: (Betty/Lucia)***

I will definitely try that Joseph! Thank you so much for these lessons.

***Extension Officer:***

It was my pleasure Betty. And remember, if you have any questions any extension officer can always help you out.

***Narrator:***

You have been listening to the last of our four part series on farm recording from AgriTechTalk.

We hope that they have been helpful. Good luck with you farm recording!

The role of Joseph was played by .....

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