

VOLUNTEER REPORT FORMAT

To be submitted to CRS at the end of volunteer assignment and shared with the Host

1.1 Assignment information

- a) Volunteer Name: **LaRon Beemer**
- b) State of Origin **USA**
- c) Host Organization: **CRS**
- d) Assignment: **LEDCA Feed mill strategic business plan development**
- e) Dates of Assignment: **Dec 2 – Dec 15**
- f) Number of days worked **11**

1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW **Assist LEDCA to evaluate their business management skills, determine relevant training needs and carry out training**

- a) Progress with the objective **Finished**
- b) Expected impacts/results **LEDCA staff and board recognized the financial condition they could intuitively feel but couldn't put numbers to. Understanding where they were and why, with numbers to back it up, gave the staff renewed confidence in their ability to communicate the message to the board with specific requests for action (example: raw material costs must decrease, credit and transportation terms were unfavorable for both incoming materials and outgoing finished products, and they must have working capital constraints resolved by April/May 2018)**
- c) Recommendations¹ **Use the cash flow template developed during the project to communicate monthly with board on progress toward goals and highlight any issues in meeting those goals that the board must take to resolve constraints**

1.2.2 Objective 2 in your SOW **Assess the LEDCA's market potential for the dairy feeds. This will involve carrying out SWOT analysis, market research and analysis, product distribution channels and repackaging strategies.**

- a) Progress with the objective **Finished**
- b) Expected impacts/results **LEDCA's Alliance branded feeds have 1% market share in their geographic footprint and are priced on par with where they are competing in their competitive tier for quality and consistency of supply. Dairy feed customers are pleased with the quality of the feed, but need additional guarantees of adequate and consistent supply of dairy meal concentrates to maintain production of milk from their cows that hit peak production only with a consistent feed source. LEDCA can improve dairy members' interests and loyalty by focusing on dairy feeds and eliminating the distractions of poultry feed production until capital constraints are resolved.**
- c) Recommendations **LEDCA to prioritize feed orders to dairy feeds, reducing poultry feeds. This will align with the purpose of LEDCA and solve customers' request for consistent supply of dairy feeds. LEDCA will use the training opportunities provided by the Global Communities and We Effect grants in 2018 to provide extension services and leverage the mobilization efforts for**

¹ **Note:** Only make not more than 6 recommendations. The most useful recommendations for hosts are ones that they can implement themselves with minimal expense. For example, a cooperative might change its financial reporting procedures or hold more regular meetings of its board. Broad recommendations on tax or credit reform, changes in government policy, or investment in large-scale equipment, are usually not within the host organization's reach.

sales and marketing of Alliance branded feeds without letting the training activities interfere with the focus required on operating the feed mill profitably and efficiently.

1.2.3 Objective 3 in your SOW **Develop five-year strategic business plan: F2F volunteer will facilitate LEDCA management on developing a comprehensive business plan for a five-year period with market analysis and business potential for their dairy feeds, sales forecast and promotion techniques, long-term (strategic) objectives, management structure, operations, financial strategies and financial projections.**

First-year action plan: This includes anticipated year one gross sales calculation and year one operational and business expenses estimation. A detailed budget for the first year of the alliance’s activity will be developed as well.

- a) Progress with the objective **Finished**
- b) Expected impacts/results **LEDCA staff and board understand financial situation and will use the action plan to address issues and prepare to leverage the strategic business plan for internal guidance and external marketing of investment opportunities. LEDCA board will set appropriate expectations for dividends with constituent farmer group members.**
- c) Recommendations **LEDCA board to focus on first-year action plan to get the organization in an “investable” state to approach external stakeholders to address cash constraints.**

1.3 Recommended future volunteer assignment

Future F2F volunteer assistance could be useful in feed mill efficiency and back office support in accounting software and reporting

I would recommend that sufficient time is given to LEDCA to ensure that they will begin implementing the one-year action plan before committing future volunteer assistance

1.4 Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific Action	Responsible person	By when
1. Understand current financial situation	Communicate financial situation to LEDCA delegates and steps needed to return to profitability	LEDCA board and staff	Dec 29, 2017, LEDCA special general meeting
2. Identify solutions to reduce raw material costs	Solicit bids for quality feed ingredients with favorable prices and terms to reduce costs and improve gross margins	LEDCA Procurement Committee and staff	February 2018
3. Identify solutions for cash constraints	Deliver a solution for cash constraints that will likely occur in 2Q 2018 in order	LEDCA board, Procurement committee and staff	March 2018

	to maintain sufficient raw materials to meet sales volume goals		
4. Prepare for 2018 AGM	Prepare for Annual General Meeting in April by identifying prospective board members and lobbying delegates to ensure board management is passionate, committed, capable and diverse	LEDCA board	March 2018
5. Track performance	Track performance monthly vs plan and vs previous year. Communicate results to board monthly to improve managerial oversight and performance	LEDCA staff	January 2018
6. Implement training	Implement training in accordance with Global Communities and We Effect grants and leverage feed marketing opportunities without the activities detracting from focusing on returning feed mill to profitability	LEDCA staff	1Q 2018 thru 4Q 2018

1.5 Number of people Assisted

- a) Through formal training (Classroom setup) **12**
- b) Through direct hands on practical assistance (Do not double count) **0**
- c) Out of these above, number of host staffs **3**
- d) Training/assistance by field

Category	Total	Males	Females
Members/ owners	6	8	1
Employees	3	1	2

Clients/ Suppliers	2	2	0
Family Members			
Total	12	9	3

1.6 Gender

- a) What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Did these roles play a part in your assignment? How? **LEDCA board meeting excluded female staff members, which could have been very productive for both staff and board.**
- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community? **LEDCA staff seem to have a good diversity profile. However, the LEDCA board could benefit from additional inclusion of women. This will need to be prompted by external stakeholders such as CRS, USAID or USADF to affect positive change.**

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$ **10**

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment **10**
- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment **\$10**

1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ (Please consult the host as well)

- a) Meals **\$25**
- b) Transportation **\$50**
- c) Lodging **\$0**
- d) Translation **\$50**
- e) Other (Specify)

1.8 Host Profile Data:

Did you obtain any data that supplements or corrects the data in the existing host information as detailed in the SOW? Please list it.

No

1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

Cannot think of anything to add

I have been very pleased with how CRS screens and scopes the projects, presents the opportunity on the website, responds to all requests for additional information and flexibility, and supports all the logistics to make the project a success for all involved

Special recognition should be given to Maria, Peterson and Gabriel for their hard work.

1.10 Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VOLUNTEER CONTACT: LaRon Beemer
Global Competitive Intelligence
Manager, Dow AgroSciences
1-317-200-1985
LDBEEMER@DOW.COM

CRS CONTACT:
Susan G. Walters
Senior Communications Manager
susan.walters@crs.org
443-955-7103



Brownsburg Indian Ag Business Professional Works with Counterparts in Kenya

Farmer-to-Farmer program promotes economic growth and agricultural development in East Africa

Indianapolis Indiana, December 28, 2017--- LaRon Beemer, a Competitive Intelligence Manager for Dow AgroSciences from Brownsburg IN who is an African ag development enthusiast travelled **to Kenya** for two weeks to share **his** technical skills and expertise with local farmers. Beemer's assignment is part of Catholic Relief Services' Farmer-to-Farmer program that promotes economic growth, enhanced nutrition through access to healthy food, and agricultural development in East Africa.

"I really enjoyed the privilege to use my passion for Africa, agricultural development, finance and the cooperative structure to make a difference at a dairy cooperative in Kenya," said Beemer. **"I was able to draw on my business and financial skills from Dow AgroSciences, previous projects in Africa, and my practical farming knowledge from my youth."**

Farmer-to-Farmer matches the technical expertise of U.S. farmers and professionals in agribusinesses, farming cooperatives, and universities with farmers in developing countries to assist them in improving agricultural productivity, accessing new markets, and increasing their incomes. Farmer-to-Farmer is funded by the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID).

In a world where 80% of food is produced by farmers working on small farms or fisheries, the movement to share proven farming and business skills can improve the quality and quantity of the world's food supply. For communities in the developing world who often struggle to produce enough food, this can improve access to a reliable source of food and better nutrition. For the farmers, it can strengthen their path to prosperity.

The goal of Beemer's assignment was to develop an action plan, identify areas of needed improvement in the organization, and develop a strategic business plan for a feed mill operated by a cooperative alliance. The cooperative provides quality feed and training to small scale dairy farmers that are members of 19 cooperatives that invested in the umbrella cooperative alliance. Most of Beemer's time was spent in the Machakos area about 60 km southeast of Nairobi working with **the Lower Eastern Dairy Cooperative Alliance**. **The impact Beemer left will help restore the cooperative to profitability and allow it to increase the volumes of quality feed on a consistent production schedule that its members are requiring.**



This is Beemer's second volunteer assignment with Farmer-to-Farmer and is one of nearly 500 assignments that focus on improving approaches to local agriculture practices, expanding production of quality food crops and nutrition in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. The program, funded by the U.S. government has been running for nearly 30 years.

CRS is partnering with five U.S. institutions to tap into the rich diversity of the U.S. agriculture community: the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Foods Resource Bank, National Association of Agricultural Educators, American Agri-Women, and the University of Illinois' College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

The volunteers travel to East Africa for anywhere from one to six weeks.

"We are certain that this program will be beneficial not just to the farmers in East Africa but also to the volunteers from America," said Bruce White, CRS' director for the program. "It's going to make the world a little bit smaller and a whole lot better for everyone involved."

For more information, visit farmertofarmer.crs.org

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***Catholic Relief Services** is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency alleviates suffering and provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality. CRS' relief and development work is accomplished through programs of emergency response, HIV, health, agriculture, education, microfinance and peacebuilding. For more information, visit www.crs.org or www.crsespanol.org and follow Catholic Relief Services on social media: [Facebook](#), Twitter at [@CatholicRelief](#), [@CRSnews](#) and [@CRSnoticias](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#).*