



S.H.A.R.E. News

SENDING HELP AND RESOURCES EVERYWHERE

DECEMBER 2003



DAIRY PROJECT YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTS

BY LES FRAYNE AND PAUL MCLELLAN

For the past 10 years, one of SHARE's main project efforts has been providing funds to establish small dairy herds in Belize and El Salvador. In almost all cases, the recipient groups were refugee farmers in Belize or farmers receiving land as part of the peace settlement in El Salvador.

Introducing two- to three cows per farmer recipient allows individuals a way to provide better nutrition for their families through milk and cheese, as well as a saleable product. The greatest challenge facing these families is continually achieving a sustainable income level. The dairy projects are providing a major step towards sustainability by providing base nutrition, as well as income potential.

There are 13 dairy groups ongoing in Belize and eight in El Salvador. Over the last 10 years all but one group maintained itself, following the project implementation by SHARE. In that one case, the animals were moved to another group in El Salvador.

Presently, four groups have progressed to sell excess milk on a regular basis to local

dairies. The remaining groups consume or sell the milk and cheese produced for their own families or within the immediate village.

All groups benefit greatly from calf sales. Steers are sold for meat and heifers for breeding purposes. This has proven to be very significant; the sale of even one or two animals a year can increase the annual family income by as much as 40 per cent in Belize and by more than 50 per cent in El Salvador.

The dairy cattle are obtained locally, and are well adapted to the area climate. The primary breed is a Brahma cross, a dual purpose animal blending both milk and meat quality.

The groups selling milk on a regular

basis are usually closer to a processing plant or a larger village. Those in remote areas are providing milk mainly for their own village needs. Groups with market accessibility tend to lean toward higher milk production, while other projects concentrate on providing enough milk for their families and benefit more through the sale of offspring. In general the groups have a tendency to maintain about 20 animals. SHARE often provides fencing for the animals, and helps dig ponds for water.

It's rewarding to look at the progress the dairy project has had over the past 10 years. The people involved are very proud of their accomplishments and look forward to the future. They are very thankful for the support they receive through SHARE.



Brahma cattle (top photo) blend both milk and meat quality. SHARE provides animals, fencing, and helps farmers dig ponds such as the one pictured here.

Audrey Symmes – A “HUCKSTER” WITH A BIG HEART

BY MARIEKE VAN DORP

Volunteers make the world a better place, and that’s the effect dedicated SHARE member and photographer Audrey Symmes is having with a project involving the SHARE network, and her striking photos.

For nearly a decade, Audrey, of Terra Cotta, Ontario, has made her art of photography into a fundraiser for SHARE. The idea arose when a friend told her that her photograph of Georgian Bay at Equinox would “make a lovely card.” With that, the seed was planted, and Audrey felt a need to make it grow.

She was no stranger to SHARE. She’d been involved with the organization since 1985, spearheading a fundraising group for SHARE called Sharing Hands of Terra Cotta, in which local women would meet frequently for craft and bake sales, as well as other campaigns such as selling books and hosting tulip walks. But she was relatively new to photography, and the concept of selling photo-cards as a fundraiser was new to her.

She first needed to look into the practicality of such a project. What about paper stock, envelopes, and film development? For advice and guidance, she sought out Georgetown, Ontario printer Don Smith, shared her idea, and

came away with a paper donation that goes on today. Next was the processing, she approached Craig’s One Hour Photo, also in Georgetown, where they offered to print her photographs at cost, to support the project. This made card production a viable and practical avenue to raise funds for SHARE.

Over the years, Audrey says she has “no idea” how many cards she has made and sold. But she went through the first order of 1,000 envelopes, and has ordered “many more” since. The money she’s raised is earmarked for a scholarship fund for children attending school in Belize, giving them the opportunity to learn for a year more than their families could otherwise afford.

Audrey doesn’t have formal training in photography or art. Her photography career debuted in 1980 when she bought her first Minolta camera before a trip to



University of Guelph student writer Marieke Van Dorp (left) was treated to a special showing of Audrey Symmes’s photo gallery at the photographer’s home in Terra Cotta. Audrey’s winter scene (bottom left) is a popular photocard.

the Queen Charlotte Islands. But over the years, she has surrounded herself with art. Opportunities such as cataloguing well-known Canadian artist Robert Bateman’s photographs, and volunteering as a docent at the McMichael Canadian art gallery, immersed her in art and taught her “on the job.”

What’s truly remarkable about this feat is that Audrey is 86 years old. She shows no signs of retiring from this project – she just purchased 500 more envelopes, to keep on going.

“I’m a huckster at heart,” she says, adding that the photo-card project gives her an opportunity to share stories about the SHARE program, and give her pitch. She sells the cards at different craft events, — at the garden club, local shops, through mail order and other social events. “Projects, however small,” she says, “are bound to make a difference.”



Sewing machines help support drive to self-sufficiency

BY LAURIE WEBER

In many rural villages in Belize, women are starting micro-enterprises, in a drive towards greater self-sufficiency. They're using handicrafts such as jewellery, needlework and sewing projects to generate income for their families.

For example, Indian Church, a village located near Lamanai, attracts thousands of tourists each year who come to see nearby Mayan ruins. There, Indian Church women are making the most of this opportunity by creating handicrafts for tourists to purchase.

Without such income, villagers become transient. Family members leave the village to try finding work in urban areas, which is difficult.

SHARE has provided Indian Church with two sewing machines to help residents make handicrafts, and promote sustainability. In addition to these machines creating income for the villagers, there is also opportunity for the women to make clothing for their own children, so they are dressed the same as the other students when they attend school.

In Belize, SHARE has placed a total of 17 various kinds of machines in schools, communities, and in community development groups, all with the intention of supplying the tools required for a more sustainable village and community.

They're all dressed up, thanks to villagers making good use of SHARE-sponsored sewing machines.



Fencing complete for dairy goat project

BY LES FRAYNE AND PAUL MCLELLAN

A dairy goat project at the Belize School for the Deaf through the involvement of SHARE is making progress. The school is for rural deaf students, with a focus on providing an education that emphasizes applied agricultural skills.

The school started the project to provide the students with milk, and the agricultural experience of livestock care. Goats were chosen because they're easier to handle than cattle. The students are involved in all aspects of herd care, including feeding and milking. Organizers

hope that when students complete their education, to return to their village with a female goat.

This concept fits well with SHARE's pass-on principle, and should allow the students to become contributing members in their village. The school had already acquired a number of local goats and erected a housing facility for the herd when SHARE was approached for assistance. The school's request included fencing-off an area to contain the animals, and purchasing better breeding stock. To date, fencing is complete, and stock is being evaluated.

Organic groups SHARE knowledge

Brazilian farmers thank SHARE for organizing an annual event for state representatives. The event rotates among three northeast states, to get farmers together to learn from each other, open the door to greater independence and an improved standard of living. There are a series of talks, demonstrations and field trips. The event will return to Ceara state next year, where it originated.

Co-operation lets voices be heard

Communication is essential for development and sustainability. With that in mind, SHARE was approached earlier this year to a request from the southern tip of Brazil, to help replace a broken radio transmitter. This request is not in SHARE's mandate, but upon return to Canada, SHARE's project committee discussed the matter with the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network. By relaying the story to the network's board of directors, \$1,000 of support came through. SHARE matched the donation, and through additional fundraising by area farmer Artemio De Bortoli, a total of \$7,000 was gathered – and the transmitter was fixed.

- BOB THOMAS



S.H.A.R.E. AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AT MAYFIELD
UNITED CHURCH

12496 DIXIE ROAD
BRAMPTON

1:15 PM
January 17, 2004

ROSS REDFORD'S RIDE FOR SHARE

Ross completed his ride from coast to coast. The tour organized by "Wandering Wheels" began in Seattle, Washington and ended in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. The 38 riders (average age: 58) cycled 3,800 miles in 53 days with the group over-nighting in campgrounds, churches and schools. ROSS RAISED JUST OVER \$8,100 FOR SHARE

Well done Ross!

THE 4th ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

AT ARISS VALLEY GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

RAISED OVER \$1,800

Thanks to all golfers and prize donors.

THE BELIZE SCHOLARSHIP FUND ANNUAL CORN ROAST

AT THE HARMER FARM MADE JUST UNDER \$12,000

Well done Isabel!

**To participate in fund
raising for SHARE...**

CONTACT:

SHARE Agriculture Foundation
R.R. #4 Brampton, ON, N6T 3S1

email
info@shareagfoundation.org

call
1-905-799-1135 or 1-888-337-4273

fax
1-905-799-2722

Board of Directors

<i>Chair</i>	<i>John Webster</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Joe Gray</i>
<i>Vice Chair</i>	<i>Kevin Mitchell</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Marg Crate</i>
<i>Past Chair</i>	<i>Hume Porteous</i>		
<i>Directors</i>	<i>David Armstrong</i>	<i>Project Officers</i>	<i>Bob Thomas</i>
	<i>John Lyons</i>		<i>Les Frayne</i>
	<i>Clark Middlebrook</i>	<i>Patrons</i>	<i>Dr. George Atkins</i>
	<i>John Meek</i>		<i>Mark Cullen</i>
	<i>Rosemary Sedgwick</i>		

This issue of SHARE News has been produced by the agricultural communication program and the Office of Research at the University of Guelph.

STUDENT EDITOR AND REPORTER: Marieke Van Dorp

FACULTY ADVISOR: Owen Roberts

DESIGNER: Jay Dart

CONTRIBUTORS: Les Frayne, Paul McLellan, Bob Thomas, Laurie Weber