

THE TIME IS RIPE FOR REFUGEE FARMERS

By Daniel Sturm, *RefugeeWorks*

Last spring First Lady Michelle Obama sent a powerful message to Americans about self-reliance in hard times, when she tilled a section of the White House lawn to grow onions and potatoes. There hadn't been a vegetable garden on the White House lawn since World War II. But with higher food prices and millions of Americans out of work, a vegetable garden has begun to seem like a simple and practical way to slash the grocery budget.

Resettlement workers know that refugees don't need a lecture on such survival skills. On the contrary, they can teach Americans a lesson in frugality. Many refugees know how to milk a cow, plough a field and grow vegetables—skills that can be used to their advantage (even in the United States). Our clients' farming backgrounds also include a work ethic that employers appreciate. This issue of *RefugeeWorks* highlights promising programs and individual success stories in the field of agricultural work.

I recently came across a story about a refugee group that reinvigorated a community through agriculture. A rural church in Smyrna, Tenn., was struggling to make its mortgage payments as a result of dwindling membership. Fourteen Karen refugee families came to its rescue. "It's a classic example of the Advent story," Senior Warden Michael Williams told the Episcopal News Service. "We could not find God, but God found us. In this case, he appeared to us in the form of 70 people from Myanmar."

The refugees, who had been farmers before resettlement, helped a local dairy farmer plow some of the land surrounding All Saints Church. Parishioners helped them plant vegetables, chili peppers and beans native to Myanmar. By the end of the summer they had raised 20,000 pounds of produce. About 10 percent went to the refugees, and the rest was sold locally or donated to food pantries. The parish received a grant to buy a used tractor and water pump.

All Saints Church also reached out to the local Soil Conservation District board, which donated \$500 to the project for seed, tools and other supplies. The church's 13 acres of land sat next to a creek (a good water source), a covered picnic area that could be converted into a food market stand and a barn for housing equipment. An SCD board member with a farming background helped to till and cultivate the soil. The Karen community's Kurios Farm ("God's Farm") now has a blog to report on its progress.

This story wouldn't surprise the D.C. Institute of Social and Economic Development's small-scale agriculture development expert, Daniel Krotz: "Mainline churches are possible partners," Krotz said during a recent conference of the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement's Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program. Presbyterian, Episcopal and Methodist churches are all facing a significant membership decline and could be an overlooked resource for such refugee farming projects. "I would encourage you to take a look at the churches' websites. Many incorporate sustainable agriculture concepts in their mission statements."



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Farming experts like Krotz argue that the time to launch small-scale refugee agriculture projects is now. (See our interview on page 4.) If you're considering one, here are the answers to some questions you might have:

Does the market support small-scale agriculture projects? Yes, a market has been growing for such projects since Americans began to embrace the idea of organic, locally grown food. A case in point is the organic strawberry farm 40 miles outside Denver, Colo., which opened its fields for picking one day and had 40,000 people show up.

How difficult is it to get started? Supplementing one's household income by growing food isn't rocket science, and refugees have the necessary skills to do it. Obtaining a permit to raise backyard chickens for eggs or meat is simple, even in some urban areas. In the first six months of 2009, the U.S. postal service

shipped 1.2 million pounds of packages containing live chicks, a seven percent increase from 2008. A chicken hatchery owner told *The New York Times* that the increase was typical of a recession. "I see it as a sense of security," he said. "If they don't have the dollars that week to get meat at the grocery store, they can go kill a chicken."

How can agencies assist refugee clients? Community garden projects are springing up across the country, since it is fairly easy to identify partners and funding sources for such projects. (See feature story on pages 5 and 6.) "The economic weather is ripe for community gardens," finds a recent McClatchy News Service report. The report draws heavily on a refugee community garden project (a 25-acre garden established by Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries) to make its point. It focuses on California's San Joaquin Valley residents coming to terms with an economic reality with which refugees have long been familiar. "Many of the people who are getting laid off know how to raise food," says the project's nutrition coordinator, Edie Jessup. "And getting them to do that is such a self-reliant, smart thing to do."



I would like to take this opportunity to say farewell. After 10 Employment Quarterly Newsletters and nearly three years on the job, I am leaving *RefugeeWorks* to take a Special Projects Manager position at Migration and Refugee Services, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. I've enjoyed

working as the *RefugeeWorks* publications coordinator, and I will miss sharing resources and publications with our network of 5,000 newsletter readers and listserv subscribers. In the current economy, developing strong and innovative partnerships that help refugees find work is more critical than ever. Please keep in touch! I can be reached via e-mail at dsturm@uscbb.org (after March 8) or at sturm@sturmstories.com.

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CONSULTANT'S CORNER: Jonathan Lucas



Hello, everyone. This newsletter issue highlights success stories in the agricultural industry. Agriculture's ancient history began in the Fertile Crescent of Western Asia during the Neolithic Revolution more than 10,000 years ago. Since that period, people from all over the world have developed the tools and knowledge to harness life-sustaining nourishment for their family and communities.

In modern times, a third of the world's jobs are in the agricultural industry and the United States has become the world's largest exporter of food. It should be no surprise to anyone working in refugee resettlement that new Americans come to our

shores with vast knowledge and skill in this area. Having worked in North Carolina with Montagnard (of Vietnam) and Hmong refugees, I have seen farming initiatives created by these populations that provided not only food but also economic livelihood—not to mention a chance for people to retain their identity and get back to their "roots." Pun intended! Writing this piece for the newsletter, I cannot help being reminded of my own roots. Growing up in Virginia, I could not wait until it was time to dig potatoes in my family's large garden. It is very rewarding to see your hard work turn into something amazing—just like the initiatives you will read about in this issue.

Jonathan Lucas
RefugeeWorks

FILLING A NICHE MARKET: FRESH HALAL MEAT

By Ron Berning, Program Director, META, Boise, Idaho

Mwaliko Mberwa, age 25, came to Boise as a refugee nearly five years ago. He and his wife, Saadia Omar, their 15-month-old son and his wife's grandmother share an apartment.

The family members are a respected and active part of the local Somali Bantu community. In early 2009, Mwaliko and Saadia completed a 10-week small farm course conducted by Global Gardens, a sister agency to META that is also funded by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. They now participate in planting, irrigating and growing, as well as harvesting fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers at a three-acre Somali Bantu community garden. They are also active in selling the all-natural produce at two Boise farmers' markets. Finally, the garden provides food for their household.

Because of the recession, Mwaliko was laid off in early 2009 from a semiconductor-chip manufacturing plant where he worked as a night janitor. After four months of searching for full-time work, he decided to strike out on his own. Through a network of friends and volunteers, he secured a rent-free, seven-acre farm parcel about 10 miles from his home. It had access to clean water, green pasture, shade trees, a gated corral and a three-sided pole barn. On it, he launched a small goat operation.

Before applying for a loan from META, Mwaliko purchased five goats at a rural county auction with money he had been saving. Within a day of purchase, he had sold two goats to friends in his ethnic community. The animals were slaughtered onsite, and the barn rafters were used to draw the carcasses up for final bleeding and skinning for each family's goat meat needs.

Confident about his new goat operation, Mwaliko soon requested and was approved for a \$500 loan to finance working capital and purchase additional goats and supplemental feed. He explained: "This first loan will allow me to expand my goat herd gradually. Within six months, I will have it paid off and plan to apply for a larger META loan to build my herd, to have

goats of varying ages to meet the taste and price needs of my customers."

Mwaliko plans to continue the operation throughout the year, using the pole barn to shelter the goats in the winter. His goats will command a higher price during the winter months, based on demand and higher operating costs. He continues to receive technical assistance from META on marketing, goat health practices and other operations management.

Once Mwaliko had an established income stream, the nonprofit organization referred him to a sister agency that administers an ORR-funded individual development account program. Through the IDA, he will save monthly and eventually invest \$4,000 of his own savings to receive matching funds. META's assistance has helped Mwaliko become a successful goat producer—providing income for his family and meeting the fresh goat meat needs of the growing Muslim community in Boise.



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FARMING JOBS: AN INTERVIEW WITH LARRY LAVERENTZ AND DANIEL KROTZ

By Daniel Sturm, RefugeeWorks

What are the prospects for refugees in agriculture? RefugeeWorks Managing Editor Daniel Sturm spoke with two experts, who coordinate the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement's Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program. Daniel Krotz is a microenterprise specialist at the Institute for Social and Economic Development. Larry Laverentz is the project's program manager at ORR.

RefugeeWorks: Over the years, you have provided financial and technical assistance to many groups interested in starting up refugee farming programs. What are the factors that make a program most likely to succeed?

Daniel Krotz: Recruiting good people to run these programs is key. We have seen former Peace Corps volunteers manage successful refugee farming initiatives, for example. Secondly, assessing your clients' skills and past experiences is critical, too. And finally, I would like to emphasize the importance of establishing partnerships, particularly with U.S. Department of Agriculture extension agents and sustainable agriculture groups.

Larry Laverentz: A shining example is the Association of Africans Living in Vermont's refugee agricultural project. Mandy Davis established a nationally-known program at the Intervale Center in Burlington, Vt., that serves Somali Bantu farmers. The program assisted 27 unemployed women by providing 25-by-50-foot plots of farmland. Eighteen of these women went on to sell produce at farmers' markets. This particular initiative also helped change the community's attitudes towards the newcomers from Somalia.

RefugeeWorks: How do you judge the consumer trend toward locally-grown, organic foods? Is it increasing business opportunities for small growers, such as refugees?

Daniel Krotz: This is a good time for small-scale agriculture business development. The general public is more concerned with the quality and safety of food production, and the demand for locally-grown foods is growing. Also, the cost of input into small-scale agriculture businesses tends to be lesser. Refugees always say, “My labor is my profit.” And they are right: They tend to work longer hours and many don’t expect to become rich.

RefugeeWorks: How has the recession impacted refugee farmers’ economic prospects?

Daniel Krotz: It’s the perfect storm. Currently, we are observing an interesting confluence of events, and I think we just have to make sure to take advantage of the situation. Gardening and food magazines tend to be the only media outlets that are still succeeding. At the same time, consumers have become increasingly food-conscious. They read Michael Pollan’s “The Omnivores’ Dilemma” or watch “Food, Inc.,” a film that exposes the dangers of big food producers. Chefs get it. And refugee farmers get it. And yet another reason why farming is a prudent choice for many refugees is its therapeutic effects.

Larry Laverentz: More than 80 percent of American farmers have off-farm incomes. Only the big factory farms rely on farming per se. So you have to be realistic about a refugee’s ability to make farming a for-profit career. However, an increasing number of refugee clients who lost their jobs during the recession are picking up farming in North Carolina and elsewhere to supplement their incomes. A 12-square-foot garden plot produces an average of \$600 worth of produce. Most recently, we have learned about refugee clients who would have become homeless had they not had access to a garden plot.

RefugeeWorks: What is the biggest challenge for refugees trying to enter the farming business?

Larry Laverentz: Refugees are familiar with farmers’ markets because you can find these all over the world. But refugees from Africa, for example, are typically used to working as producers only. Middlemen take care of the selling. Here we expect them to do everything, from the production to the sales. That’s a huge challenge.

Daniel Krotz: Another challenge is how to reach beyond the farmers’ markets. A long-term challenge is how to break into the wholesale market. (See related how-to guides on pages 9 and 10.)

RefugeeWorks: Can you give an example of a typical challenge?

Larry Laverentz: I am thinking of the fairly common story of the successful tomato grower, whose 15 neighbors all grow tomatoes and together are now flooding the market. We have seen clients who mastered the production techniques and produced a lot. However, they were unable to sell their products or consistently meet the demands of the markets. This is where program support is needed to assist with training and funding.

RefugeeWorks: What advice do you share with refugees who wish to start farming in the U.S.?

Larry Laverentz: We ask them to get in touch with their cooperative extension agent. I also invite them to subscribe to our free listserv and review the materials published on ISED’s website.

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A SNAPSHOT OF REFUGEE AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN THE U.S.

By Daniel Sturm, *RefugeeWorks*

The ORR's Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program (RAPP) provides funding and advice to refugee farming and food security projects. The project supports increased incomes, access to quality foods, physical and mental health, and integration. This map features an overview of RAPP's 10 current grantees, who together have received \$900,000 to support their rural and urban farming initiatives.

Association for Africans Living in Vermont (Burlington, VT.)

Fifty families participate in this project, and their numbers are expected to grow as more Burmese, Bhutanese, Burundian and Somali Bantu clients are enrolled. Most clients are women. AALV also subcontracts with Intervale, a training and incubator farm outside Burlington. Refugees work on 600 to 1,200 square-foot plots and sell the produce at four farmers' markets, all of which accept food stamps. They also sell to restaurants and a grocery store.

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Catholic Charities of Louisville, KY.

Forty-five families are involved in community gardening, selling much of their produce to Grasshoppers, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project that provides produce weekly to its subscribers. Growers also sell at farmers' markets and churches. Catholic Charities emphasizes the role of community gardens in refugee families' socioeconomic adjustment.

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Mountain States Group (Boise, ID)

The Idaho project assists 100 gardeners at five different sites managed by the Girl Scouts, a Methodist church, a synagogue, a Somali Bantu community group and an African community organization. Clients receive assistance to market their produce at two farmers' markets. In 2009, refugee growers sold produce from a large booth—the only one to accept food stamps—at the Boise Farmers' Market. With support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers' Market Promotion Program, the Somali Bantu Association also operates a mobile farmers' market and plans to lease one-acre plots for eight families to farm.

Web: www.mtnstatesgroup.org

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International Institute of New Hampshire (Manchester, NH)

The IINH involves refugees in four gardening sites, one of which is on church property. The Department of Social Services recognizes refugee gardeners' work in fulfillment of its TANF work requirements. Older refugees in particular have participated in establishing "pocket gardens" adjacent to refugees' residences. The IINH has developed a strong partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Council.

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Catholic Charities (Kansas City, KN)

This project established the Juniper Gardens community garden in public housing. In 2009, eight gardeners sold produce at two farmers' markets, and seven other families grew produce for themselves and neighbors. In addition to public housing residents, 40 Somali Bantu and Karen refugees participated. A seed bank and a savings program reserving 20 percent of market sales for purchase of supplies are innovations. Juniper Garden has diminished tensions between refugee and non-refugee residents. The Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture provides technical support. A new initiative planned this year is the double voucher program modeled after IRC San Diego's Wholesome Wave project.

Web: www.catholiccharitiesks.org (Rachel Bonar)

Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (Boston, MA.)

This is the only state-administered RAPP project. The program has collaborated with the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Transportation, the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Flats Mentor Farm and Nuestras Raices. It also works closely with the Mutual Assistance Association Coalition, which has received private funding to promote community gardens in Boston refugee and immigrant communities. Under an additional contract with Lutheran Social Services, more than 40 refugee families operate gardens in Worcester and Holyoke. One refugee farmer,

Production on this lot has been sufficient to support a 10-member CSA project.

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International Rescue Committee (Phoenix, AZ)

The major barrier for refugees interested in farming as a business is the lack of suitable irrigated land. IRC has organized a refugee farmer coordination group with support from university agriculture departments and local organizations. Success stories include a farmer raising goats for the lucrative Halal market, five Uzbek farmers cooperating with an American farmer to grow crops on 35 acres and an African refugee's successful nine-acre farm. After an initial year of training, the farmer receives an ORR microenterprise loan to start a farming business. A Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant supports the farmers' further training, and a \$45,000 loan from the USDA Farm Service Agency allows for later business expansion.

Web: www.theirc.org/phoenix

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International Rescue Committee (San Diego, CA)

The IRC manages about 12 different initiatives in San Diego. They include a farm-to-school garden, a farmers' market, a community garden and a program that gives bags of fresh food to new arrivals. The community garden provides opportunities for 80 families, two-thirds of whom are refugees. In 2008, IRC established the City Heights Farmers' Market, serving a low-income, multiethnic neighborhood. A Wholesome Wave Foundation grant doubled Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Senior Coupon benefits for clients buying fresh produce at the market. Other support for IRC's endeavors has come from a USDA Specialty Crop block grant, The California Endowment and local charities.

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United Hmong Association (Hickory, NC)

This project set up a Growers' School for Hmong farmers. Some Hmong clients already owned small parcels of land, usually four to six acres. The Growers' School leased public land and erected a high tunnel to grow produce and train Hmong farmers. The North Carolina A&T staff and agents from the university's cooperative extension service provided educational support. Training topics included marketing, irrigation, harvesting and growing-season extension. Interest in this project increased this year after some refugees lost their jobs.

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a Meskhetian Turk, farms a larger acreage and sells his produce. Many LSS clients have obtained lucrative green jobs through a partnership with the Bigelow Nursery.

Web: www.mass.gov/ori

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Mercy Corps Northwest (Portland, OR)

Mercy Corps focuses on helping a small number of refugees to create successful farming businesses. In 2009, 3.5 acres of land were leased from a prominent sustainable farm and divided among seven refugee farmers, most from the former Soviet Union. Most of the produce was sold at a farm stand. Recently, three Bhutanese families converted a vacant city lot into a very productive garden.

THE NEW ROOTS COMMUNITY FARM: INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE'S SUCCESS IN LOCAL URBAN LAND-USE ADVOCACY

By Amy Lint, Food Security and Community Health Program, International Rescue Committee, San Diego, CA

San Diego is one of the most expensive places to buy land in the U.S. and the city prides itself on a public real estate portfolio that is among the strongest in the country. Starting a new life here is challenging for immigrants and refugees. But despite the challenges, the International Rescue Committee has successfully resettled more than 10,000 refugees in San Diego's urban core over the past 35 years.

Many of these refugees come from agrarian backgrounds, and IRC clients have expressed interest in going back to the land—establishing new roots in their new home area.



Our refugee clients' needs presented a unique challenge for IRC's Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program staff. How could we build political will to use valuable public resources for the benefit of low-income urban farmers?

More than two years ago, our staff and community organizations, including Somali Bantu, Cambodian, Mexican and Burmese refugees and immigrants, set our sights on a 2.3-acre, publicly owned parcel in the heart of the new immigrant community of City Heights. Together we solicited the support of City Council

members, land use planners and community decision makers to use the site for San Diego's first urban farm. The process was arduous, not a typical undertaking for a refugee resettlement agency. It required (among other tasks) changing the city's General Plan and other land use policies to make the project feasible.

In Fall 2008, we reached a major milestone: The city granted us all necessary permits to use its vacant land. Less than a year old, the New Roots Community Farm now provides growing space for 80 families. IRC offers technical assistance to refugee farmers interested in bringing produce to market and applying their agricultural enterprise to a small-scale farming venture. So far, almost 10 new farmers have sold fresh produce to local restaurants. During the upcoming summer season, we anticipate collaboratively selling vegetables from the local City Heights Farmers' Market.

Because the urban farm has only a three-year permit, our advocacy work is ongoing. After refugees and the larger community are finished watering their kale and onions during the day, they spend many evenings engaging with neighborhood associations and local decision makers. The next step is to secure access to the farmland for five to 10 years. In addition, the New Roots Community provides the opportunity for more social integration, as our new local food heroes tell the story of overcoming barriers to growing food in their own neighborhoods. The Urban Farm has achieved success by mobilizing citywide energy to change permitting requirements to allow for more community farms and gardens in the urban San Diego area.

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AGRICULTURAL AND GREEN JOB RESOURCES

American Green Jobs (U.S. Department of Labor)

This online website brings together government, business, academic and nonprofit leaders involved in the development of green jobs and the preparation and training of workers.

www.americangreenjobs.net

Cooperative Extension System Offices (U.S. Department of Agriculture)

The cooperative extension system is a nationwide, noncredit educational network. Each state has an extension office at its land-grant university and a network of local offices. This website will help you find the office nearest you.

www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/



Farm Business Curriculum (International Rescue Committee of Phoenix, AZ)

This training curriculum includes materials on accounting and farm record-keeping.

<http://tinyurl.com/y8n8mge>

Farming Project Budgeting Templates (Mercy Corps Northwest)

Materials on this website are designed to assist clients in understanding the financial aspects of farming and gardening with the help of a short budgeting course.

<http://tinyurl.com/ydhxwja>



Finding and Posting Green-Collar Jobs (Green for All)

Green For All provides in-depth information on green economy initiatives nationwide. A special segment on its website is dedicated to green-collar job postings, training opportunities and green job definitions.

<http://tinyurl.com/yaunl3c>

Green Collar Jobs (San Francisco State University)

This case study takes a close look at how men and women facing barriers to employment can still find green business opportunities.

<http://tinyurl.com/yensfbt>



Green Curriculum and Certifications Resources (Green for All)

Workforce development experts share information on green job topics, including services, partnerships, curricula, certifications, links to employers, funding and measuring results.

<http://tinyurl.com/ldxz8t>





Green Jobs Guidebook (Environmental Defense Fund)

This California manual highlights 45 job types, many paying more than \$25 per hour, for high-school grads, as well as information on job training and apprenticeship programs.

<http://tinyurl.com/6l6cwz>

Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program Listserv (Institute for Social and Economic Development)

RAPP provides funding to refugee farming and food security projects and shares advice with refugee families. It also disseminates a highly informative listserv.

www.ised.us/blog

Refugees Unsettle the West (High Country News)

This Web article highlights cultural challenges and solutions for Muslim refugees seeking

employment in the meatpacking industry.

<http://tinyurl.com/yh5hlmh>

Small Farmer Legal Compliance Manual (University of California Cooperative Extension)

This manual summarizes and clarifies the laws and regulations relevant to small-farm owners.

<http://tinyurl.com/yd379y3>



Small Farmer Resource Directories (University of California Cooperative Extension)

This website shares in-depth resources for small farmers in Hmong, Spanish and English. The cooperative extension agent serves 850 Hmong farmers in Fresno County, CA.

<http://tinyurl.com/yf7guwx>

Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (U.S. Department of Agriculture)

This program provides funding to organizations serving refugee clients, such as the International Rescue Committee in Phoenix, the Minnesota Food Association, the

Farmers' Legal Action Group and the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

<http://tinyurl.com/y8ghyrj>

Solving the Garden Transportation Problem (Institute for Social and Economic Development)

This online article describes how an organization successfully tackled job transportation issues.

<http://tinyurl.com/yauxxrs>



Two Ears of Corn: A Guide to People-Centered Agricultural Improvement (World Neighbors)

Recounting World Neighbors' experiences around the world, Robert Bunch presents a people-centered account of how communities can improve agricultural production by encouraging appropriate technology and small-scale experimentation.

<http://tinyurl.com/ybhpa7>

PLACING REFUGEES IN FARMING JOBS

By Scott Harper, Employment Specialist, Catholic Family Center, Rochester, NY

There are many reasons for job developers to consider placing clients in agricultural jobs. Built into this type of employment is an opportunity for people to work at something both familiar and validating. The ability to earn a living doing something of which one has expert knowledge improves both self-esteem and finances.

However, job developers should be ready for some resistance in the beginning. When we first started placing clients in this sector, we encountered problems because of the seasonal nature of farm employment. But as we explored further, we found that refugee job seekers' legal status and farming skills were valuable assets. Also, even if a client chooses to work only for one season, this can still be beneficial as a stopgap for current clients still looking for work and the constant influx of new arrivals (who can strain the resources of even the best agencies).

One of the positions our clients filled was harvesting. This job calls for a specific picking technique that protects both the tree and the fruit. An example is cherry picking. The harvester needs to separate the cherry with the stem intact and place it in a receptacle. You can't drop it in without bruising the product and drastically decreasing its market value. Wages start at \$7.25 an hour but increase each year. We have not yet found a farm that offers any type of benefits.

There are some challenges to consider: Because most farms are in rural areas, transportation can pose a problem. One way we addressed this was to arrange a "drop point" (the furthest place the bus could go), where a worker could pick up clients and drop them off. We also encouraged clients to try networking for rides from people with cars.

Employment staff and employers must monitor the clients and address any problems. They also should be aware of poison ivy and other irritants, dehydration, toxic chemicals and pesticides, machinery and any other hazards that clients might not be familiar with. It's also important to familiarize your clients with U.S. work etiquette. American farming culture differs vastly from home-country family farms, and so do U.S. work standards.

Paperwork can be challenging. When hired, every client collecting public assistance must be accounted for by a DSS employment form. Then the employer receives five-day verifications, 90-day verifications and end-of-employment statements. Employers might feel as if all they do is fill out paperwork. Job developers would do well to advise an employer of this requirement in advance and be available to lighten the burden. This can be achieved by providing copies of all forms and a schedule indicating when they must be filled out. Also, offer to pick up the documents if necessary.

Finally, I would like to offer a word about unemployment. Our clients have a right to unemployment insurance, but this does not change the reality of a farm's limited funds. I have found that the best way to deal with this problem is to be absolutely transparent, before any clients are placed, bringing the possibility to the employer's attention that refugees will apply for unemployment insurance.



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" This is a good time for small-scale agriculture business development. The general public is more concerned with the quality and safety of food production. Also, the cost of input into small-scale agriculture businesses tends to be lesser."

*Daniel Krotz, Microenterprise Specialist, Institute for Social and Economic Development
See "Talking Point," p. 4*



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REFUGEEWORKS

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