



ECHO®

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Edited by: Brad Ward
bward@echonet.org

Latin America & Caribbean Network News

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ECHO's Latin America/Caribbean Regional Impact Team

ECHO is pleased to announce the formation of the **Latin America/Caribbean Regional Impact Team**. Despite its remaining poverty and food security challenges, Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the last regions in the "developing" world without a dedicated ECHO presence. Due to the proximity of ECHO to much of the region, a strategy has emerged for extending regionally focused services from ECHO's headquarters in southwest Florida. ECHO's efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean will be led by Brad Ward who has been with ECHO since 2012 and was previously engaged in agriculture and community development efforts in Central America.

The mission of the Latin America/Caribbean Regional Impact Team is:

- To represent ECHO and extend its services in the region.
- To make appropriate technical information more widely available among persons and organizations who serve to alleviate hunger and improve the condition of the poor.
- To increase the awareness of regionally important crops, animal breeds and farming systems by seeking out, sharing and promoting effective indigenous innovations related to food sufficiency and poverty alleviation.

- To increase the availability of seeds of select regionally important crops among development workers, encourage regional seed saving and sharing and determine the availability of other significant plant material.
- To encourage networking and information sharing among development workers in each region.

ECHO's roots run deep in Latin America and the Caribbean. We excited for this new opportunity to be a more effective resource to small-holder farm families and those who serve them.

This newsletter is for you!

Send announcements and your stories to bward@echonet.org for inclusion in an upcoming newsletter.

ECHO Seedbank Resources

- Online seed catalog
- Free sample packets for active development workers

Visit the ECHO Community

Your global Agriculture network

ECHOcommunity.org

ECHO Seed Bank

The Seed Bank is a vital ministry of ECHO. Our goal is to serve as a resource for development workers who wish to experiment with underutilized crops. We maintain a collection of hard-to-find seeds that thrive under the often difficult growing conditions of the tropics and sub-

tropics. As a seed bank we provide small sample packets



of seed to those working on behalf of the poor. ECHO community members who qualify as Active Development Workers may receive up to 10 free seed packets per year. Log on to ECHOcommunity.org for more details

Best Practice Spotlight

ECHO regularly publishes Best Practice Notes to address important agriculture development issues. Here is a short excerpt from the most recent Best Practice Note on the topic of institutional project design and implementation. It is available on ECHOcommunity.org in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

ECHO frequently receives questions from members of our network, asking how available land could be used to grow food and/or create income to augment an otherwise non-agricultural project. Broadly speaking, they are asking how to begin an institutional agriculture pro-

ject—a coordinated agriculture effort undertaken by an institution or community of people, for the purpose of creating economic, environmental and/or nutritional benefits.

Major challenges addressed in the Best Practice Note related to institutional projects include:

- A lack of purpose or clear vision.
- The initial excitement and energy which motivates the participants decreases over time
- Lack of boundaries for the project, resulting in “mission creep.”
- Staff with appropriate gardening/agriculture and management experience may not be available.
- The true cost of producing small quantities of food may be higher than the local market price.
- The existing physical resources are not well suited for an agriculture project.
- Environmental catastrophes such as drought, flooding, pests and disease can wipe out investments of time and money.

ECHO’s Global Farm—A renewable resource

ECHO’s Global Farm is an incredible resource for research and hands on learning. The farm is divided into specialized areas to demonstrate best practices for major climatic zones of the tropics (e.g. rainforest, semi-arid, monsoon) as well as zones dedicated to urban farming and sustainable upland agriculture. The farm features intensive growing strategies,

uniquely adapted animal grazing and management methods, appropriate technology displays, and an extensive library with a world class collection of Tropical agriculture books, articles and digital media. Additionally, ECHO has one of the largest collections of tropical food plants in the United States.



Building raised beds on ECHO’s global farm in Fort Myers, FL.

Network Regional Event Calendar

November 18-21, 2014 ECHO International Agriculture Conference, Fort Myers, Florida

December 10-12, 2014 Best Practices in Seed Production and Seed Saving in the Tropics Workshop, Managua, Nicaragua— presented by CCID Biointensivo and ECHO

December 15-16, 2014 Seed Saving and Soil Building: The Basics, Siguatepeque, Honduras—Presented by ECHO and Camino Global

January 19 - 23, 2015 Tropical Agricultural Development I: The Basics, ECHO Farm, Fort Myers, Florida

Help our network stay connected. Send information about upcoming events to bward@echonet.org.

Hundreds of ECHO technical and educational resources are just a click away.
Check out ECHOCommunity.org today.