

From Our Regional Impact Centers

ECHO Asia

The latest issue of Asia Notes (Issue 17, May 2013 (<http://edn.link/whj72j>)) contains the following articles:

- Sustainable Decentralized Water Treatment for Rural Developing Communities Using Locally Generated Biochar Adsorbents (by Josh Kearns, MS)
- An Introduction to Bokashi Fertilizers and Soil Amendments (by Rick Burnette)

The issue is online at ECHOcommunity.org

A leadership transition has taken place at the ECHO Asia Regional Impact Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Rick and Ellen Burnette have moved to ECHO's Florida campus, where Rick is the Director of Agriculture. Abram Bicksler is now Director of the ECHO Asia Regional Impact Center, joined by Rebecca Garafano as Office Manager. Boonsong Thansrithong (Toh) is the ECHO Asia Agricultural Program Manager.

The ECHO Asia Impact Center was recently a participant in John Deere's Inspiring Leadership Program, which provides free consulting services for NGOs in the developing world. Three John Deere team members worked with the ECHO Asia staff from May 6 to May 30, and spent their time evaluating seed bank decision making and inventory management, creating templates and toolkits for the seed bank's use, and strengthening the EAIC's overall seed bank operations.

A new article entitled "Strengthening informal seed systems to enhance food security in Southeast Asia" has been published in the Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development. The article highlights some of the research conducted by the EAIC team from 2010-11 and funded by HortCRSP (USAID).

ECHO East Africa

Two new documents from the East Africa Impact Center are now posted on ECHOcommunity.org. One is a Best Practices Note (BPN) about working with pastoralists (<http://edn.link/p93fqe>). The other is the first issue of East Africa Notes (EAN) with a focus on conservation agriculture and an article about the 'Oyster nut' plant. Erwin Kinsey, Director of the East Africa Impact Center, commented, "These have been written to generate sharing from our readership. Please review these and respond with your own experiences on the groups and/or forums areas of ECHOcommunity.org."

Work continues on new publications and seminars. EAN #2 will focus on soil and water conservation and agroforestry technologies. A dialogue has begun around conducting an East Africa-based seminar on Holistic Management late this year to be facilitated by the Savory Institute, details of which are not yet fixed. A conference on best development practices in pastoralist areas is now being planned by ECHO East Africa for February 2014. Please note other trainings and events posted on ECHOcommunity.org.

The Impact Center is currently growing out green manure/cover crop seeds and designing a cold store for a small seed bank, in order to make gm/cc and other under utilized seeds available to ECHO membership in the longer term. Currently the East Africa Impact Center provides limited samples of seeds only to members within Tanzania, since they are not yet able to comply with inter-regional phytosanitary regulations.

Erwin Kinsey also shared, "If there is interest in your area to engage ECHO in some type of training for which funding is available or participants can pay, do not hesitate to contact us and engage us!"