
Echo's First Agricultural Missions Conference

We were surprised by the response when we announced that every November ECHO would sponsor a conference for agricultural missionaries. Would anyone even come when most of our potential delegates work overseas? We hoped for at least 30, but we ended up with 90 delegates, several of whom had come from overseas primarily for the conference.

Since the delegates themselves represented years of relevant experience and ideas, networking sessions were scheduled into the daily agenda. These included both formal delegate presentations and informal times to share solutions and contacts. The minute any formal session ended, the group was abuzz with conversation among people with an amazing diversity of expertise. In addition, several individuals presented profiles on the technical or outreach aspects of their work, such as Dr. Rolf Myhrman's work on velvet bean featured on page 2.

The three keynote speakers donated their time to interact with the delegates (Dr. Carl Campbell spoke on tropical fruit, Dr. Frank Martin on improving the small tropical farm, and Dr. Hugh Popenoe on farming in tropical soils). Half of every day was spent on the ECHO farm for hands-on interaction with speakers and delegates around the plants, animals and appropriate technologies at ECHO. Workshops included grafting, cooking with tropical fruits, and rooftop gardening. Many stayed after the conference to use the library.