



2010 AWARD Fellow Bridgit Muasa

Position:	Veterinary officer
Institution:	Ministry of Livestock Development
Country:	Kenya
MSc:	Clinical Studies, Theriogenology University of Nairobi, 2010
Mentored by:	Dr. Karen Marshall, Scientist Animal breeding/quantitative genetics International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Research area: *Reproductive technologies to improve animal genetic resources, particularly evaluation of the Boran cow as a potential donor of oocytes for in vitro embryo production.*

As a veterinary officer, Bridgit Muasa conducts disease diagnosis and control at the Ministry of Livestock Development's Central Veterinary Laboratories. "Livestock management in Kenya is often left to the women, who manage the animals' day-to-day health and production," says Muasa, who is working on improving the delivery of farm animal genetic resources via assisted reproductive technologies as a research assistant at ILRI. Although her current research is with cattle, avian management and production are her passion.

Muasa, who holds a BSc in Veterinary Medicine and a master's in Clinical Studies in Theriogenology from the University of Nairobi, is eager to apply her knowledge to help rural Kenyan poultry producers learn to raise and sell healthier birds, thereby increasing their incomes. Poultry is considered women's business, and is therefore an important source of cash to supplement the family's livelihood.

Muasa says that few small-scale farmers have had any poultry breeding or management training. Many farmers lose birds to dehydration because they are not aware that chickens need a constant supply of water, however small. "Chicks need a certain amount of feed and water in the first 48 hours. If they don't get it, it doesn't matter how much they get over their life span, they will not reach their full weight," she explains. "It's really satisfying to help farmers solve their problems and increase their productivity."

Muasa plans to pursue a PhD in livestock development with an emphasis on improving livestock genetic resources. As an AWARD Fellow, Muasa hopes to develop her self-confidence and to gain skills in sharing the results of her work with the women farmers, who need it most. "There is only a handful of women working for the government in livestock development, and so I hope to improve my professional visibility," says Muasa.

Muasa is one of 180 African woman scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science, empowering them to contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, please visit www.awardfellowships.org