

SPOTLIGHT - Moses Momanyi, Dawn2Dusk Farm & Kilimo



Credit: Dawn2Dusk Farm

Entering the agricultural system as a beginning farmer is fraught with challenges that would be difficult for anyone to overcome. This is especially true for those who have immigrated to the Midwest. They face overwhelming economic, cultural, and networking barriers. Integrating these communities into a robust 'circle of support' is proving to forge lasting relationships with other emerging immigrant farmers. We *all* benefit from their Indigenous food knowledge and sustainable land management practices from across the globe. A most inspiring example in the Upper Midwest comes from Moses Momanyi, co-owner and operator, along with Lonah Onyancha, of "Dawn2Dusk Farm" in Cambridge, Minnesota.

Moses has been both a recipient and the provider of technical assistance (TA) for emerging farmers in the U.S. When he first came to the U.S. from Kenya, he wanted to farm, just as he had done with his family in rural Kenya. With no access to credit, no experience with large-scale, conventional row crop agriculture, and no professional support network, he was determined to once again work the land. After joining a farm incubator and tirelessly working a night shift job for five years, Moses saved money, gained experience, and established good credit. He was then connected to a USDA loan program for under-resourced farmers.

Dawn2Dusk Certified Organic Vegetable Farm officially started. In 2020, Moses and Lonah formed their own farm incubator, Kilimo. It supports African immigrant farmers in Minnesota on topics related to access to land, business classes, networking, field days, and individualized coaching.

Meanwhile, Dawn2Dusk Farm is providing nutritious, locally grown produce to communities in the Twin Cities. Moses also works with other TA providers to incorporate more continuous living cover practices onto their farms. As an emerging farmer leader, he has pursued USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grants to purchase equipment that will help him and other emerging farmers expand the use of conservation tillage and winter cover crops on their land.

Through his 'circle of support,' Moses is directly integrating diverse peoples and practices into the U.S. agricultural landscape. His story exemplifies how diversity feeds resiliency in our communities through equitable access to culturally appropriate food, and the implementation of sustainable, resilient farming practices.