

The Last Hunger Season: A Year in an African Farm Community on the Brink of Change

By Roger Thurow

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At 4:00 am, Leonida Wanyama lit a lantern in her house made of sticks and mud. She was up long before the sun to begin her farm work, as usual. But this would be no ordinary day, this second Friday of the new year. This was the day Leonida and a group of smallholder farmers in western Kenya would begin their exodus, as she said, “from misery to Canaan,” the land of milk and honey.

Africa’s smallholder farmers, most of whom are women, know misery. They toil in a time warp, living and working essentially as their forebears did a century ago. With tired seeds, meager soil nutrition, primitive storage facilities, wretched roads, and no capital or credit, they harvest less than one-quarter the yields of Western farmers. The romantic ideal of African farmers—rural villagers in touch with nature, tending bucolic fields—is in reality a horror scene of malnourished children, backbreaking manual work, and profound hopelessness. Growing food is their driving preoccupation, and still they don’t have enough to feed their families throughout the year. The *wanjala*—the annual hunger season that can stretch from one month to as many as eight or nine—abides.

But in January 2011, Leonida and her neighbors came together and took the enormous risk of trying to change their lives. Award-winning author and world hunger activist Roger Thurow spent a year with four of them—Leonida Wanyama, Rasoa Wasike, Francis Mamati, and Zipporah Biketi—to intimately chronicle their efforts. In *The Last Hunger Season*, he illuminates the profound challenges these farmers and their families face, and follows them through the seasons to see whether, with a little bit of help from a new social enterprise organization called One Acre Fund, they might transcend lives of dire poverty and hunger.

The daily dramas of the farmers’ lives unfold against the backdrop of a looming global challenge: to feed a growing population, world food production must nearly double by 2050. If these farmers succeed, so might we all.

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The Last Hunger Season: A Year in an African Farm Community on the Brink of Change By Roger Thurow Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #165902 in Books
- Published on: 2013-05-14
- Released on: 2013-05-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.38" h x 1.00" w x 5.75" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 328 pages

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Editorial Review

Review
"The National""To understand their lives, the author ... takes us deep inside the smallholder's struggle.... Thurow has us hanging on the dramatic tensions affecting all four families: one finds the calf they'd depended on to cover future educational fees has died... Where Thurow is most effective is the interplay he weaves between hunger and policy - or its absence... Readers of "The Last Hunger Season" will find themselves getting caught up in these dilemmas, then breathing a sigh of relief to learn that the farmers Thurow followed in 2011 enjoyed reasonably good yields that year - seven to 20 bags of harvested maize apiece - thanks to One Acre's seeds and training." "Publishers Weekly""Empathetic and eye-opening.... Thurow paints a sobering but ultimately hopeful picture of a continuing food crisis in Africa and some of the things people are doing to mitigate it." "Beliefnet""Awe-inspiring . . . A well-told story of scarcity and hope."
"Financial Times
""Part of the beauty of this book is that it is not the story of foreign aid workers. Nor indeed does the author, a former "Wall Street Journal" reporter with decades' experience of writing about Africa and agriculture, intrude. Rather it is the tale of villagers such as Wanyama who is grappling with dilemmas familiar to millions of rural and indeed urban Africans: whether to devote scant money to health, education for the children, or food.... This book shows us why history does not have to repeat itself."
"Weekender
"""The Last Hunger Season" is as much a look at the distortions of agricultural development in Africa as it is a gritty underdog tale of hope and survival. The issue of malnutrition and hunger in children and adults living in impoverished conditions is a vast one. But Thurow does a good job not only touching on those problems but also deeply exploring the trials and tribulations associated with farming in Kenya. His voice is even-keeled, hopeful and respectful, and it's almost impo

About the Author

Roger Thurow is a senior fellow for Global Agriculture and Food Policy at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. He was, for thirty years, a reporter at the *Wall Street Journal*. He is, with Scott Kilman, the author of *Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty*, which won the Harry Chapin Why Hunger book award and was a finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize and for the New York Public Library Helen Bernstein Book Award. He is a 2009 recipient of the Action Against Hunger Humanitarian Award. He lives near Chicago.

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The reason? Because this The Last Hunger Season: A Year in an African Farm Community on the Brink of Change is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap that but latter it will zap you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who also write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this ever again or you going to

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