

Plus ca change plus c'est la meme chose
The more it changes the more it's the same

We're all getting a little tired of this coronavirus, eager to get back to our 'real' lives, but as Guillaume reminds me malaria and tuberculosis kill far more people each year, especially in West Africa. I'm lucky to be spending time in Utah with my grandchildren, Penelope, 13 and Fiona, 8 one of whom likes to ride, the other loves gymnastics. I shuttle them back and forth and have had time to rewrite and edit my memoir on Africa, which I hope to see published soon.

Meanwhile, Guillaume stays safe in Benin and keeps busy making beer, upgrading the brewery to pass certification so that his beer can be sold commercially. He's also just finished building an enormous new chicken house for all our hens and their chicks. Soon we'll have an ample supply of eggs from organically fed chickens plus manure to put on the fields. Bio-Benin endures and evolves, slowly but surely.

We've put the fishery on hold and rabbits will be housed in due course, when the fields are full of organically raised vegetables. For now, Guillaume hopes to participate in an international festival in October with his beer and we use the *dreche*, residual grain from the beer making, mixed with whey from cheese made by the nomadic Peuhl tribe, to feed the chickens; a closed loop of organic production.

Benin is suffering like the rest of the world from Covid-19. Guillaume knows at least two people personally who have died. Since the country lacks adequate medical facilities and has only three ventilators for the entire country, they can only wait it out, wear masks, respect social distancing and wash their hands frequently. Most commercial traffic between the north and south of the country has been drastically curtailed and the people resigned to staying in place and enduring, much like they endure malaria and the 5,000 deaths it brings each year.

Other news includes Guillaume approaching the local agricultural college to get approval for students to work in our fields and raise organic vegetables as part of their practical training. So often they graduate without any hands-on work in the fields. Some students in Benin think agriculture can be done entirely over the internet.

Getting back to Benin will be problematic until I can renew my passport and travel is safe. In the meantime, I support Guillaume as he gradually makes improvements to the property, installs electricity in the house, starts to manure the fields and make everything more beautiful. I attach a few photos, including one of the new chicken house, flowers growing around the house and a Peuhl village nearby, where we will get the whey which is normally thrown away.

I find it heartening that each time I reach out at least one of you sends in a donation. It's even easier now with PayPal on our website, www.bio-benin.org. Every little bit helps us reach our goals and prepare the land for organic vegetable gardening and raising chickens. I hope you'll consider donating at a time of extreme food shortages in West Africa. This is one of the reasons people eat bats, dogs and cats here. They have no other food.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support for what we are trying to accomplish in Benin. With your help we hope to make many more people in Natitingou food secure, eating healthy and nutritious food, much of which we will give away to those in need. Please make your donation through www.bio-benin.org or by sending a cheque to Bio-Benin, 7483 Pinebrook Road, Park City, UT 84098.

A heartfelt thank you from Guillaume and Julie.



New chicken coop



House in Natitingou



Zinnia next to house



Peuhl village nearby