

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A Letter to the Editor is a letter to a newspaper or magazine publication expressing concern or commenting about a current issue. It is a good advocacy tool and means to raise awareness in your community as it represents the views of everyday citizens and can have an impact after the date of publication. Below are some pointers to help you write your letter:

FOLLOW THE PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

- ☐ **Follow the guidelines** of the publication. Newspapers and other publications have guidelines in place for Letters to the Editor submission.
- ☐ **A 150 to 300 word limit** for the letters is common for most newspapers. Keep your letter short, original and use facts to support your position.
- ☐ **“To the editor of the <name of newspaper>”** or **“To the editor”** is acceptable. You can use a simple salutation to start your letter if you don’t know the editor’s name.
- ☐ **Include your name, address and telephone number/email** in the signature block. Newspapers don’t publish anonymous letters. They will also keep your contact information private.
- ☐ **State your key point in the first sentence of your letter.** Your opening sentence should tell the reader why you are writing.
- ☐ **Explain why the issue is important in plain language.** Make it simple yet interesting. All readers will not be familiar with the topic or share the same interest as you.
- ☐ **Tell the reader what action they can take before you close your letter.** You can tell them to contact their Member of Parliament to support increased foreign assistance for small-scale farmers. Or tell them to visit the Good Soil campaign website to get involved.

DRAW ATTENTION TO THE GOOD SOIL CAMPAIGN

- ☐ Support to small-scale farming in the developing world is not discussed regularly in mainstream media. You may need to create an indirect link to the campaign. Editors look for responses to what they publish so relate your letter to one of their articles.
- ☐ Use topics discussed in the media as a Segway to Good Soil. For e.g. global hunger, foreign affairs, natural disasters, trade, agriculture, nutrition or climate change.
- ☐ Around election time, draw attention to issues that were not mentioned in election debate related articles, such as international aid or support for small-scale farming.
- ☐ Alternatively, write in relation to issues that were mentioned as part of a party/candidate’s election platform.

- ☐ Think local. Articles and events around local food and agriculture present an opportunity to write about supporting small-scale farmers.
- ☐ Need help. Contact us for ideas or assistance in writing your letter. Our email or phone number can be found on our webpage: www.worldrenew.net/goodsoil.

INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF PUBLICATION

- ☐ Try and follow the tone and style of the newspaper.
- ☐ Be respectful, professional and engaging.
- ☐ Provide factual evidence. Include one or two interesting statistics.
- ☐ If you can, include your professional title. It may increase the credibility of your letter.
- ☐ Link your letter to current events being mentioned in the media.
- ☐ Be Timely. Submit your letter response to an article soon after it is published.
- ☐ Remember to include your contact information in case the editor wants to follow-up.
- ☐ Consider submitting a letter to a smaller, local newspaper before writing to larger publications.
- ☐ Modify the original letter to submit to different publication outlets.

SHARE YOUR LETTER

- ☐ When you are published, email us the link or newspaper title, publication date and page number at: mmendonca@worldrenew.net with “Good Soil Letter to the Editor” in the subject line. Even if you don’t get published feel free to share your letter with us.
- ☐ Share your letter with your family, colleagues, social networks, friends, church congregation and also with decision-makers such as your Member of Parliament. Increase the reach, increase the impact.
- ☐ Encourage people you know to also write and submit a letter in support of strengthening assistance to small-scale farmers through increased foreign aid funding.