

[Innovation of the Week: Getting to the Market](#)

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By Molly Theobald

For many farmers, an abundant harvest is only the first step toward feeding their families and earning an income. Vegetables ripening in the field—or even harvested and stored nearby—are still a long way from the market where they can be sold for a profit.

One farmer in Sudan’s Kebkabyia province, [Abdall Omer Saeedo](#), has to travel 10 kilometers twice a week to the nearest market to sell his vegetables and green fodder. Without a cart, truck, or other means of transporting a large amount of goods efficiently, he couldn’t make enough money to cover his production and packing costs, let alone the cost of seeds for the next season, education for his children, and other household needs. And after making it to market with his 10 sacks and five bags of produce on the back of his donkey, he was still at risk for loss if he wasn’t able to sell it all. Instead of dealing with the hassle of trying to pack it back home again, he would throw away whatever wasn’t sold.

Saeedo sought the help of [Practical Action](#), a development non-profit that uses technology to help people gain access to basic services like clean water and sanitation in order to improve food production and incomes (see [Beating the Heat to Reduce Post-Harvest Waste](#)). Working with local metal workers, the organization designed a donkey cart for him. Now, Saeedo is not only able to cart his produce to market twice a week, he can also easily bring back whatever he is unable to sell. His income has increased along with the quality and quantity of his product, which is no longer lost or destroyed by travel time and conditions.

Practical Action’s transportation innovations are helping to improve farmer livelihoods throughout sub-Saharan Africa and around the world. In [Kenya](#), the organization introduced bicycle taxis as a way for people to earn a living, as well as an energy-efficient means to transport people from place to place. In Nepal, Practical Action’s [bicycle ambulances](#) help carry sick or injured people from remote areas to hospitals safely and comfortably. And in [Sri Lanka](#), the group’s bicycle trailers—capable of carrying loads of up to 200 kilograms—are used to transport goods to market, people to hospitals, and even books to local communities.

To read more about innovations that help get crops to market, reduce post-harvest waste, and improve livelihoods see: [Beating the Heat to Reduce Post-Harvest Waste](#), [It’s All About the Process](#), [Investing in Better Food Storage](#), [Reducing the Things They Carry](#), and [In a World of Abundance, Food Waste is a Crime](#).