



ESCUELA AGRICOLA PANAMERICANA
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

APRIL 1950. At the end of the month 59 new students were on the campus, and a good many of the old ones were returning from vacation. A problem is developing in connection with boys who show up here without having made application in advance. This is especially true of boys from El Salvador. Some of these unexpected arrivals look so good it is hard to turn them away; but every time we take one of them it usually results in their passing the word to friends, who in turn show up unexpectedly. Interest in scholarships this year has been especially keen in Nicaragua and Colombia. There has been a gratifying increase in the number of applications from Panama; while Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica have maintained their high averages and El Salvador has swamped us as usual.

Interest in the Field Crops department this month centered around the termination of the "zafra" or harvesting of the cane crop, after which the boys who took part were given a free trip to Danli. The cutting of sugar cane and manufacture of panela (dulce, crude sugar) is just about the heaviest work which a student has to tackle during his three years here. Grinding begins at four o'clock in the morning and continues intermittently all day. The crop this year consisted entirely of the variety Mayagüez 28. Thirty three days were occupied in harvesting and milling. The cane (plant crop) was practically two years old at the time of harvesting, and yielded at the rate of 70 tons per acre. We made 21,520 pounds of panela more than half of which was sold (since it is more than we can use) and the proceeds placed to the credit of the Students Benefit Fund.

The second and third papers on the composition of Central American food plants, published by the Central American Nutrition Foundation which works under the joint auspices of this school and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, were published in "Food Research", volume 15. These two papers cover food plants collected in Guatemala. Among those which have shown unusual or interesting values may be mentioned Amaranthus hybridus; the leaves and growing points of pumpkin as well as the chayote (Sechium edule, known as guisquil in Guatemala); and the leaves and tender stems of Crotalaria longirostrata. These are outstanding in their content of calcium, iron, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and ascorbic acid. Sunflower seeds were high not only in nitrogen, iron and riboflavin but also contained more than 50% of oil. Those persons interested in the subject should apply for copies of these papers, either to the school or to Dr Robert S. Harris at the Nutritional Biochemistry Laboratories, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.

On the third of the month we were visited by Allen L. Schwandt of the Liga Mexico-Panamericana. On the fifth we had the pleasure of receiving a distinguished group of Nicaraguan diplomats, including Senator Mario Argüello and the Ambassador to Honduras. Mr Crede H. Calhoun, representative of the New York Times in Central America, came on the 5th and published an excellent account of the school, under the heading "Honduras School is 'Good Neighbor'" in the Times of the 15th. This was translated into Spanish and reprinted by the Epoca and El Dia of Tegucigalpa. The Honduran Director of Agriculture Ing. Pompilio Ortega, came on the 5th and spent several days with us. Dr Carlos M. Galvez, Minister of Education, came on the 16th with a group of friends, to discuss plans for the Escuela Normal Rural which has recently been transferred from Tegucigalpa to Comayagua. Merle and Oliver Toll of Tolland, Colorado, were here on the 22nd, while Dr Enea Raseto of the Nicaraguan school of agriculture at Chinandega came on the 26th. Dr Alberto Varela of Colombia, who has been studying at the University of California under a fellowship of the Rockefeller Foundation, spent two days with us at the end of the month.