



ESCUELA AGRICOLA PANAMERICANA  
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

NOVEMBER 1953. Students sometimes poke fun at their Director because he says he refuses to die until he sees one of our graduates attain the position of Minister of Agriculture in some tropical American country. The Director may thus be forced to live for some years yet, but we are making progress. Here is a case:

From the highland town of Marcala in Honduras Gustavo Perez came to the School when we first opened our doors in August 1943. He was of humble origin; his education had consisted of five years of primary schooling. He was graduated here with the class of 1946, after which Doris Stone took him to Costa Rica to work with a group of Indians. He taught them vocational agriculture. On coming back to Honduras, he was employed by the Comisión Nacional de Agricultura y Alimentación, which sent him to Mexico for six months' training, in preparation for assisting with the 1950 agricultural census. Shortly, he was employed by STICA and sent to Catacamas, in the Department of Olancho, as Extension Agent. We saw him there; his office was as neat as a pin, and what interested us even more, it looked like a little corner of Zamorano. He had even copied our furniture. It was not long before the government of Honduras decided to establish a vocational school of agriculture at Catacamas. Who would be the Director? The answer was simple: Gustavo. And there he is today.

Hernán Fonseca reports successful preparation of more than 200 tons of Jaraguá hay. This was cut from about 75 acres of pasture, and he says the material was in prime condition. When stacked, it showed 15.8% moisture content, as determined by Francisco Sierra in our chemical laboratory. Haymaking is a slightly risky business with us; if you start too early and get caught by rain, you are stuck; and if you start too late, the grass is so tough it does not make good hay.

Quite a month of interesting visitors. On the 2nd, Dr. C.A. Fleschner came for a stay of several days. He is connected with the Experiment Station of the University of California. His job, on this trip, is to study mites on citrus and avocado trees. At the middle of the month, Edmund S. Whitman, Director of Public Relations for the United Fruit Company, brought a "safari" (as he termed it) of extremely interesting visitors, including Mr. William Gray, editor of the international editions of Life Magazine; Mr. Martin O'Neill of Time Magazine; Mr. Sergio Santelices, Latin American editor of the International News Service; and about ten others. In contrast to this de-luxe safari, Dr. Carlos M.A. Helbig, working under the auspices of the University of El Salvador, reached Zamorano toward the end of the month after having spent 130 days on foot in Mosquitia, the most remote and little-known part of Honduras. Dr. Helbig is a German geographer -- one of the old-school kind. Reminiscent of Dr. Karl Sapper, who did such splendid work in Guatemala and other parts of Central America 50 years ago. Our friend Francisco de Sola of San Salvador dropped in for the night to talk about his pet project, the development of Simaruba glauca as a source of edible fat. Dr. J. R. Havis of Turrialba came to look us over.

Three boys we sent on scholarships to the College of Agriculture, University of Florida, have written that they are running out of money. Such letters from college students are of course perfectly normal; but in this particular instance the boys are on the horns of a dilemma. They have no overcoats and winter is approaching. If they use their remaining funds to buy overcoats, they cannot eat during December. They ask, do we prefer that they freeze to death or die of starvation?