



ESCUELA AGRICOLA PANAMERICANA  
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS

### MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

MARCH 1955. This month has been devoted principally to the selection of new students for the school year which commences the last Monday in May. The Director and the Registrar, Amado Pelén, spent a week in El Salvador and a week in Guatemala for this purpose; while Professor Julio Pineda went to Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

In choosing new students, we take into account a number of factors, of which the following seem to be essential: (1) intellectual capacity of the applicant; (2) character, including seriousness of purpose; and (3) an equitable distribution of scholarships among the countries we are trying to serve, based upon local needs and the number of applications we receive.

Each applicant who looks promising is given the "Examen de Capacidad," which this year was expanded to include 100 questions, about half of which are related to intelligence, about half to previous education. It seems to us that the examination is too long; not many boys can concentrate for three or four hours, which was the time required by most this year. We further got the impression that the best questions are those which involve the use of reasoning in connection with simple mathematical problems. For example: "A boy is eight years old and his sister 13. When the boy is twice his present age, how old will his sister be?"

There is by no means a high positive correlation between the number of years a boy has been in school and the grade he makes in our examination. A boy who had finished high school and was studying law made slightly below 50. Before taking the exam, he asked, "Do you teach philosophy at your school?" To which we replied, "Sure. Lots of it. In fact, four hours every day". This is the time the students spend in their prácticas or field work.

The demand for our graduates in extension work cannot yet be met. The government of Guatemala is reorganizing this branch of its Agricultural Ministry, and is calling home several of our boys who have been working in Salvador and Honduras. It was gratifying, on our recent trip, to talk with graduates who are working in Salvador. Two of them are earning annually about \$5000 each, a fine income for a young man in this part of the world. They do this by supplementing government work with teaching and the operation of small agricultural enterprises of their own.

It was a pleasure to visit the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura at Bárcena, near Guatemala City, to which we donated, not long since, eight heifers of three-quarters Guernsey or Jersey blood to assist in rebuilding their dairy herd. This school has an excellent physical plant and a fine group of students. Both the Minister of Agriculture, don Lázaro Chacón, and the Director, don Rigoberto Chacón, are anxious to build up close cooperation between our two institutions and we are happy to be in close touch with the Guatemala school once more.

We are lining up graduates who will go to the University of Florida in September with a view to working toward the B.S. degree. We hope to send four on our own scholarships; several others are going on their own. Out of each graduating class of about 50, five to ten of our boys seem qualified to do good work at the university level. By majoring in such branches as animal husbandry, agronomy, soils, pathology, entomology, and so on, they will assist in developing a group of technically trained men of whom we need many in tropical America.