



MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

AUGUST 1956. Interest this month centered in the neighboring republic of El Salvador, where the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura was inaugurated on the 28th, terminating a program organized by the "Asociación Amigos de la Tierra" (Friends of the Land) celebrating their tenth anniversary. Wilson Popenoe, Professor Manuel Chavez Viaud (a citizen of El Salvador) and student Francisco Lino Osegueda, also a salvadoreño and the best student in our second-year class, took part in the meetings which we think deserve an issue of this news letter because of their almost unique character and their importance from the standpoint of agricultural education.

The Asociación Amigos de la Tierra, in its ten years of existence, has made an enviable record. It is devoted to the cause of soil conservation, soil improvement, and better agriculture in a country where agriculture is all-important - though it is to be noted that the industrial development of El Salvador in recent years has made rapid strides, a desirable thing in a country which has more people than it has land. Amigos de la Tierra now count with more than 800 members; they have published and widely distributed two excellent books on conservation; they issue a monthly newspaper "El Conservacionista", edited by José Raul Flórez, which is distributed free of charge and which preaches the gospel of better agriculture in a popular manner. It seems to us that the Amigos de la Tierra, a group sponsored by practically all of the important agriculturists and coffee growers of El Salvador, are doing a fine job.

Speaking of agriculturists and coffee growers gives us an opportunity to ask, what is the difference? Aren't coffee growers agriculturists? This is a pet question of ours, and we like to quote the answer given by the late Professor Oakes Ames of Harvard, who pointed out that agriculturists think of plants en masse, i.e., a field of corn or sugar cane, while horticulturists think of plants as individuals. Every coffee grower knows that he has to treat his plants as individuals; so does every banana grower; ergo, they are horticulturists.

The program in Salvador included lectures as well as round table discussions, and we want to mention that the latter, rather new in this part of the world, were popular and we believe very useful. The excursion to Altamira, property of don Francisco de Sola, brought out many comments regarding the cultivation of coffee without permanent shade.

The inauguration of the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura was of course the feature of greatest interest to those of us who went from Zamorano. The President of El Salvador, Lt. Col. Oscar Osorio, summed up the value and importance of this school, for the founding of which much credit must be given to the former Minister of Agriculture Roberto Quiñonez and his successor José Nicolás Mora. It has been no simple matter to develop a physical plant which has cost more than a million dollars (and will cost considerably more before all necessary equipment is available). The school, under the direction of Dr. Victor Ortiz, with Marshal Fox as Technical Director, opens this month with some 70 students. Of course it gives us satisfaction to see two of our own graduates, Ricardo Granada of El Salvador and José R. Calvo of Costa Rica (both of whom subsequently were graduated at the University of Florida) on the teaching staff.