



ESCUELA AGRICOLA PANAMERICANA
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

MARCH 1952. We are now up against the pressing and perplexing problem of choosing about 65 new students from a list of more than 600 applicants. Unlike many other institutions, where the only requirement is a diploma from a school of immediately lower level, we try to take into account a number of factors. In the first place, we endeavor to satisfy ourselves that the applicant is sincerely interested in pursuing an agricultural career. This is often difficult to determine, but in general, boys from rural districts are better bets than those who have grown up on the city streets. This is so obvious as to require no comment, yet we cannot allow it to be the deciding factor, since many city boys sincerely desire to be agriculturists. Once we feel that a candidate is a good bet from the vocational angle, we give him the "Examen de Capacidad", which was developed here three years ago by Dr. Herbert Popenoe of Pasadena, California, and which has proved to be our most useful tool in weeding out applicants who would enter only to fail during their first year. This examination, which so far as we know is the first of its kind to be used in schools of vocational agriculture in Latin America, stresses arithmetic and figures in general, relationships, younger and older age problems, and alphabetic situation series both mathematical and otherwise. Ample proof that it is by no means a test of previous education has been provided by our experience: in many instances boys with only 5 or 6 years of primary school have made better grades than some high school graduates. Once the applicant has satisfactorily passed this test he is given a medical examination, and then, if he does not live too far away, he is brought here on a month's probation, during which time he works in the horticultural department and can find out if he is going to like the sort of life he will lead here, and we on our part can satisfy ourselves that he is really interested.

Walter Schullstrom reports from the Dairy: "For milk production, this has been the highest year on record due to the development of our herd through the use of pure-bred sires, and through increased quantity and quality of feeds. We are now milking 65 cows; six students are milking by hand and three machines are used for instructional purposes. Following are yields for the month of March, during a five-year period, in pounds of milk per cow per day: 1948, 8.9; 1949, 10.7; 1950, 12.4; 1951, 11.6; and 1952, 16.0. These figures of course represent the average; a few of our highest yielders are giving 30 to 35 pounds of milk daily. Figures for March, however, by no means represent the average for the year; we are in the midst of the dry season and our pastures are in extremely poor condition. We are feeding about 40 lbs. of ensilage per cow per day, plus grain mixtures containing about 14% digestible protein. The ensilage used at present is composed of 60% sweet sorghum and 40% pigeon pea tops. The cows also receive green feed, either chopped Guatemala grass or pasturage, twice weekly."

In the horticultural department, Horace Clay reports promising results from the pioneer graft on mangos. Several new citrus varieties, including three tangelos, were received from Florida. Our collection of vinifera grapes from California, some 45 varieties in all (of which only two, Valdopeñas and Carignane, had done even fairly well here) was abandoned and replaced with varieties of Labrusca blood, including Niagara, Diamond, Golden Muscat, Delaware, Catawba, Beacon, Caco, and about 6 others. American grapes in general seem to do much better in the tropics than the so-called "European" (vinifera) grapes which have been planted throughout tropical America during the past four centuries without their culture having attained commercial importance except in a few places and on a very limited scale.