



## MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

APRIL 1957. We are making up the teaching program for the new school year which commences Monday 3 June, and as usual we come up against the problem of texts. Since this is a problem which affects all other schools of vocational agriculture in Spanish-speaking countries of tropical America we think it worth while to discuss it in some detail.

Texts for teaching English to students whose native tongue is Spanish are numerous and many of them are good. We have switched from one to another, as the years have passed. Because so many of our graduates go into the service of their governments as agricultural extension workers, we added, two years ago, a course in extension principles and methods. Experts of STIGA in Tegucigalpa have taken part in giving this course.

We have not found a text in Spanish on botany which meets our ideas. (It must be remembered that most of our teaching has to be in Spanish). We would welcome a text which covers the elements of this science and treats of a limited number of tropical economic plants - there are only about 35 plant families which are of major importance to us. Neither have we found a suitable text for classroom work in zoology. There are some good Spanish texts on general biology, but they cover too much ground for a school of vocational agriculture - or so we think.

Our first-year classes in elements of agriculture and elements of horticulture have to be taught on the basis of lectures, outlines put on the blackboard, and copy-book work. We do not have much trouble with these subjects. As regards mathematics, or course there are plenty of texts in Spanish but they do not cover agricultural mathematics. We make the students (first and second years) solve the sort of problems they are going to meet when they go out into the agricultural world.

For vegetable gardening and pomology we have prepared texts of our own, for we have found nothing suitable in Spanish. These subjects must be taught on the basis of tropical American conditions. We have a good text in general chemistry, published in Argentina, and we use as a reference the excellent book on soils by Lyon and Buckman, which has been put into Spanish but is expensive and too advanced to be used as a text for our second-year students.

Field crops we have to handle on the basis of outlines which we prepare ourselves. The same is true of animal husbandry subjects in general. The excellent "Manual de Lechería para los Trópicos" issued some years ago by the United States Department of Agriculture is a great help. On Conservation we also have the excellent manual issued by the Department.

There is a good Spanish text on Farm Management (Hopkins) but it is more extensive than we need, for this is a one-semester course. Farm records we handle through giving problems in the classroom. Swine and Poultry are taught mainly through lectures and outlines on the blackboard though we have some bulletins, mainly from Guatemala, as well as some good reference works in Spanish.

Agricultural engineering and farm machinery must be taught mainly through lectures and the blackboard. We have found no texts in Spanish which fully meet our needs. The same is true of Farm sanitation and disease prevention. Much of our training in these subjects is practical. That is to say, it is done outside the classroom - which applies also to most subjects taught at this school.