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ANNUAL REPORT OF ESCUELA AGRICOLA PANAMERICANA

1952

Tegucigalpa, Honduras, C. A.

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ANNUAL REPORT

1952

This year was a satisfactory one from all points of view. We graduated 44 students from nine republics, and we took in 72 new students of whom 68 were on the campus at the end of the calendar year.

The interesting trend mentioned in last year's report continues to develop. This is the demand on the part of government agencies in numerous tropical American countries for graduates to work in agricultural extension, the supervision of agricultural loans, and teaching in vocational schools. A large proportion of our boys is now entering these fields. For the successful prosecution of such activities, and for the reputation of the school, we cannot afford to turn out graduates who are not intellectually competent and adequately prepared.

And there is another factor: more and more of our graduates are going to the United States for further training, mainly on scholarships provided by a considerable number of governments and institutions. All this has made it necessary for us to tighten up a bit on the scholastic end. As was mentioned in our last Annual Report, our original aim was vocational training and little more.

On the whole, we feel the trends are wholesome. It is now costing us more than \$5,000 to turn out a graduate, and it does not seem logical to spend this much money on a boy who is not going to be a real element for good when he goes out into the world.

In several countries, discrimination against our graduates because they lack professional degrees ("Ingeniero Agrónomo, equivalent

to Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in the United States) continues to prove a real handicap and we expect it to become worse in the future. Wherever colleges of agriculture ("Facultades de Agronomía") are established, the problem comes up sooner or later. To assist us in preparing a limited number of our very best graduates to meet the competition of the Ingenieros Agrónomos, the United Fruit Company has now provided funds for scholarships in the United States. Two of our graduates were at the University of Florida this year on such scholarships, one of whom will graduate in 1953 and return to Escuela Agrícola Panamericana as Instructor in Horticulture. The University of Florida has been generous in receiving our graduates and giving them every opportunity.

Commencement Day, 1952

On Saturday, March first, we celebrated our seventh Commencement, at which (as has already been mentioned) 44 students representing nine countries were graduated. These were divided as follows:

Guatemala	7
El Salvador	2
Honduras	6
Nicaragua	6
Costa Rica	10
Panamá	4
Colombia	5
Cuba	2
Dominican Republic	2

It may be interesting to add the following comments: Most of the Guatemalan graduates, after going home on vacation, left that country to work with the governments of El Salvador and Honduras. Most of the Hondurans went into service here with the STICA, the Banco de Fomento, and the new agricultural school at Catacamas.

Several of the Costa Ricans came back to work in Honduras. Most of the Colombians returned to family properties. Because of the difficulty experienced by our graduates in getting good jobs with the Colombian government, we have been selecting students from that country who are likely to return to their own farms. The Cubans, because of labor laws, have a hard time obtaining good jobs and are showing a desire to work in Central America. The Dominicans, almost without exception, have good jobs offered them by their government when they return home.

Commencement exercises, which took place in Zemurray Hall as usual, and were broadcast over HRN (it gives parents, who cannot attend, a thrill to hear their boys' names called when the time comes for diplomas to be handed out). An unusually large number of distinguished visitors sat upon the platform, including Dr. Juan Manuel Galvez, President of Honduras - who has not missed one of these occasions. It is customary for the diplomatic representatives of countries which have nationals in the graduating class to be present on the platform; six were present this year, which with officials of the Honduran government, makes seven.

The principal address of the day was delivered by don Roberto Quiñones, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of El Salvador, who was followed by Ing. Benjamín Membreño, Honduran Minister of Agriculture, and by Doris Stone, speaking on behalf of our Board of Regents. Rodolfo Barrenechea Bolandi of Costa Rica delivered an excellent Valedictory address on behalf of the Class of 1952, after which he went to the new agricultural school at Catacamas where he is now teaching. About 400 guests were entertained at luncheon.

The New School Year

The 72 new students who commenced the academic year on Monday 2 June were divided by countries as follows:

Colombia	6
Costa Rica	8
Cuba	3
Ecuador	4
Guatemala	5
Honduras	20
Nicaragua	8
Mexico	1
Panama	4
Dominican Republic	4
El Salvador	8
Venezuela	1

These students had to be selected from about 600 applications. There was a great increase this year in the number of Colombian applicants, due in large part to a highly favorable write-up of the school by "Calibán" (brother of ex-president Eduardo Santos) which appeared in "El Tiempo" of Bogotá, one of the leading dailies of South America. El Salvador continues to swamp us with applications. There are always plenty from Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica; and during the past year or two the number from Nicaragua has increased very materially, due in large part to the interest shown by President Somoza and his ambassador to Honduras, Dr Diego M Sequeira. We still do not receive enough applications from Panama to enable us to have much choice, while Cuba has fallen off, and we rarely get one from Venezuela or Peru. Applications from Ecuador increased materially this year.

We have expanded the use of our "Examen de Capacidad" since we find it the best basis for the elimination of candidates who are almost certain to fail in their classroom work. This examination is now being given by representatives of the United Fruit Company at

headquarters in a number of countries, which saves us a good deal of money, since we are often able to avoid the expense of bringing a new student here, only to find that he is unable to pass in his classroom work and has to be sent home at our expense. Candidates from Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua are usually given the examination here on the campus.

Personnel

In August, Mr Albert S. Muller, who had been Assistant Director since April of 1950, resigned to go to the University of Florida as Counselor for Latin American Students in Agriculture. Because of his familiarity with Escuela Agricola Panamericana and his interest in our boys, he is proving extremely useful to us in connection with graduates we desire to send to Florida.

Manuel Chávez Viaud, a native of El Salvador, educated in Switzerland and California, was employed as Professor of Biology, replacing Professor Héctor Gómez Lora, who resigned in October of 1951.

Walter Schullstrom, who had charge of our dairy herd, resigned and was replaced by Rodolfo Zamora of Costa Rica, one of our graduates whom we had sent to the University of Florida, where he received the degree of B.S.A. in June of this year.

Horace Clay, who had been in charge of our Horticultural Department, resigned in July. In November, Harry S. Gordon, a young Scotchman trained at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, was brought here in November as Plant Propagator.

Kenneth Caston came from London, England, toward the end of the year to work in the Livestock Department under the general direction of Rodolfo Zamora.

Donald Delgado, who had served as Student Inspector and had also taught one of the classes in English, resigned in September.

Buildings and Equipment

Work was limited principally to repairs and alterations of buildings constructed in previous years, and to improvement of our domestic water supply through connecting with the present system a spring which had not previously been used. We now have plenty of water available; but we have found that we shall have to increase the size of the pipe which brings water from the reservoir to the campus, in order to have sufficient pressure at all points on the latter. This we hope to do in 1953.

Medical Department

Adán Zepeda, who has been in charge of this department since March 1951, obtained his degree of M.D. at the middle of the year. He has continued to take good care of our students, and to live up to the best ethical standards of the profession in connection with caring for employees and inhabitants of our valley in general. We noted in our last report that there is no practicing physician, other than Dr Zepeda, nearer than Tegucigalpa (36 kilometers distant), hence his presence here, and his willingness to care for all who come to him, is of great advantage to our neighbors.

Only five cases of malaria occurred among the student body, and it is fair to assume that these were brought in from the outside, for malaria is now very rare in the neighborhood of the campus. Dr Zepeda treated during the year 69 cases of tonsillitis, 29 of amoebiasis, two of appendicitis (in both of which, the students were sent to Hospital Viera in Tegucigalpa for appendectomies), there was the usual

amount of grippe or influenza, not of a severe type, and so on. We are happy to state that up to now, we have never lost a student here at the school; we can only hope that this will continue.

Dr Henry D Guilbert of Tegucigalpa took over the dental laboratory, with the usual program of fortnightly visits on Saturdays. Mr Carleton Hale, General Sanitary Inspector for the United Fruit Company, continued to visit us from time to time.

Religious Services

The Franciscan Missionaries in Tegucigalpa continued to send a priest every Sunday to say Mass. Once a month he comes on Saturday to hear confessions that evening. We reported last year that we had inaugurated a program of Saturday evening lectures by these priests, on moral and ethical subjects, and that attendance was obligatory on the part of all students. Because of persistent objection on the part of many, we decided to give this up.

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Meteorology

The year was notable for unusually heavy rains in June, which caused the small stream which runs through our property - the Quebrada Caparrosa - to overflow its banks and damage severely a considerable area in our vegetable garden. It was the highest flood, by far, which we have experienced in our ten years here. To prevent a recurrence of this sort we commenced the construction of a heavy retaining wall, particularly necessary because another flood of this sort would undermine our tractor shed and repair shop.

Tabulation of rainfall, maximum and minimum temperatures by months follows:

	Rainfall (inches)	Maximum Temperature (Fahr.)	Minimum Temperature (Fahr.)
January	0.41	88	45
February	0.16		48
March	2.67		49
April	1.99	92	53
May	5.66	92	60
June	17.71	92	63
July	6.75	86	60
August	4.93	87	60
September	7.31	89	57
October	3.61	86	53
November	2.09	85	49
December	0.08	86	46
TOTAL	<u>53.37</u>		

Work in the Three Departments

As has been pointed out in previous reports, students do their "prácticas" during the first year in the Department of Horticulture; in the second, in that of Field Crops; and in the third, in that of Animal Husbandry. Since activities in these three departments have been reported in our Monthly News Letter, it is not necessary here to give more than a general resumé.

The vegetable garden continued to provide good training for the boys, and to supply the students' mess hall, as well as staff families, with all the vegetables we could use. We did not produce as much nursery stock - grafted citrus, mangos, avocados, and roses - as we have done in several previous years. Our young vineyard of American grapes was seriously damaged by the June flood. There was a fine crop of avocados and grapefruit; a fair one of oranges and mangos.

The Field Crops Department, under the direction of Professor Luis Morcillo, produced abundant supplies of sweet potatoes and yuca for our consumption, and more than enough sweet sorghum to fill our

three silos - some 650 tons in all. Our largest planting of corn was severely damaged by the heavy rains of June, and did not yield well, neither did our large planting of Plainsman grain sorghum.

In the Department of Animal Husbandry, excellent progress was made in the dairy. We are gradually building up our herd to 3/4 Jersey and Guernsey blood. During the year, 209,000 quarts of milk were produced; 11,866 lbs of cream, 4406 lbs of butter, and 3782 lbs of Cheddar-type cheese. We can not raise sufficient steers to supply the beef we consume; but it is interesting to note that beef supplied the Mess hall only cost us seven and one half cents, U.S. currency, per pound.

Our herd of pigs, all Hampshires, was built up to more than 100 animals, and 33,666 lbs of pork were supplied the Mess hall and staff. The poultry branch reached an all time high, with more than 2000 young birds on hand in May, and a total yield, for the year, of 110,038 eggs.

The Monthly News Letter

This little "Publication" of one multigraphed closely-spaced sheet was sent regularly to about 180 recipients. It goes to government agencies and experiment stations in all parts of tropical America; to all Divisions of the United Fruit Company and its subsidiaries; to a number of agricultural colleges in the United States; and to important friends of the school in many regions. Reports indicate that it helps, in many places, to maintain interest in our work.

The Scientific Journal "CEIBA"

This is edited by Dr Louis O Williams of our staff, and is sent on an exchange basis to other institutions. A limited number of interested individuals is also included in the list of recipients--some 300 copies of each issue are mailed. While it is not published at regular intervals, we try to get out four issues each year. An entire number this year was devoted to "Central American Fruit Culture" by Wilson Popenoe, a Spanish translation of which will be published early in 1953. Through the cooperation of technical workers, especially in this region, we are more and more able to secure excellent papers for this journal, which we are convinced is not only serving the cause of Central American science in general, but is adding materially to the prestige of the school.

Our reference library and our herbarium of Central American plants have continued to grow, thanks to the work of Dr. Louis O. Williams and the well-known botanist Paul C. Standley, leading authority on the flora of Central America, who makes his home with us. We now have some 60,000 sheets in our herbarium and our reference library is without doubt one of the very best in tropical America, with regard to the fields we try to cover.

Visitors

We mention Visitors regularly in our Monthly News Letters, hence it does not seem necessary to list them again in this report.

What it Has Cost to Run the School

The following figures are of interest as showing our total expenditures for three years:

	Operations	Betterments
1950	\$223,700	\$ 45,200
1951	\$263,900	\$ 18,900
1952	\$265,600	\$ 42,000

As stated in our Annual Report for 1951, "when we attempt to calculate the cost per student for such items as clothing, meals, etc., we have to use as our basis the average number of students. Changes take place from day to day and week to week, especially during the months of March, April and May, when old students are leaving and new ones coming in." For 1952 the average number of students per month was as follows:

January	154	
February	153	
March	106	(Graduates and vacationists leaving)
April	124	(New students coming in)
May	166	
June	169	(School year commences)
July	168	
August	167	
September	167	
October	167	
December	165	

The average per month, for the year, was 156 as against an average of 162 for the preceding year.

It is the policy of the school to ask students to pay their own transportation to Tegucigalpa in all cases where this will impose no great hardship upon themselves or their families. When they say they cannot do so, we pay it; but if at the end of the first or second year they say they can pay their transportation to go home on vacation, we require them to refund any amount we have paid for transportation from their homes to the school. In 1952, the average expense for transportation borne by the school (bringing in new students and sending home those who graduated or were dropped from the rolls) was \$32.94,

as against \$26.71 in 1951 and \$24.02 in 1950. This figure is, of course, obtained by dividing the total cost of student transportation by the average number of students for the year. It may be mentioned that the cost of transportation for students from such distant regions as the Dominican Republic is a large item. When a student from such a region comes here and after a few months, or a year, drops out for any reason, we lose about \$500 if we have to pay his transportation; and for this reason we are considering a program suggested by Mr. D. J. Cloward, Manager of the Grenada Company. This would require the student to deposit the value of his return transportation, in case he is expelled from the school or leaves voluntarily before graduation. If he graduates, the deposit would be returned to him and the school would pay his transportation home - provided his family is not able to do so.

To supply a student with clothing for the year, including shoes, bed linen and towels, cost us \$51.44 in 1952, as against \$51.87 in 1951 and \$52.09 in 1950. That this figure has remained practically the same for three years, in spite of some increase in the cost of clothing purchased abroad, is due in part to our having issued less Khaki uniforms and more blue denim.

And now comes an interesting item: what it costs us to feed a student. In 1952 this was 14 cents per meal; in 1951 the same; and in 1950 16 cents. As stated in previous reports, this cost includes wages of the chief cook and the entire kitchen staff, 10 to 12 people in all; the cost of supplies which we have to buy, such as wheat flour, sugar, coffee, cooking fats, and condiments; and it also includes the cost of meat purchased - we consume some 300 to 350 cattle per year, most of which are purchased.

To provide a student with medical and dental attention cost us \$40.25, as against \$35.05 in 1951 and \$29.49 in 1950.

To wash his clothes, bed linen and towels cost \$32.32 as against \$29.85 in 1951 and \$30.17 in 1950. Expenses in this department, which employes 35 to 40 women who live in our valley, have remained at about the same level for years, and the women are glad to have the work.

To provide texts and school supplies cost \$7.36 as against \$25.09 in 1951 and \$20.97 in 1950. This impressive reduction was not due to using less texts and school supplies (copy books, pencils and the like) but to curtailment of expense in our chemical laboratory upon the resignation of Professor Gómez Lora. The problem of texts is a difficult one; for most courses we simply cannot obtain good texts in Spanish. We have to content ourselves with multigraphed outlines prepared by members of the staff.

The above figures, when added up, represent only a small part of the total expense in connection with the education of a student. They do not show the overhead -salaries paid to our teachers and other staff members; the cost of operating our electric light plant, maintenance of buildings and grounds; and many other items. We have made it a habit to show the total cost for each student by dividing the cost of operating the school, exclusive of betterments, by the average number of students. On this basis, the cost in 1952 was \$1,703 as against \$1,629 in 1951 and \$1,406 in 1950. The steady increase in this over-all cost is due in large part to increases in salaries and wages.

It is sometimes pointed out to us that we could send our students to the United States, on scholarships provided by the Company, at no greater cost. This is true. But it should be remembered that (1)

many of our boys, because of insufficient academic preparation, would not be accepted in North American agricultural Schools; (2) they would not be able to obtain vocational training in tropical agriculture anywhere in the United States; and (3) the cost of education in that country is borne in large part by the government or by the institutions themselves, while our over-all cost covers everything - salaries of the staff, maintenance of buildings and grounds, light, sewerage system and many other items.

A Final note: How is our Program Working?

We have mentioned in previous reports that we are more than satisfied with the records of our graduates. The fact that so many of them go into extension services in tropical American countries means that what they learn here is passed on to many farmers. We try, every year, to select our students carefully. Never-the-less, we lose a good many in the first and second years here. Recently we have reviewed the history of our classes with results which we believe are worth mentioning.

We opened the school in September 1943 with 74 students in the Class of 1946. Sixty-three of these students graduated. One was dropped because of ill health; seven were dropped for disciplinary reasons; and three for having failed in their studies. We did not have many applications for scholarships the first year; hence 43 of the students who graduated were Hondurans.

The second year we had only 100 applications for scholarships. From these we selected 51, representing 11 countries; 40 of these 51 graduated in 1947. Three had left voluntarily before graduation; three had left because of illness; and three were dropped for

having failed in their studies.

The third year we had about 125 applications for scholarships, from which we selected 48 new students - the Class of 1948. Thirty-eight of these graduated; two dropped out voluntarily, five were dropped for disciplinary reasons; and one failed in his studies.

The next year we had about 150 applications from which we selected 59 new students. Thirty-nine of these graduated in 1949. Two of the original 59 had dropped out voluntarily; five left because of ill health, five failed in their classes; and nine were dropped for disciplinary reasons.

The next class, that of 1950, consisted of 70 new students selected from a list of about 250 applicants. Forty-eight of these 70 graduated; two dropped out because of ill health; six failed in their classes; eight left voluntarily; and six were sent home for disciplinary reasons.

In June, 1948 we commenced the school year with 61 new students selected from 272 boys who had applied for scholarships. In 1951, forty-three of these graduated, the others having dropped out for the following reasons: one for ill health, one because he did not like it here, nine because they failed in their classes, and seven for disciplinary reasons.

In 1949 the number of applications for scholarships had risen to about 300. From this group we selected 71 new students, of whom 44 graduated in 1952. Losses were as follows: one left voluntarily; 17 failed in their classes; and nine were dropped for disciplinary reasons.

Since every boy who enters the school and fails to graduate represents a financial loss to the school and deprives someone else of

the opportunity to prepare himself for a career in agriculture, we would greatly like to reduce the number of students who enter and fail to graduate. Just how to do this is the question. The number of applicants is increasing annually, as the school becomes better known. In 1952 we had nearly six hundred. Among this large number there is plenty of good material.

The "examen de capacidad" - in reality an intelligence test - eliminates most of the applicants who would not be able to make passing grades if they came here, but it does not eliminate bright boys who do not want to study. This is one of our major problems.