



## MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

NOVEMBER 1954. We mentioned last month that we have added a brief course in agricultural extension to our curriculum--a thing we have wanted to do for several years. To show the need for such a course, we desire to cite a recent letter from Enrique Summers, Acting Director of the Servicio Técnico Interamericano de Cooperación Agrícola in Costa Rica. Our third-year students have been assembling information from all countries where we have graduates, with a view to preparing something for publication on the occasion of our tenth Commencement which will take place about the first of next March.

Mr. Summers writes that "STICA" has in its extension service thirteen graduates of EAP, all of whom are doing good work. We take pleasure in placing their names on record here. They are: Juan Montalto, Orlando Martinez, Eduardo Rodríguez, Guillermo Villalobos, Milton Arias, Pablo Guillén, Eduardo Calderón, Olger Vega, Miguel A. Mora, Oscar Bellavita, Jorge L. Arguedas, Gilberto Fernández, and Luis Cárdenas.

As we have mentioned previously in these letters, it was not expected, when we organized this school, that so many of our graduates would go into agricultural extension. In fact, at the time we started, relatively few countries in tropical America had organized extension services. Everywhere results seem to be more than satisfactory and we are proud of the fact that our graduates are taking such an active part. In future News Letters we shall speak of what they are doing in Honduras, in El Salvador, in Nicaragua, in Panama, and elsewhere. It is, and has been, our conviction that in tropical countries the way to start an extension service is by giving the small farmer better planting material: improved corn, better varieties of sugar cane and rice and beans and sorghums and yuca and sweet potatoes and other crops which the farmer has been growing. With these he gets better returns from his labor at no additional expense, and when he has done that, he is ready to go in for more elaborate programs. Livestock improvement, for example, which in our opinion is just about one-half better stock and one-half better care and feeding. Or perhaps this side of agriculture should go pari passu with better crops!

November has been a tough month for our boys in the field. They harvested the rice crop, which will nearly meet our needs for the coming year; they filled two silos with sweet sorghum and pigeon-pea tops, which will take as good care of our dairy herd as rice will take of students in the mess hall; they began the preparation of hay to take care of the steers destined for beef, of which our students eat unconscionable quantities, thus forming a habit which costs us money when they are sent for further study in the United States; and they made progress in harvesting the corn crop, which is never adequate because we not only have to feed our livestock, but in addition make about 1500 tortillas per diem for the mess hall and employees. The Central American tortilla is an article sine qua non, but at the same time an article which cannot be stored for future use. It must be hot, or at least warm, from the griddle. Way back about 1575 the King of Spain sent his protomédico, Francisco Hernández, to make a study of the food and medicinal plants of Mexico (then New Spain). The good doctor wrote that "the bread of this country is a thin cake made from Indian corn, the which, being hot, is quite palatable, but the which, being cold, is a melancholy form of nourishment." His opinion still holds.