



MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

JULY 1957. Last month we wrote about the opening of the new school year. We mentioned the total number of students, by countries of origin, and the number of new students on the same basis. We would like this month to discuss another angle of our work.

Ever since this school was opened, we have had in mind several objectives, all of which were outlined by Samuel Zemurray when, as President of the United Fruit Company, he authorized the establishment of Escuela Agricola Panamericana. In brief (and perhaps overlooking some important points) they were as follows: Our job was to train young Latin Americans to be better farmers and good citizens. To make better farmers we had to teach good agriculture, and good agriculture is dependent in large part on having the right animals and crop plants for every individual region - this is where climate and soil and economic factors come into play. To make good citizens a major objective is Panamericanism. This works. We have mentioned it before in these News Letters. When we bring together boys from 18 to 21 years of age, from 10 or 12 different countries, they soon learn that they have all been cast in the same mould - they are at least as much alike as boys from Maine, Louisiana, and California.

Now as to better agriculture. We started out 14 years ago to "upgrade" dairy cattle. Based upon rather long experience in tropical America, we doubt that the small farmer (and he is the man we have tried and are trying to serve) should go in for pedigreed Holstein or Jersey or Guernsey cows. Especially if he is in the lowlands, or let us say, regions below 2500 or 3000 feet. Even above that, we are rather doubtful. Here at 2500 feet we have developed a dairy herd which we think meets pretty well the needs of our client the small farmer. We have used imported bulls, Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey, and Brown Swiss. We started with good native cows. We now have a dairy herd of about 80 milk producers, mainly 3/4 pure blood and our average yield per cow per day is about 27 lbs, or a little more than 13 quarts. This would not sound very high to a dairyman in Wisconsin, but just mention this figure in Central America! We have done so, and the result has been that we are deluged with requests for young animals. Incidentally, we are asked which blood is best; and all we can say is that, under the particular conditions of Zamorano, if we were going to sell milk we would lean toward the Holstein side; if we were going to make dairy products, we would lean toward the Guernsey, though some times we argue among ourselves about the relative merits of the Guernsey and the Jersey. We can't argue about all the dairy breeds because we have not worked with all of them here.

We have mentioned the dairy business first because we think it has such an important future in tropical America. Dairy products are in short supply, as the economists like to put it. But we do not want to end this letter without mentioning the importance (we have mentioned it several times in the last ten years) of better varieties of corn and rice and sugar cane and yuca and sweet potatoes and other foodstuffs. Nor do we wish to overlook the value and importance of grafted varieties of such fruits as the various kinds of Citrus, avocados, mangos, and numerous others. We have tried to make ourselves useful in connection with the introduction, propagation, and distribution of such. We have grown and distributed many thousands of trees.