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TRIP REPORT

OF

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ISN-32940

TO

HONDURAS

JULY, 1981

PURPOSE

1. Introduce myself to officials in the Secretaria de Recursos Naturales.
2. Establish a working relationship with the Secretaria de RR. NN.
3. Inspect the Estacion Experimental de La Lujosa and determine support needed from INTSORMIL.
4. Select land for planting sorghum experiments in La Lujosa.

ITINERARY AND DISCUSSIONS HELD

The stint of my trip was July 27-31, 1981 and my daily activities were as follows:

Monday, 27 July. Left College Station, Texas at 6:40am and arrived in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on SAHSA airlines at 3:00pm. Total traveling time was 9 hours with changes in carriers in Houston and New Orleans. Note that Honduras time is one hour behind Central day light savings time.

Went direct from the airport to the U.S. Embassy by bus. Bus #1 stops in front of the airport and passes by the Embassy for 15 centavos.

Arrived at the AID mission at 4:15pm but was unable to meet William Janssen, Chief of Agricultural Development Division, who was in conference. The security at the mission was impressive so I decided to leave before the trouble they were expecting arrived.

Walked to the Peace Corps office which is next door to the Hotel Honduras Maya. Met Nick Metes, Program Manager Natural Resources. We talked briefly about Peace Corps' role in Honduras agriculture. Currently, there were no peace corps volunteers (PCV) working with the Programa Nacional del Investigacion Agropecuaria (PNIA) of RR. NN. Peace Corps was in a transition period for its Agricultural Program Manager and any talks about including PCV's in a RR. NN.-INTSORMIL project would have to wait.

There was no vacancy at the Honduras Maya so I walked to the Hotel Granada (Tel. 22-23-81) where PCV's generally stay and took a room. Security at the Honduras Maya was also very visible.

Tuesday, 28 July. After eating a few selected fruits in the market next door to the Hotel Granada for breakfast, I took the bus marked 'Miraflores' to RR. NN. There I first met with Ing. Antonio Silva, Jefe PNIA at 9:00am to discuss my role as an INTSORMIL scientist with RR. NN., (Silva was my incountry boss when I was a PCV in 1975-76). The following points were made:

1. Silva is in charge of agricultural investigation in Honduras and therefore, I would be responsible to him.
2. The 'sede' (headquarters) of the Programa Nacional de Sorgo would pass from Comayagua to the Estacion Experimental de La Lujosa in Choluteca.
3. With the 'sede' would also pass a small Chevy diesel pickup.
4. The title of Jefe del Programa Nacional de Sorgo would pass from Ing. Miguel Solero to Ing. Fransico Gomez who would be my incountry counterpart. This change was partly necessary because Solero could not relocate in Choluteca. I did not meet Gomez but his biodata is as follows.

Name : Francisco Arnaldo Gomez M. Nationality : Honduran  
Age : 25 Status : single  
Degrees : B.S. Agriculture, New Mexico State University  
M.S. Agriculture, New Mexico State University

Gomez's proficiency in English will facilitate visits of other INTSORMIL workers.

5. I expressed INTSORMIL's interest that Ing. Rigoberto Nolasco be reinstated as Jefe del Programa Nacional de Sorgo upon completion of his M.S. degree and training at TAMU.
6. Other technical personnel that will continue their work in the sorghum program are:  
Ing. Arnulfo Hernandez, Asistente  
Sr. Nicolas Perdomo, Auxiliar de Agronomo
7. The number of 'jornales' (workmen) was not set nor was it established whether they would be considered permanent to the sorghum program. 'Jornales' are customarily shared among the projects at an experiment station. We will have to negotiate these points with Ing. Orley Garcia who will be the new Coordinador Investigacion Region No. 1 when I return.
8. Part time 'Tecnicos' and 'jornales' would be available at other experiment stations.
9. Most of the work will be concentrated in the Departamento de Choluteca which occupies 50% of the land planted to sorghum.
10. The Secretaria would obtain a visa for me. The visa would be a 'carnet de residencia' and it would be obtained after I arrive in the country. I will enter Honduras on a turist visa when I return in September.

While in Silva's office, Ing. Norberto Urbina, Supervisor de La Lujosa, dropped in to say hell-o (Urbina was director of La Lujosa when I arrived there in 1975 as a PCV). Urbina was recently appointed by the Minister of RR. NN. to oversee the rejuvenation of La Lujosa which had suffered from little financial support and poor management. Consequently, roads were in need of repair, much of the machinery was broken down, irrigation canals and drains were filled with silt, and the fields needed to be worked. (When I saw La Lujosa the next day, it became apparent that INTSORMIL would be starting from square one and that much of our attention would have to be directed towards rebuilding morale and La Lujosa).

It was lunch time when I met Ing. Guillermo Ramos, Director Regional de RR. NN. La Cieba, and his wife Ing. Ligia de Ramos, Jefe de Centro Analisis de Laboratorios de Agua Planta y Suelos (CALAPS), so I invited them to lunch at the Honduras Maya. Guillermo and I worked together at La Lujosa and became very good friends so we had much to talk about. After lunch, Guillermo introduced me to Ing. Miguel Bonilla, Sub-Secretaria de RR. NN. (Bonilla was Jefe del Programa de Maiz when I was there in 1975 and although he was on the north coast, we knew each other's names). Guillermo asked for permission to drive me to Choluteca in the morning. Permission granted.

After talking most of the afternoon with Guillermo, I returned to the Peace Corps office to meet the Director, Peter Lara. We talked briefly about INTSORMIL and our Peace Corps experiences in Peru. We agreed to talk more about INTSORMIL when I returned in the fall.

Wednesday, 29 July. While waiting for Guillermo to pick me up at the Hotel at 7:30am, I met PCV Jean Tiffany, Nutritionist, who works with JNBS-Comedor Infantil in Choluteca. She was returning to Choluteca so I

offered her a ride. On the way we discussed the possibility of writing a booklet on sorghum recipies. Her work with INTSORMIL would depend on her decision to extend in the fall. Jean is currently looking for a graduate assistantship in international nutrition.

We stopped in Pespire to meet Dr. Billie DeWalt, INTSORMIL, and his crew. Guillermo's mother l'ives next door to the DeWalts, so Guillermo had already met DeWalt. Billie and I compared notes on INTSORMIL in Honduras and we both agreed that we were receiving better cooperation and support from RR. NN. than the Escuela Agricola Panamericana. Billie told me that Jesus Maria Oryulla, Save the Children in Pespire, and Val DeBeusset, AID in Tegucigalpa, were wanting sorghum seed to do some demonstration plots. Since Oryulla was in Pespire we went to see him at his office, but he was out in the 'campo'. However, X-PCV Rob Burke who works with Save the Children was there and we talked with him about sorghum over a piece of watermelon. I promised to send him seed (100g each) of ATx623/77CS3 and ATx625/77CS1 for a demonstration plot with instructions to plant it at a low plant population (26,000 plants/ha).

We arrived in Choluteca on schedule and met Ing. Miguel Solero, Jefe del Programa de Sorgo at the Hotel La Fuente at 1:00pm. Because La Fuente was closing its resturant service at the end of the month, they had no 'comida' so we went to El Camino Real to eat which is just down the highway from the Direccion Regional.

After dinner, Guillermo, Solero and I went to the Direccion Regional to meet Ing Richard Weddle, Director Regional de RR. NN. in Choluteca. We also met Ing Calixto Chacon who had just been promoted to Asesor. Abraham Espinosa, the new Sub-Director Regional was not in the office. The backyard of the regional office had several abandoned vehicles that could probably be

restored for \$3,000 each. This may be a possible avenue to obtain cars for other INTSORMIL workers.

From the regional office, Solero and I drove to La Lujosa and Guillermo returned to Tegucigalpa. I had never seen La Lujosa look in such bad condition. It appeared worse than the description Silva and Urbina had given me. La Lujosa has the equipment necessary for the sorghum program, but some of it badly needs repair. However, La Lujosa did not have a rolling cultivator nor a small plot thresher for single head selections and these would probably have to be supplied by INTSORMIL.

Solero introduced me to Ing. Arnulfo Hernandez, Asistente Programa de Sorgo. We discussed the problems he was having in La Lujosa. Arnulfo told me that one of the major problems that Silva had just resolved was with gasoline. There were times when La Lujosa was without petro for 15 days. However, Silva now controls the distribution of gas to La Lujosa rather than the regional director. Arnulfo was growing about 4 ha of Maicillo Criollos (Tropical Sorghums) to raise money to continue his work.

Solero, Hernandez and I then drove to the house of Sr. Nicolas Perdomo, Auxiliar de Agronomo. Perdomo was my right hand man when I was there before and not to see him the same day I arrived would be unforgivable. Since I had trained Nicolas, I was pleased to hear how much everyone depended on him. As the four of us sat talking, I could feel the morale begin to rise. We agreed to meet the next morning to select the land to plant our experiments.

Solero and I returned to Choluteca and while eating dinner in the Hotel Imperial Maya we bumped into Ing. Abraham Espinosa. We had known each other before and it was good to know that I had competent friends in the regional office.

After dinner, Solero and I went back to the bar in La Fuente where

we met the other two tecnicos working in La Lujosa, Ing. Leslie Rapido, Asistente de Arroz, and Ing Rigoberto \_\_\_\_\_, Asistente de Oleaginosas. Both of these men had just arrived to La Lujosa when I left in 1976.

Earlier, I had left word that I wanted to see PCV John Townson who had worked at La Lujosa in Maiz. He and a couple PCV friends later came over to La Fuente and I was able to get his point of view on La Lujosa and why he transferred to another Agency. John felt that with the arrival of INTSORMIL support to RR. NN. that incoming PCV's would like to work in PNIA. I promised John that I would send him the same set of seed that I was sending Burke so that he could do a similar demonstration plot where he was working.

That night I felt my welcome to Choluteca was complete as the diarrhea began.

Thursday, 30 July. The first thing in the morning, Solero and I went to the Regional office to telephone Silva and tell him we would be in Tegucigalpa at 2:00pm to see him. We then drove to La Lujosa.

Near the entrance of La Lujosa is a school and we stopped in to see Profesora Alba Gloria de Portillo and Srta. Dora Sarmiento, Prometora Social. I asked them if they knew of any houses for rent in Choluteca and they said they would look around. They also said that they would be interested in organizing the local women to exchange sorghum recipies and demonstrate African methods of preparing sorghum.

We found Arnulfo and Nicolas and began to look La Lujosa over for a good place to establish our nurseries in the 'postrera' (fall planting). We picked out two lots about 2 ha each. One of the lots is next to the road that enters La Lujosa. We plan to use this one for show. The second is out of the way and will be used for F<sub>2</sub> selections.

Having selected the land, Solero and Arnulfo gave me a written report of their current and planned experiments. These are summarized by Departamento.

1. Choluteca--Ing. Arnulfo Hernandez.
  - a. Planted in the Primavera.
    - 4 ha see production of Maicillos Criollos in La Lujosa.
    - 5 yield trials of 5 Criollos in Orocuina (1), El Triunfo (3), and La Lujosa (1).
  - b. Planned for the Postrera.
    - 8 yield trials of the same 5 Criollos in Amapala (1), Lamque (3), Moropocay (2), and Coray (2).
2. Comayagua--Ing. Miguel Solero.
  - a. Planted in the Primavera.
    - 1 yield trial of 14 Criollos in comayagua.
    - ½ ha mass selection of Tortillero I (probably CS3541).
    - 10 Maiz-Maicillo intercropping experiments, La Paz and Comayagua (7), Alauca and Danli (3).
  - b. Planned for the Postrera.
    - 1 yield trial of 20 improved varieties in Comayagua.
    - 1 yield trial of 20 commercial hybrids in Comayagua.
    - 1 yield trial of 60 F<sub>5</sub> families in Comayagua.
    - Selection of 16 varieties for grain mold resistance in Comayagua. (from Sepon 80, ICRISAT).
    - 1 yield trial of 26 ICRISAT high protein varieties in Comayagua.
    - 1 yield trial of ? ICRISAT grain quality varieties in Comayagua.
    - Introductions from ICRISAT in Comayagua
    - 2 Ridomil demonstration plots in La Paz.

3. Olancho--Ing. Elio Dunor.

a. Planned for the Postrera.

- 3 yield trials of commercial hybrids.
- 3 yield trails of improved varieties.
- 3 ensayos exploratorios
- 2 Downey Mildew evaluation nurseries.
- 2 Lotes de comprobacios

Arnulfo said that he would start preparing the land we had selected tomorrow. We all agreed it would be best to plant before the heavy rains in September. Being that I had trained Nicolas, we didn't think there would be any major problems if the sorghums from TAMU were planted before I arrived. It was agreed to send the seed from TAMU to La Lujosa via Silva. Arnulfo said that he would try to salvage what material they had and would plant these for evaluation along with the TAMU material.

On the way out of La Lujosa, we were flagged down by Dora and Alba Gloria. They had just come from Choluteca and said they had found a house for me. The house had three bedrooms, two baths, two kitchens (one with adobe stove), dinning room, living room, screen doors and windows, patio, water reservoir, telephone, and was wired for both 110 and 220 V. After looking at the house I made a \$100 deposit to rent it starting September 1.

We arrived about 2 hours late at Silva's office. Silva said that he would check into receiving equipment from the U.S. and that he would advise me of the best way to send it. It would have to be sent to the Secretaria de Recursos Naturales and marked donation but he was not sure who would receive it. Silva informed me that he just bought 50,000 pollinating bags, and several balances for PNIA. He asked me to check with him before I ordered anything.

Friday, 31 July. Return to TAMU (10 hours).

APPRECIATION

I am indebted to Ings. Silva, Ramos, Solero, and the other employees of RR. NN. for the attention they gave me. Their willingness and desire to work with INTSORMIL should be envied. The success of my trip belongs to them.