

Apiculture or Beekeeping Project

In February 2014 Appleton volunteers introduced the apiculture project to the community of Las Lagunas. This new concept provides one more opportunity for learning centers to develop another skill by reproducing bees and honey production.



Francisco Mejia of Las Lagunas graduated from high school by participating in the scholarship program sponsored by the Appleton Partners. Currently he is studying apiculture at the technical school (INATEC). Upon completion of the one-year program, Francisco will receive a technical certificate enabling him to apply for a job supporting other communities and institutions looking for this type of project.

Early this year Francisco (Nicaragua) and Chad Carlson (Wisconsin) worked together in the field setting up the bases to start the project. Collaboration in the early stages helped Francisco to develop a successful project and to be one of the apiculture students earning a high grade at INATEC.



In February 2014 Francisco and Chad initially set up two bee hives. Since then two more hives have been added. Francisco is getting ready for the next reproduction season and will add two more nucleuses which will become additional hives, improving honey production during the rainy season. Startup equipment for the project included three shirts, three veil protectors, one knife, one spatula and two bee hives. In May a two-panel extractor was bought to extract the first 1 ½ gallons of honey with only 80% of the panels covered.

Six months into the project, Francisco put classroom theory into practice on site in Las Lagunas, a rural community located almost at the bottom between four mountains. He has received many visits from students in the apiculture class.

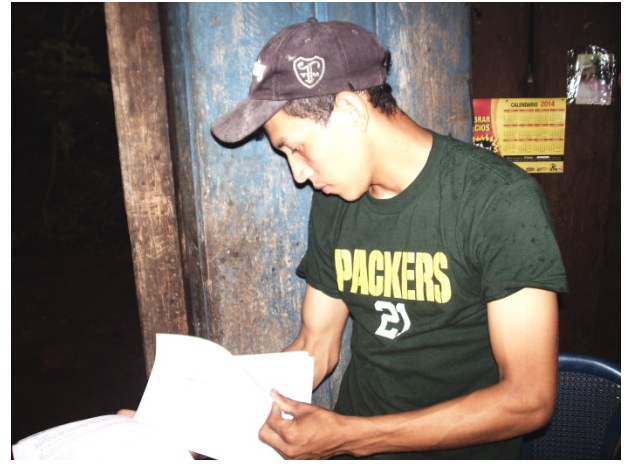


During the rainy season, Francisco hopes to make improvements in his apiculture project in different areas. Most importantly through volunteerism, he is willing to be of assistance to other learning centers and organizations who want to work on a similar project in the future.

While the Appleton volunteers introduced the project in February, W/NP made the first connection to Nicaraguan volunteers who were interested in honey production in 2008. Six volunteers visiting Wisconsin for a sports exchange indicated an interest in honey production. One of those



volunteers was Misael Ordenana. His father, Camilo, has been involved with a family apiculture business for 9 years. Early this year Camilo shared his expertise with Chad and Francisco. Camilo continues to work closely with Francisco as the project develops. Francisco often travels to Boaco to work on site with Camilo. Camilo's son, Misael, has been working in apiculture for 3 years in North Dakota focusing on pollination. Camilo and Misael will continue to provide assistance to the W/NP apiculture project.



The plan is to develop sustainable information to spread the project to other communities. The first apiculture exchange will take place in September with Wisconsin volunteers visiting Las Lagunas. The focus of the visit will be to look for ways to support the project in the future. Expanding this project to other families will include a week long training program. Areas of focus will involve:

- An environmental study to find the right location where bees will thrive.
- Theory and information before the first contact with bees, including an on-site visit to the beehives of Las Lagunas
- Looking for and deciding upon the correct type of beehive to purchase.
- Transportation of the beehive to the assigned place to start the project.
- Periodical assistance and information provided by Francisco.
- The procedure to expand the project once the reproducing phase will provide enough bees for at least two beehives.
- Expanding the project to additional families, providing the tools and training to new participants.



Thanks to the Appleton Partnership, Chad Carlson, Francisco Mejilla, Marty Havlovic, Camilo and Misael Ordenana and all the Wisconsin volunteers for starting this project. Francisco maintains contact with the W/NP office and looks for opportunities to move this program forward. He is waiting for the Wisconsin volunteers to visit and to learn more about how the program will be carried out in the future.



While a new expectation will happen as we are dreaming about honey, I want to share this: The apiculture teacher from the technical school is one of the people in Nicaragua who can certify honey. According to him, the 1 ½ gallons of honey from Francisco's hives can be certified meaning there are no chemicals and it is 100% natural. Therefore, honey will be waiting for the Appleton group and other Wisconsin volunteers during their next visit to Las Lagunas.