

CAN NEWSLETTER

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES

◆ EXPERIENCE SUSTAINABILITY

◆ EDUCATE FOR HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS

From the Director

I am excited to share some new developments at CAN, where our network continues to grow and our relationships and collaborative work strengthens.

We held our annual meeting of affiliated researchers in July in Chiapas, México in conjunction with our XIth annual Agroecology Shortcourse. At the annual meeting we set network goals for the year ahead. Here we welcomed two new community partnerships to CAN: our hosts in San Cristóbal de las Casas with partner organizations El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR), Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS), and La Casa del Pan; and in Estelí, in the region of Las Segovias, Nicaragua with partner organizations El Centro Integral de Informática - Asociación de Desarrollo Social de Nicaragua (CII-ASDENIC) and the coffee cooperative: Promotora de Desarrollo Cooperativo de Las Segovias, R.L.(PRODECOOP, R.L.). We now have partnerships with eight communities in México and Central America where researchers have long-term relationships working with farmers to improve rural livelihoods and conserve natural resources.

Discussion at the annual meeting revolved around common issues related to food security and youth leaving communities to seek jobs elsewhere. We discussed a plan to focus on two key initiatives over the next five years: Food Security and Youth Education and Leadership in Sustainable Agriculture. I am pleased to announce that we just received a two-year grant from Green Mountain Roasting Company to pilot the Youth program in two

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UPDATES

CAN has received a grant from Green Mountain Coffee Roaster (GMCR) to implement our initiative: Youth Leadership and Education for Sustainability. This initiative will be launched in January 2011 in two CAN partner communities where GMCR sources coffee: Huatusco, México and San Ramón, Nicaragua, by CAN partner organizations.

For two years we will work within each region to develop youth leaders to foster school and community gardens that will promote year-round access to fresh food for farming families. You, too, can join the effort by supporting scholarships for youth from these communities. Visit www.CANunite.org to make a donation.

Check our website for updates. ◆

Upcoming Events

- * Jan 3-14: Univ. of Vermont Field Course: El Salvador
- * Feb 1-8: Intercambio at UC Santa Cruz
- * Mar 18-26: CAN Alternative Spring Break: Yucatán, México
- * TBD: Youth Leadership Course in Agroecology at UC Santa Cruz: (in Spanish)
- * Jun 15-30: Cal State Monterey Bay Field Course
- * Jul 10-22: XII Annual Agroecology Shortcourse: Santa Cruz, CA

Ongoing

- * Bi-monthly coffee talks at the Santa Cruz Coffee Roasting Company Coffee Learning Center. For schedule and topics visit www.santacruzcoffee.com
- * Find CAN and AgroEco™ coffee at the Wednesday Farmers Market in downtown Santa Cruz, California.

Learn more at www.CANunite.org

AgroEco Coffee — Based on Research and Relationships

By Daniel Fuentes

More than just another form of certification, AgroEco™ seeks to build consumer confidence through research and relationships. It is a collaborative partnership among small-scale coffee farmer cooperatives, progressive coffee roasters, CAN, and conscious consumers. Information from CAN researcher liaisons provides data, such as bird, shade tree, and orchid species information, household food production, percentage of children in school, and the projects that the cooperative is carrying out with the AgroEco™ premiums. The sustainability label on the back of each package shares this information with the consumer. The long-term relationships that CAN researchers have with our farming partners makes it possible for us to collaborate on research-based projects that improve the farmers' livelihood and the environment.



CAN's relationship with Santa Cruz Coffee Roasting Company (SCCRC) began in 2001 when Sarah Albuquerque, General Manager, and her parents, co-founders of SCCRC, accepted an invitation from CAN researcher liaison Chris Bacon to visit San Ramón, Nicaragua, during the height of the coffee crisis. Sarah visited again last December and noticed that some of the children she had encountered on her first trip are now young adults attending the university with a scholarship provided by the cooperative, UCA San Ramon.



AgroEco™ is the culmination of over five years of trade innovations. The partnership provides farmers with technical support, ongoing ecological monitoring, and evaluation of sustainable farming practices. Roasters receive an exceptionally rich tasting, high-quality coffee. CAN works with our partner organizations to support sustainable environments and livelihoods, and to communicate the data on sustainability. Consumers develop an understanding of what's behind the cup — and enjoy delicious coffee. ♦

Daniel Fuentes is Marketing Coordinator at CAN. He graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a B.A. in Environmental Studies and Economics. He's been with CAN since he was a student intern in Fall 2008.

Director's Note

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network communities: Huatusco, Vera Cruz, México and San Ramón, Matagalpa, Nicaragua. Look forward to updates on these programs as our work gets underway.

This Fall we've also seen a major transition in our trade innovations coffee program. Over the past six months the Costa Rican cooperative CoopePueblos has experienced increasing challenges with the Fairtrade Direct model of mailing coffee to consumers from their cooperative. As we tried to work on solutions, both organizations realized it was time to transition from this program to AgroEco™, which brings strong benefits to the cooperatives and farmers in a manner that increases their volume of sales and guarantees your coffee's arrival. We currently have AgroEco™ coffee from our partner cooperatives in Nicaragua and hope to have Costa Rican coffee in the near future.

Finally, on behalf of the CAN network, thank you for your ongoing support and interest in making intercultural connections between our lives and those of small-scale farmers in MesoAmerica. Your actions make a difference!

Please join us this holiday season by donating to a high school scholarship for a Nicaraguan youth and telling the coffee story, by sending gifts of AgroEco™ coffee to your friends and family.

With warm regards,

Robbie

Roberta Jaffe, Co-Director

XIth International Agroecology Shortcourse Report

By Emel Orhun

Over 45 people attended the XIth International Agroecology Shortcourse held last July in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México. The course was a collaborative effort between the Community Agroecology Network (CAN), El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR), and the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS). With the support of Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, 10 coffee-growing producers and cooperative members from throughout Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz, and Nicaragua attended with full scholarships and nine more attended with partial scholarships.



Emel Orhun (left) and Irene Sánchez coordinated the shortcourse.

The focus of the course was Cultural Memory, Biodiversity and Agroecology: Linking Tradition, Education, and Science for Sustainability. Chiapas and the surrounding regions of MesoAmerica are responsible for 5,000 years of agrobiodiversity and cultural knowledge that has adapted in a wide spectrum of environments. From the first class discussion, we identified the agroecological importance of passing on the cultural memory of older generations to younger ones. Shortcourse participants voiced a concern that campesinos who maintain agricultural knowledge are aging while members of younger generations are migrating into urban areas to pursue other jobs. We learned how school gardens and farmer-to-farmer exchanges have successfully helped to reverse this trend.

Course highlights included: field trips to traditional and newer markets, trips to local farms, a humorous and educational activity called Confessions of an Agroecologist, and a wide range of course presentations related to agroecology. Evening presentations were open to the public. The first presenters were local farmers from Chiapas and other parts of México who voiced their perspectives on the impact of modern agriculture and their innovative approaches to maintain and adapt traditional agroecological practices. In addition, educators from all over México were invited to a day of presentations and discussions about school gardens. We formed a new network of school gardens throughout MesoAmerica as an outcome of these discussions.

We closed the shortcourse with a traditional Mayan altar and ceremony. This was followed by a celebration with dancing and live music provided by a mariachi group. We left the course with new friendships, inspiration, and renewed energy to creatively pursue the field of agroecology. ♦

To read the complete report, visit www.CANunite.org/resources.

Emel Orhun was coordinator for the XIth Agroecology Shortcourse. She graduated from UCSC in 2006 and now lives in Chiapas where she is studying in a masters program in anthropology.



Season's Greetings

Coffee & Education

EDUCATION: Give a gift with meaning this holiday season

It only costs \$360 to send a Nicaraguan youth to high school for 1 year. Our goal: 10 scholarships.

DONATE ON OUR WEBSITE — NOW!

www.CANunite.org

Holiday Special!

COFFEE: Support sustainable farmers

Give a delicious gift — give AgroEco™ coffee.

Order today — save \$1 off the regular price.

Buy 3 lbs or more — **save an additional 5%**

Order Now!



**Offer good 'til
Dec. 31, 2010**

Learning Life in Nicaragua

By Briana Robertori

Since my return from Nicaragua, I've been in the process of coming to terms with what CAN is, and what the experience I've had has meant. How does Nicaragua receive CAN interns, with our shaky Spanish and romantic perceptions of rural life in the "developing world?" Do I think differently now than I did before? Where does my experience fit into the larger picture of international NGO agendas for the developed world? Now, looking back on the experience, my project is not the first thing that comes to mind. In fact, the project I completed was never even used. Unfortunately, the film I made to present the co-op's agroecotourism program disappeared somewhere between Nicaragua and California.



I think my mind comes back to the life I'd spent months building, and then left so easily. I think of my host family, my illness, the cows in the road, the biggest bugs I've ever seen, and the Nicaraguans with whom I became friends and family. Finally, I've written a letter to my host family. It took

months, but mostly I was afraid of what it would mean for me to try to portray a life that they can never know. My life in the U.S. is dominated by the university: appointments, classes, assignments, work, work, work, sweaters, and tea. As mundane as it is, it's my "normal." The Nicaragua I knew is made of cement, dirt, plants, bugs. It washes its clothes by hand and hangs them to dry on plants and barbed wire. It shrugs off periodic electricity, water, and Internet losses. It eats *gallopinto* [rice and beans dish] and speaks Spanish. It's hard to think now that sometime last summer, that was my normal.

Since returning to the university, I've realized that in almost all of my theory-laden and jargon-filled classes, I can verify or disprove much of my classes' content with examples from Nicaragua. The experiences I had there resonate in every subject, from political economy to development studies, public health to business management. In fact, living in Nicaragua was the closest I've come to living in the "real world" that exists outside the hallowed halls of academia. In a way, I finally feel like I have grown up — waking up to the rooster's crow at dawn and the challenge of building a home in a new and foreign world. Now, coming back to the U.S., I feel I'm privy to a type of self-knowledge and independence that many recent grads have not yet experienced. ♦

Briana Robertori is an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, double majoring in Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Studies. She spent two months last summer with a CAN field internship in San Ramón, Nicaragua

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CAN Field Internships

As the new Education Coordinator at CAN I support students on local and international internships. I connect students to communities in consultation with our partner internship coordinators in MesoAmerica. As a former CAN intern, I have an affinity for the program. I understand how profound a CAN field internship is. The experience of culture shock and immersion is incredibly eye opening, some moments lost in translation and others of genuine cultural exchange. Now, overseeing the program, I have the privilege of working with students who are having similar experiences. CAN field internships are unique because they offer a realistic understanding of rural living. Intercultural exchange is nuanced with the complexities of leaving your comfort zone and opening yourself up to new ways of thinking. And if you're lucky, a transformed understanding of our global world.

— Amanda Kessner

Thanks a Latte

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And all our supporters, students, consumers, staff, and partners...