



Sheep Not Goats

Not Sure We'd Have a Newsletter this Month... - Sandy and I are in the U.S. for a visit, so the other day I asked those working at that time to write up some of what they do on the farm, and also requested some photos. Here's what I received, plus a little background on each author.



Bismarck Saenz

I work in the feeding of the fish. Every day at 7:00 AM I clean waste from the fish tank. It's suctioned out every day and 3 or 4 times a day I give food to the fish.

I inspect the irrigation valves of the plantains and pitahaya, then I work on building the next (aquaponics) grow bed. They function like a filter for the water and give more oxygen to the fish when the water returns to them. And each day there's also work in other areas of the farm.

Bismarck has a wife, Marta, and a daughter, Josseling, who just began high school. Prior to working on the farm, Bismarck was a soldier who was separated from his family all but a few days each month.



Oscar Salgado

While you're away from the farm we have been working in the mornings from 7AM to noon on the block wall on the south side of the farm 3 days per week (except last week which was Holy Week and there were only 3 work days).

Oscar preparing to place large stone blocks along one side of the farm. These are to better keep the dogs in and irrigation-line-chewing critters on the outside. Oscar and his wife, Noehlia, have 3 young girls. Oscar takes university classes in León every Saturday.



We inspect the drip irrigation hoses, raising up the hoses (above the mulch from previous harvests) and every day we are fixing the hoses because the security staff (the dogs) bite the hoses and damage them with their nails.

We've applied fertilizer weekly to the plantains and other fruits of the finca, and have been applying the "neem" on all of them as well.

Medical Update

On March 23, our friend and brother Jorge Velasquez died of cancer, just a few weeks



after being diagnosed. Your donations in the Medical Support area paid for a significant portion of his testing, but it was too late. To be honest, public medicine in Nicaragua leaves *much* to be desired. We hope to connect more and more people to qualified private doctors, help pay for treatments, and connect the most seriously ill with 1st-world physicians, e.g. specialist teams that make "medical mission trips" to Nicaragua.

Raul Ernesto Diaz Rojas

The projects are advancing bit-by-bit. Oscar is progressing with the block wall on the south side of the farm and is helping with the weeding. Bismarck is giving excellent care to the fish and is an excellent worker overall, fixing the ditches of the road (for the exit of water once the rains come) and where the water from the house exits near the bamboo. Lucio has been very attentive to the new trees up front and with the dogs. All in all, we're completing the work that you left for us.

Sophie, Max, and Daisy are fine. We've harvested between 10 and 12 cabezas of plantains (a cabeza is the total production from one plantain or banana plant – you can see one in the wheelbarrow in the photo), and have been fertilizing them on time. I change the filter going into the aquaponics growbed every week, and we've sprayed water on the tomatoes (to battle whiteflies) each day at 7AM and 2PM.



Raúl (in the foreground, near Max). Raúl and his wife Cristina have two young children, Raulito and Ester.



Sheep Not Goats

What	US-based 501(c) (3) non-profit
Where	Nicaragua, the poorest country in Latin America
Why	To share God's love by offering help to the very poor
How	Through income from our farm, <i>Finca Buenpaisillo</i> , as well as medical & other forms of support as needed
Help	Visit sheepnotgoats.org to make a tax-deductible one-time or monthly donation

100% of donations goes to worker salaries, medical care, and other areas of our mission. We receive no salary from the non-profit.

Solar Energy Update

While in Florida, Steve's been collaborating with the engineering team of Kevin Frantz, David Holloway, and John Gonzales on design and best practices. In Nicaragua in May we'll build the infrastructure to hold the panels, house the batteries, and get 240VAC to the front of the farm.

David has worked installing solar, has lived in Nicaragua, and speaks Spanish. He'll come down in June or July for the final installation and powering up of the system. The goal is to supply all of the pumping needs of the fish growing and irrigation, plus the lighting and other power needs at the front of the farm.