

## Notes: Visit to Three Cacao Facilities

6-May-2016

Prepared by Jim Fisher, PCV-R (13-May-2016)

A team representing the USDA, UN, Peace Corps and SENA met at SENA's Gaira Campus then traveled to two cacao processing facilities located in Departamento Magdalena.

### Purpose

- Coordination of Cacao Program with SENA training and research resources
- Repeat visit to regional resources for cacao production, processing and marketing
- Further discussion of potential centers for training in cacao production, processing and marketing
- Discussion of challenges and needs with growers and processors for increasing cacao production

SENA, Centro Acuícola y Agroindustrial, Gaira, Santa Marta ( <http://centrogaira.blogspot.com.co/>)



A meeting took place at approximately 9:00 AM with approximately 20 persons attending.

Introductions - I was not able to record the names of attendees, but a sign in sheet was used.

- SENA – Sistema Nacional de Aprendizaje
  - Jairo Tamariz, Sub-Director
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - SENA External Relations, Bogota
  - Other SENA faculty and staff
- Arhuaco Production Facility
  - Representative – Elieser ?
- US Embassy – Department of Agriculture
  - Juan F. Gallego B., Agricultural Specialist, US Embassy Office of Agricultural Affairs ([gallego.JF@state.gov](mailto:gallego.JF@state.gov))
  - Ben Rau, Agricultural Attaché, US Embassy Office of Agricultural Affairs
- UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

- Karina Ariza, UNODC, Santa Marta ([karynayed@gmail.com](mailto:karynayed@gmail.com))
- Other members of UNODC
- Peace Corps
  - Beatriz Cordoba, Program Manager for Economic and Community Development, US Peace Corps, Barranquilla
  - James Fisher, US Peace Corps Response Volunteer, Aracataca, Colombia ([jimfisher101@gmail.com](mailto:jimfisher101@gmail.com))

#### Presentation about SENA Educational Programs

- A representative of SENA presented a detailed outline of SENA's educational program at Gairo
  - Técnicos – 1 year
    - Production and harvest of cacao
  - Tecnólogos – 2 years – without a major vacation break
    - Transformation of cacao
    - Post-harvest production of cacao products (eg. chocolate)
- Primary location for instruction about cacao – Antioquia, Santander
- In addition to regular courses, SENA sponsors
  - Special Courses – 40 hours
  - Events – 8 to 20 hours
- Research
  - SENA faculty expressed interest in creating a map of cacao production in Colombia
    - Characteristics by:
    - Location
    - Varieties
    - Quality
    - Challenges
- Juan Gallegos discussed a roles for Peace Corps Volunteers in the program
  - Technical classes held at the farms.
  - Extension / Technical assistance for growers
- Beatriz Cordoba – overview of Peace Corps plans
  - Recruiting 20 volunteers to begin training in July
  - Hoping that some will have specific training in agronomy
  - Perhaps 3 or 4 will work with the cacao program
  - These volunteers may receive additional training at the facility in Santander or elsewhere
- UNODC
  - interested in crop substitution for coca (cocaine)
  - cacao appears to have significant value for small family farms.
    - Sustainable production
    - Meets financial needs of families
  - Will require an investment for 10 to 15 years

- FEDECACAO
  - National Organization
  - Work with multiple dimensions including social, economic, family, political
- Adaptation of Curriculum
  - Build institutional capacity at SENA
  - Create or expand [?] the Escuela de Chocolate
- Support services
  - Nursery with expanded varieties of cacao
  - Instruction in agronomy
  - Instruction in agro-industrial processing of cacao

Elieser – Representante de los Arhuaco

- Cacao production is increasing as violence subsides
- The quality of cacao is winning international recognition
- Want to continue to increase production and quality
- Interested in training youth to work in this industry

### **Conclusions**

No firm decisions were made at this meeting that I could discern. This meeting was a chance to meet other stakeholders, compare missions and look for common objectives.

- SENA can play an important role educating people to work in all stages of cacao production and processing.
- Training técnicos and tecnólogos can be an important service provided there is a labor market for people with these skills.
- A labor market analysis may be needed to determine the appropriate level of training and mix of skills are in demand.
- SENA’s “events” may prove to be a more useful means for upgrading skills of cacao producers and processors.

The meeting concluded as most SENA representatives returned to their work and two vehicles departed to visit Cacao facilities in Don Diego and Trompito.

### **Cacao Hunters - Arhuaco Production Facility – Don Diego, Magdalena, Colombia**

Carrera 6 45 N 41, Popayán, Magdalena, Colombia

Cell Phone: 310 2241831

Website: <http://www.cacaohunters.com/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/CacaoHunters/>

News Article: [www.elheraldo.co/economia/pnud-apoya-arhuacos-para-cultivar-cacao-en-la-sierra-nevada-155945](http://www.elheraldo.co/economia/pnud-apoya-arhuacos-para-cultivar-cacao-en-la-sierra-nevada-155945)



Elieser led our visit to the facility at Don Diego.

- Construction of the cacao processing building is moving ahead steadily.
- During our visit one worker was installing the electrical wiring blue plastic conduit.
- Some of the system is now electrified.
- They have not installed the wooden floor for the drying level. Consequently the entire building is a greenhouse under the polycarbonate roof.
- Water continues to be a problem. The well is not producing any longer and the growers are still looking into digging it deeper.

**Guardabosques de la Sierra:** Asociación de Organizaciones Asociativas, Agro-turísticas y Sostenibles De Bosques de La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta - **Trompito Bajo**, Magdalena, Colombia  
 Correo: CL 16 5 64, SANTA MARTA, MAGDALENA

Consolidación Territorial en la Casa del Chocolate y el concurso Cacao de Oro 2015

The team started the return trip west, re-visiting the fully operational facility in Trompito Bajo. This facility is primarily staffed by one person who is able to manage most of the process on his own. Additional employment would be created if the facility were to continue processing some of the beans

to make chocolate or other finished products. Tours are another possibility, though not having a grower nearby and not having any final processing rules out broad appeal.

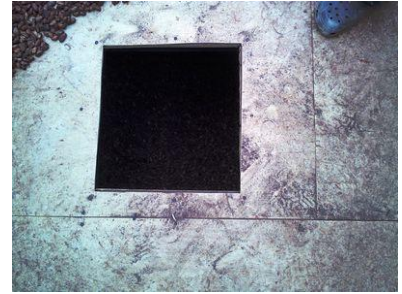


The “babas” are fermented in boxes on the first floor. After about four days fermentation ends and the beans are lifted in a small elevator to the second floor for drying. →



The beans are raked frequently to insure even drying. →

Dry beans are poured through a hole in the second floor into a grading machine place below.



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The road crew also revisited a nearby cacao grower. His problems with insufficient water continue and harvests are meager. Irrigation is essential in this zone. When he does harvest, he sells the cacao in Baba – still covered with a moist fruity layer.



The grading machine selects out beans that are a good size. Smaller beans and chaff are sent to other bags for hand sorting. The beans are then sold to one of two major companies in Colombia that process them or re-sell them abroad.