

## **Sebastian Unger August 2009 to August 2010**

Looking into my calendar I realize that it is time to write my second report about my experiences here in Ecuador...

What is there to tell? Let's see...

I still live in La Paz with my hostfamily and things are going really well, I'm at home!

In the beginning of December started the rain-season and we now have lots of water.

According to the season, our jobs on the finca have also changed a lot. While harvesting lots of Cacau and having to haul water from the well almost every day during summer, we now only collect the rain-water from the roof and barely find Cacau to harvest, because the rain damages the fruits.

Therefore, we now have huge amounts of Palma to sell and Yucca to harvest. January is a good time to seed new plants, and I learned how to seed Corn, Peanuts, and Beans. It is an incredible amount of work to seed here, because everything is done without any kind of machinery. If you are seeding in a plain and clean piece of land, you in one hand you have a long stick to dig wholes, and with the other hand you put two seeds of the plant you are seeding into each whole. It's an easy job, but you do get tired when you do it the entire day and if the field is on a hill-side with tree-trunks and branches covering the soil it is hard work. Anyway, we actually managed to plant a lot of Corn, one half on a field and the rest in between the Cacau-plants. Like this there will be enough Corn to feed a lot of Chicken once we can harvest. As I already mentioned, we have a lot of Yucca to harvest, and the other day went to the place, where you can sell it. The price at the moment is at 5 cent/kilo. To say it in other words: nothing! Even if we would harvest 5 tons of Yucca (rather unlikely) we would only gain 250 \$. And that is for a lot of hard work, cutting the branches, digging out the roots, and looking after the plants for more than a year. Incredible, even more so, when you know that Yucca is very expensive on the market. I really got angry about it and therefore spoke with some people from the recinto. They had made the same experience and do not sell their Yucca anymore, but eat it at home or feed it to their pigs, dogs, and chicken. So I had the idea of selling only half of this year's harvest and buy two or three pigs from that money. With the rest of the Yucca we could feed the pigs and sell the meat at the end, making a lot more money. My family liked the idea and now we are looking for pigs to buy.

Another idea and project that I planned is to build a chicken house and start breed chicken. We have already chosen and measured the place where we want to build it, cut some of the wood that we need for the construction, and collected palm-leaves that we'll use to build the roof. With the house built, we will start off with 50 chicken and breed them during a time of 6 weeks until they are big enough to sell them. With the first 50 chicken sold we should have paid off the cost of the house and after two generations more, (reinvesting the money each time) we should have paid off all the costs for the chicken and the food as well. Afterwards the chicken should accumulate a profit of 140 \$ each generation. That's not bad for only 50 chicken and if everything works fine we might double the amount to 100 birds. I am excited, how it will work out! Hopefully, how it is planned, so that at the end it really is a support for my family.

Now, you might ask yourself, if I have forgotten about my work at school, just writing about my experiences on the finca. I haven't ;-)

Things in school go fine, but we are in vacations since the last week of January and I have passed these two weeks in the finca.

Before that we did have classes ;-) and everything is going fine. There are no problems, neither in the “Cóndor de los Andes” nor in the “Hugo Mayo”. I like teaching and enjoy to be with the kids. Here, in the “Cóndor de los Andes” we did make progress in English as well as in Computation. With the older students I started to conjugate verbs and build first short sentences. With these kids and the teenagers from the recinto I will start a course to write letters and start a friendship with a class from my old school in Germany. They will need a lot of help to understand the letters from Germany and also how to write their own cards, but I am excited to test how that idea works. The kids are really excited as well and I hope that it helps them to learn some more English, as well as getting to know kids from Germany.

In San Antonio, the English classes don't work that well, it's much harder to teach the kids English. Some kids, even from the older ones, don't even know how to use Castellano in the correct way. Therefore, I don't see to much sense teaching them a lot of English, and concentrated more on Computation.

However, I have planned to work out a class schedule for both schools, now, during vacation-time. Many of my classes I haven't prepared very well and with a little more preparation they might have much more efect. We'll see how that works.

As well, I have planned to paint the English-classroom in La Paz and design the walls with some vocabulary from the classes. In the school-yard we want to plant some Citrus-trees that I brought from the finca where we do the reforestation-project. Around the Indoor-field and along the side of the river are still missing some plants, in San Antonio they asked me to plant some and here on the finca I also have found a place to reforest. Many plans for for the upcoming weeks and I don't know if there will be time left over to leave to some part of this beautiful country. ;-)

Saludos de La Paz!

Sebastian