

December 26, 2007

Greetings from Tierra Nueva,

Tobias couldn't wait to show me his tree nursery. In three thousand small black plastic bags, seedlings of six varieties of native timber species were just beginning to sprout. Right next to them were the small coffee plants. He has been learning about organic and Rainforest Alliance coffee certification and is getting started on his model coffee planting. What has Tobias and other Tierra Nueva farmers motivated is that the specialty coffee company, Coffee Masters, bought some of his coffee and paid him a great price. You can now support Tobias' and other Tierra Nueva farmers' efforts and help with other projects in Honduras by buying Tierra Nueva coffee.



Although we've continued with our usual activities of visiting the poorest farming families in the Tierra Nueva area to work with them on sustainable farming practices, preventative health, and nutrition, the focus this last year has been the coffee project. Mike Ebert, the president of the specialty coffee company Coffee Masters, has been working with us for over a year now. A year ago he contributed money to Tierra Nueva to help us build solar driers that Bud Hensley a Coffee Corps volunteer recommended to improve the quality of the coffee the farmers were producing.

When the coffee harvest came, coffee samples from Tierra Nueva farms were sent to Mike, and he cupped (tasted) them. I joined him while he was doing this. It's kind of like wine tasting, but not so quaint. There aren't any little pinkies in the air when this is going on. There's a lot of slurping sounds, some spitting, and throwing out adjectives like "clean, bright, nice acidity, complex, spicy, nutty-in-a-good-way," when it's good and "dirty cup, winery, fermenty, simple," when it's not. Through all of this I've learned just how complex coffee is. It has far more flavor affecting chemical compounds than both wine and chocolate combined.

Without the support of Coffee Masters starting this Tierra Nueva brand could never have happened. For one, they had to buy a total of over 40,000 lbs of green unroasted coffee beans from Honduras to fill a shipping container just to get the first 7,000 lbs of green beans from Tierra Nueva they wanted to get started. Secondly, without their expertise, we could not have identified what coffees met the standards for a true specialty coffee.

What we are working towards is a "direct trade coffee" – a direct farmer-to-roaster relationship. Coffee Masters has been willing to pay better than fair trade prices for the coffee, and when they sell it under a Tierra Nueva Coffee Masters label, they are giving back a dollar for every pound to Tierra Nueva to do projects to improve the quality of life in the villages where we work. This could eventually work towards getting Tierra Nueva self-sustaining. That is something we are excited about. We have our eyes set on some of our poorest communities where basic needs such as clean water to drink, access to medical assistance, and even projects to help them diversify their farms to make them more economically sustainable are needed. If this coffee project is successful, we'll be able to do even more of this than we are now.

Ismael Carranza Remembered

Even though Don Ismael Carranza was a master at using cover crops to enrich his once depleted soils, I best remember him for constantly reminding us that Tierra Nueva is



really about helping people grow. “When Tierra Nueva came to my village, the corn on my land only grew three feet tall” he would say. “Tierra Nueva taught me to make compost. It taught me to use cover crops and take this piece of sandy ground exhausted by three generations of slash and burn farming and turn it into a lush, productive farm that people stop on the road to admire. But what Tierra Nueva really did was teach me to put compost right here,” he’d say thumping his chest. “It’s put a ton of compost on me. I’ve learned that I am loved by a loving God and to love my family, and I’ve found a way that I could help others. It made a new person out of me.” After serving as a Tierra Nueva promoter for almost 20 years, Ismael passed away on December 20th.

On-line Donations to Tierra Nueva

We’ve now set it up so that **you can make donations online**. Since Tierra Nueva has several different accounts, when you donate online **be sure to write in the designation box: Honduran Project: San Luis** if you want the money to get to the work I am doing. At the website: http://www.northsuburban.org/activities/tierra_nueva.html or tierranuevahonduras.com go to the **Donate Now** link. Please inform me, Larry Sell, by email lsell@att.net of your donation.

Tierra Nueva is funded entirely through individual contributions and free-will offerings. Any amount helps, as every dollar donated goes directly to the work in Honduras. Contributions are tax-deductible. Tierra Nueva is a not-for-profit organization.

Your help will fund the regular family visits to help farmers and their families produce more using sustainable practices. Through these visits we also help families learn better health practices and provide encouragement, prayer, and counseling in difficult times.

Donations can also be made by check: Make checks out to **Tierra Nueva**. On the bottom MEMO line put **HONDURAN PROJECT, SAN LUIS**. Send the checks to **Larry Sell, 23471 Petite Lake Rd., Lake Villa, IL 60046**.

God’s peace be with you.

Larry Sell

How you can buy Tierra Nueva coffee

A 12oz bag costs \$8.00. Coffee Masters is giving \$1 / lb back to Tierra Nueva to use for projects in the communities. Email me at lsell@att.net to place an order. With shipping the price is:

1 -12 oz bag with shipping is \$14.00
2 -12oz bags with shipping is \$23.00
4-12oz bags with shipping is \$40.00
8 - 12oz bags with shipping is \$76.00

If you want to sell it through your church, use it for a fundraiser, or get your local coffee shop to serve it, you can get much better prices by setting up a wholesale account through me. I would be the sales rep to set this up and earn a small commission to help cover my costs. The coffee is available in 12 oz or in 5 lb bags for coffee shops or for those who want to buy in bulk and share with others in whatever quantity each person wants. Wholesale prices are \$5.71 a 12 oz bag or \$6.95 / lb if bought in 5 lb bags. Minimum orders have to be \$75 with an introductory order of \$150.00. The shipping would be free. With an account, any other of Coffee Master's products (coffees, hot chocolates and teas) are available at the wholesale prices.

Using Tierra Nueva coffee as a fundraiser allows you to help your local programs while giving a better price to coffee farmers like Tobias, and give money to the Tierra Nueva program to help Hondurans.

Email me at lsell@att.net or call me at 847-265-9401 if you want to know more about doing this.

Larry