

## Village Update

*Nuevo San Pedrito, México*



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16 year-old Eneida Ruiz Pérez, a participant in the handicraft group, has stood out with her ability to embroider. She says, “I am very happy because I have already learned to make new things, aside from what I make at home, and I know that I should really put my heart into this so that I can help my family and myself by making money from my work.”

### **Community Organization**

In April, the families set up a loan committee with participation of men and women of the community. Also, Greg Rake and Dick Nelson (Agros staff and board member) visited the community to see the irrigation system they have been working on. Laurie Werner and Deana Berg (also staff) paid a similar visit last May.

### **Land Ownership**

In April, the families of San Pedrito received the 60 acres of land that had been under their neighbor’s control for the last five years. They now have control of the full area of 247 acres. Their conflict was resolved by the Agricultural Attorney of the federal government and agreements with the authorities of San Pedrito and the former owner of the land. Agros collaborated in deciding where to set up a fence that defines the community’s

border. The majority of the 60 acres that they received will be set aside for conservation.

### **Housing and Infrastructure**

Last May the men of the community used heavy machinery to dig a small reservoir in the community. They are expecting abundant rain this year and hope to store enough water to make an irrigation system that will work during the dry season, which will open the possibility of growing tropical fruits and vegetables year-round. They currently have 94 trees planted in the field, including: papaya, lemon, orange, and mango. To keep sediment from getting into the water supply, they also set up permeable walls that will help filter out unwanted sediment. They did all of the work by hand for these filters, using the sand and stones that a local business offered them. The business also helped them with the overall project and oversaw the work, as well as offered them machinery at a low cost. Agros International and Cross Sound Church made an effort to provide the financial resources and aided the Agros Mexico team through the entire process.

### **Sustainable Economic Growth**

Planting new crops has become new process for the families, who have little experience in crops besides corn and beans. Currently, with the rains beginning, they have prepared the land to plant cabbage, squash, cilantro, and radish. They are waiting to see the results.

During May, sixteen farmers took out a loan of \$1,400 to begin growing black beans. They planted the crops and are expecting to yield enough to repay the loan and improve their diets. They will begin repaying the loans in October. The ten women working in the handicraft project also received a loan for \$440, which they will also begin repaying this October.

The families recently finished vaccinating 335 chickens and turkeys against the Newcastle virus.

Of the group of 13 people involved in the handicraft project, 8 of them participated in a hands-on demonstration with a

designer from Oaxaca who had experience in making textiles. They learned how to embroider and improve their work. The 8 of them (one man included) and 3 women from a potential Agros community, Champerico, will act as examples in the handicraft projects and help improve organization and involvement in the project among others in their communities.

### **Community Education and Training**

Agros provided the families with technical assistance in growing their bean crops. They were taught how to manage plagues and take care of the plants using organic methods.

The boys and girls of San Pedrito have finished the school year, which is a great achievement due to the fact that they hadn't received schooling in two years.