



Semilla Nueva

2013 Community Survey Summary of Results

Methodology

During the months of April and May of 2013 Semilla Nueva (SN) conducted its first Community Survey / Needs Assessment. In collaboration with a graduate student in the Masters of Development Practice at University of Florida, the Director of Monitoring and Evaluations designed a survey instrument to gather basic community information as well as achieve the following objectives:

- Provide baseline data of farmers to inform SN programs
- Identify impacts of SN's programs among farmers directly involved in SN programs; additionally, identify if any "spillover" affects to neighbors and other communities are occurring.
- Understand farmers' risk perception of SN technologies and the factors leading to adoption

The survey was carried out in 6 communities in the Southern Pacific Region of Guatemala, where SN works. Four communities surveyed are communities with SN active programs; 2 communities surveyed were "control" communities where SN does not work. A total of 146 farmers were surveyed in these communities, divided into three groups:

- Group 1: Farmers directly involved in SN's programs
- Group 2: Farmers in SN Communities but not involved in SN's programs
- Group 3: Farmers in non-SN Communities, with no knowledge of SN

Key Findings

❖ GENERAL STATISTICS

- 56% of families have family member(s) in the United States
- 22% of families consider themselves indigenous
- Average education level 2nd grade
- Average 5.7 people living in the household
- Average age of farmer: 41
- Average landholding size: 4 manzanas (2.8 hectares)(6.9 acres)
- 33% of farmers have access to irrigation
- 43% of farmers cultivate on their own land only, 35% on rented land only, 21% on both



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- Average gross income from agriculture estimated at Q5900/manzana (\$1080/hectare)(\$491/acre)
- 46% receive all their income from agriculture
- 72% of farmers interviewed receive credit from at least one source
Average amount borrowed overall was ~Q17,000/year (\$2180/year) with average interest rate of 29.23%
- Average corn yield: 56 quintales/manzana (4 MT/hectare) (56 bushels/acre)
Average corn sale price: Q103/quintal (\$0.12/pound)
- Average sesame yield: 9.23 quintales/manzana (.64MT/hectare) (640 pounds/acre)

❖ FARMERS PERCEPTIONS OF MAJOR PROBLEMS

- **Access to land and high rent prices** – Land is constantly changing hands/owners in the region. Farmers may sell a piece of their land in a time of need and then have to rent later. Rent prices continue to rise in the face of the sugarcane industry competing for land with smallholder farmers.
- **Sugarcane** – excessive irrigation is lowering the local water tables, increased pesticide use by industry is drifting into farmer's fields and home gardens and affecting production, clearing of land is causing increased deforestation.
- **Climate Change** – Farmers say the patterns, frequency and intensity of rains are changing. Extreme weather events have led to 50% crop harvest loss in both 2009 and 2010. These factors are increasing farmer's vulnerability. In one community (A-13) farmers identified general environmental change (storms, droughts, heavy winds) to be the single most important challenge facing agriculture in their community.
- **Markets and Prices** – Many farmers complained that the prices of inputs continue to rise while the price they receive for their product continues to decrease. Often times farmers do not have adequate funds to buy appropriate fertilizers and thus achieve much lower yields than their neighbors, decreasing their profit margins even further.
- **Soil Fertility** – Farmers in general expressed a general concern that if they don't apply chemical fertilizers, nothing will grow on the land anymore because of degraded soils. Elders in the community say harvests used to be abundant but because of strong use of tilling and chemicals over the years, their soils have decreased in quality and thus yields have gone down as well.
- **Lack of Capital** – As seen above, the majority of farmers receive credit in some form. Many received loans last year from NGOs and government banks with lower interest rates, but difficulty to process these loans leads many to take loans from neighbors at exorbitant interest rates. With most farmers barely breaking even every year, some sort of loan in advance of the season is needed in order to purchase appropriate inputs, seeds, etc. for a good harvest.



❖ SEMILLA NUEVA'S IMPACT

- 23% of farmers working with Semilla Nueva practice field burning while 68% of farmers not affiliated with SN burn their fields every year.
- No-burn/incorporation of crop residues is perceived by farmers as the most beneficial practice promoted by SN.
- Farmers who have planted pigeonpea showed high interest in continuing experimentation and adaptation of the crop, nearly all said they would plant again.
- Farmers who have tried no-burn or no-till technology promoted by SN perceived their soil conditions to have improved, more than the farmers who had not tried these technologies.