VISION
An equitable and environmentally responsible society where people live in peace with dignity.

MISSION
To help communities gain economic independence and rejuvenate their land through hands-on education and collaborative sustainable agriculture projects.

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Letter from the Director

First and foremost, I want to extend a warm thanks for taking the time to read about Semilla Nueva's work in Guatemala. Amidst all the hardship here, this year has been a great gift, providing our first opportunity to begin long-term programs with farmers in three different communities. 2010 also marked Semilla Nueva reaching 501(c)(3) status and officially becoming a registered non-profit in the United States. Lastly, this year was the first in which our programs have been made possible by a wonderful community of donors and volunteers, giving our organization the chance to work continually on the ground.

While we have a lot of triumphs to tell, we must frame it in the difficulty of the situation where we work. The last few years have been hard for farmers in Guatemala, but 2010 was the worst by far. The storm season began with tropical storm Agatha, which left 320 people dead, destroyed 30% of Guatemala’s grain crop, and caused 1.64 billion dollars in damage. This toll is immense in a country where average annual income is only $5,000 and 52% live under the poverty line. Agatha was the third most costly Pacific tropical storm in the last 60 years, and the sixth most deadly. But perhaps the hardest thing to report is that the storm season started by Agatha didn’t stop. From June onwards, major storms continued to pummel Guatemala, and in October the nation’s grain farmers lost another 20% of their crops to flooding. Many of the farmers we work with simply stopped planting their fields this season for fear of more storms, and many have lost more than half of the money they invested in their crops. Crop losses due to weather are inevitable, but the massive damage done to Guatemala is only possible because of adverse weather combined with highly vulnerable growing methods. Excessive tillage and over-use of agro-chemicals weaken soil quality, while hillside cultivation and lack of windbreaks multiply farmers losses to weather. Systems have been designed in other parts of Latin America and Africa to help small farmers more than double their earnings and protect their land at the same time, but these haven’t been adapted or promoted in most of Guatemala. Helping farmers learn these methods and share them with others is why we are here, and as our community reports in the following pages show—we began our first year with a strong foot forward.

As always, Thank you for all your support!

~Curt Bowen
Executive Director
Semilla Nueva Links Farming Associations on the Coast

Though hard, our promotores stayed true to their tests. By September we were able to see improvements in the harvests, in some cases by as much as 20%. In a year when fields were being destroyed by downpours, they were able to protect some of their crops. This enthusiasm was shared as we brought local sustainable agriculture experts and our promotores together in our first conference. Despite the fact that the conference happened toward the tail end of another major tropical storm, we had an amazing turnout. Fifty farmers from five farming associations made the journey through mud and rain because they were inspired to learn a new way to grow. Our promotores spoke strongly at the conference, explaining a situation they all know well. They implored their fellow farmers to learn, experiment, and share so that their communities would survive and thrive through the coming changes. People left the conference inspired, with new ideas, new seeds for the off season, and a plan for the next planting. We are dedicated to providing the resources needed to feed this interest and grow a better future here in Guatemala.

~Brook Golling
Field Director

The Pacific coastal plain is home to fields of corn and sesame grown on small and medium size farms. Savannah trees and endless green are shadowed by Guatemala’s volcanic back drop and dark rain clouds that gather during the afternoon. Many of the area’s farmers have formed associations with the hopes of receiving government or non-profit aid, however aid and projects rarely make it to this region of Guatemala. The Pacific coast is one of the country’s most productive regions, but it has also been the hardest hit by a string of problems, from skyrocketing fertilizer prices in 2008, a drought in 2009, and a string of tropical storms this year. Techniques like no-till farming, green manures, and agroforestry could help farmers become more resilient against these problems, but few have even heard of these technologies. Semilla Nueva’s driving question is how to bring information to the farming associations already established and help farmers organize around these technologies.

We began this year by selecting several highly motivated associations and conducting investigations with their members.
Upcoming Project Profile: Coastal Plains of Retahuleu

Semilla Nueva is working closely with promotores representing the following farming associations—In La Maquina: Asociacion de Desarrollo San Antonio los Encuentros San Andres Villa Seca (ADASEV, 80 families); Asociacion de Pequeños y Medianos Agricultores el Porveneir (APMAPOR, 27 families); and Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Nuevo Amanecer (ASODINA, 100 families)—In Caballo Blanco: Cooperativa Agricola Integral R.L. La Montaña (20 families).

Current and upcoming project work: We are working with these farming associations to experiment with and learn about simple, well-proven technologies to reduce farmers’ dependence on chemical fertilizers. Conservation tillage, agroforestry, and green manure investigations are all part of an integrated agricultural system for lowering the use of expensive and environmentally destructive chemicals, educating people about healthy soil, and increasing soil fertility and environmental resilience.

Green Manures: Green manures are crops that biologically fix nitrogen, accumulate organic matter, and confer many other benefits based on the species. Farmers have expressed a growing interest in planting green manures, because they represent an economically and environmentally viable alternative to expensive chemical fertilizers, and fit well into existing systems for production. We have gathered positive results from collaborative tests with velvetbean (Mucuna pruriens), and are investigating the success of jackbean (Canavalia ensiformis) as a summer cover crop and green manure. Semilla Nueva is working to share information about viable Green Manures in the coastal climate, and to provide local access to seed.

Conservation Tillage: This technology is intended to reduce soil tillage to zero, lowering labor hours, greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing the overall fertility of the soil. Conservation tillage means leaving the crop residues and mulch to decompose post-harvest, then planting directly in the mulch, rather than mechanically tilling. This technology has been proven to increase soil fertility and structure, retain more humidity during droughts and dry periods and reduce erosion. This technology also reduces the labor hours, health hazards, and greenhouse gas emissions of field burning and mechanical tillage. Semilla Nueva is working to spread information and consultation on this technology through conferences and example plots with promotores.

Agroforestry: An agricultural system that introduces tree-intercropping, agroforestry can improve soil fertility while protecting crops from vicious winds. Trees used in agroforestry increase soil health through biological nitrogen fixation, organic matter accumulation, and recycling of nutrients from depth. Gliricidia sepium (known in Guatemala as Madre Cacao) is native to the coastal plains. This valuable tree is a prime candidate for improving soil fertility, increasing maize yield, providing beneficial predator habitats, and protecting crops from winds that easily topple corn stalks. Semilla Nueva is working to increase awareness of this native resource through conferences and consultation, test plots, and access to seeds and saplings.
Relationships and Opportunity in Xacana Grande

Nestled in the mountainous highlands lies Xacana Grande, an agricultural community of indigenous Mam farmers. Xacana Grande has been the main focus of Semilla Nueva's small community work, and the results of 2010 have been both inspiring and instructive. There are many obstacles to being accepted as a foreign organization in Xacana—the community is filled with rusted signs of NGO projects long abandoned. To overcome these barriers, we tried our hardest to develop true relationships through collaboration within the community.

Semilla Nueva works by forming local volunteers into qualified community leaders and technicians, called promotores. Inherent to our model is the patient development of lasting relationships, an important factor for building enthusiasm and change from within the community. In Xacana, we began our collaboration with local promotor Ender Lopez and his family—who ushered us into the community by generously taking our staff and volunteers into their home. As we continued to live in the community, we got to know many of the local families, talked with community leaders, and introduced the ideas behind our first projects. We worked with Ender to help teach him the science behind sustainable agriculture and planned tests to try the new technology on his farm. Volunteers from Whitman College spearheaded the project, living in the community and participating in day to day work, while simultaneously collaborating with Ender to build a worm compost bin and a plot dedicated to growing a diverse vegetable garden. In this way, we were able to participate and learn about the normal practices for rural subsistence farmers, while also beginning the steps to the creation of a self-renewing fertilizer source, and an integrated system for teaching and investigating soil ecology principles. The worm compost proved successful, quickly producing a rich organic fertilizer and interesting other community members...continued on next page
Ender, fulfilling the Semilla Nueva model, worked with our volunteers and staff to put on a community conference in late July, teaching the technology to an audience of community members. Within a month of the presentation, five other families were in the process of building their own worm composting bins, utilizing worms and consultation from Ender’s own bin. These families have committed to share and teach other families in the same fashion.

Watching as the kids each brought small bags full of organic fertilizer from home, or argued over who got to dig and help was one of the most beautiful parts of our year. Capturing this enthusiasm and helping the kids learn about sustainable growing is a valuable way to secure future knowledge and interest in agriculture.

Earning the trust of the community and stimulating excitement about sustainable development has been hard; but we’ve learned that with good technology and relationships built on trust, we can help facilitate real change. Nowhere was this more apparent than in our work with Xacana’s school. Over lunch in her home, the school director explained that their garden project was failing, and having seen our work with Ender, they wanted help. We were thrilled to fulfill the request. We taught sustainable agriculture lessons in the school and then worked with the kids to design and build a new garden complete with terraces, crop diversification, and a worm composting bin.

This next year will bring our work to the next level. Working together with our promotores, we are going to expand our exploration of modern technologies—such as soil conservation and green manures. We intend to significantly increase yields and decrease reliance on chemical fertilizers, while fostering the connections that make the work possible. To all the volunteers who’ve spent months teaching, learning, and enjoying hearty portions of tortillas and beans, thank you for making this work possible!

~Darren Yondorf
Xacana project manager
Semilla Nueva

Statement of Financial Position
Fiscal Year May 1st, 2010 - Dec 31st, 2010

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<tr>
<th>Use of Operating Funds</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program Activities</td>
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<td>Management &amp; Administration</td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td>Total Expenses</td>
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Operating Revenue

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Event revenue</td>
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<td>Foundation grants &amp; Institutional support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Unrestricted Revenues and Other Support</td>
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![Diagram showing the distribution of funds]
THANK YOU!!

Carlynn Canny, Marge Bernard, Tomas Belsky, Pat Kennedy, Brady Brim-DeForest, Aaron Michalson, Natalie Jamerson, Maggie Appleton, Alegria Olmedo, Sierra Phillips, Mike Pierce, Cody Fearon, Gobardhan Pradhan, Sasha Kanno, Mike and Diane McGrath, Tracy Barnett, John Diehl, Wilson Ixct, The Thordike Family, Noah Bronstein, James Bowen, Linda Copman, Zach Katz, Jonathan Cardinal, Ryan Shea, Susan and David Chapman, Simon Sharkey-Jacoby, Lindsey Menard, Dori Appel, Perry S Prince, Duane Harvey, Melissa Reddell, Steve and Louise Rouse, Molly Erwin, Joe Bowen, Marcy B Greene, Adam McGrath, David and Jody Hodges, Diane and Mike McGrath, Todd and Deena Kobernick, Judy and Johann Visser, Stan and Laurie Zuckerman, John and Sharon Javna, Marilyn Borkin, Andrew Cunningham, Rod Birney and Suzanna Nadler, Bonnie Campos, Muriel Ames and Rolar Yondorf, Jill Weston, Elizabeth Murphy, Jennifer Pletscher, Mariah Mayfield, Trine Vik, Swirl Alexander, Hanna Rayn Elliot, Steve Isser, Cameron Patterson, Nate Smith, Jackie Curry, Megan Armstrong, Heather Hardie-Hill, Ethan Zirin-Brown, Erica Knutson, Hannah Aronowitz, Shelley Phillips-Nielson, Noa Bornstein, Judy and Bill Campbell, Sue and Howie Morningstar, Harriet and Dick Friedman, Karen Chapman, Jinny Brown, Dr. William Jackson, David DeVane, Ken and Lori Gambelin, Brian and Jen Griffith,

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