



HONDURANS ARE TAUGHT to keep chickens in pens by the agricultural missionaries Garland Gingerich reports

chickens in Honduras lay an average of 20 to 25 eggs per year and are left to run throughout the village.

Agricultural Missionary Reports (Part II)

Hondurans Are Poor

by Garland E. Gingerich
Penn Manor Vo-Ag Teacher

Ed. Note: This is the second part of a three-part series. During the 1967-68 school year Garland E. Gingerich was on sabbatical leave from his position as teacher of agriculture, Penn Manor High School, Millersville. During that period of time, Gingerich served as an agricultural missionary in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, Central America. He served as an agricultural education adviser for a coordinated effort by three church groups to promote community development on the northern coast of Honduras.

Honduras, like most developing nations has two classes — a rich class and a poor class. The rich class makes up about 10% of the population, the poor class is the remaining 90%. There is no middle class of any measurable size.

The large masses, the 90% who are poor, are very, very poor. From Honduran Government reports we learn that their average income is \$48 per year. This salary does not go very far, a loaf of bread costs 25c and a quart of milk 18c. At those prices on their income they do not drink very much milk. They eat meat about once per week. The poor, the masses of the people, live a subsistence type existence. Every day is one of getting food on the table.

What are some of the physical factors contributing to this deep set poverty?

There are several physical things. Some of the more noticeable include 1) water, pure potable water; 2) education; 3) slash and burn agriculture; 4) transportation; 5) agricultural production; 6) productive land.

Let's look at some of these things individually and see how they are causing poverty in Honduras.

First of all, agricultural production. Most cows produce 3 or 4 quarts of milk per day as their average production. The majority of the cattle are not fed

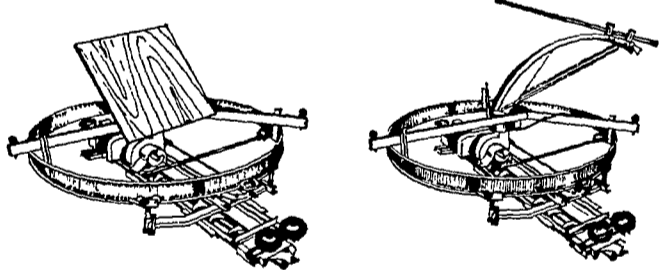
grain. They are left to shift for themselves finding what forage they can.

Chickens lay an average of 20 to 25 eggs per year. Chickens are left run throughout the village including a free run of the

houses. No attempts are made to house or feed the majority of the chickens in Honduras. We helped families gather green shelled eggs indicating that some of the fowl they are keeping are not too far removed from the wild jungle fowl.

Sows in Honduras frequently raise only 2 or 3 pigs per litter. These pigs in turn take 9 to 12 months to reach a weight of 200 pounds. As with cattle and chick-

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ons, hogs are left to run and to shift for themselves. They too are in and out of the open doors of the houses creating health problems from the worms and parasites with which they are constantly infesting the area in and around the house.

Corn production pegged at 35 bushels per acre is considered to be a good crop.

These are a few of the agricultural production figures that further illustrate the fact that Hondurans are poor.

Education certainly has to rank high as one of the root causes of poverty. About 60% of the Hondurans are illiterate. At the present time most of the children do have the opportunity to receive a third grade education. But, for the majority, third grade is the end of their formal education. Education beyond the third grade is not readily available to children in Honduras. There is practically no vocational education. Only one school in all of Honduras offers a course in vocational agriculture. The ability of the people to read a newspaper or bulletin from

which they could learn new ways of doing things on their own is just out of the question at the present literacy level.

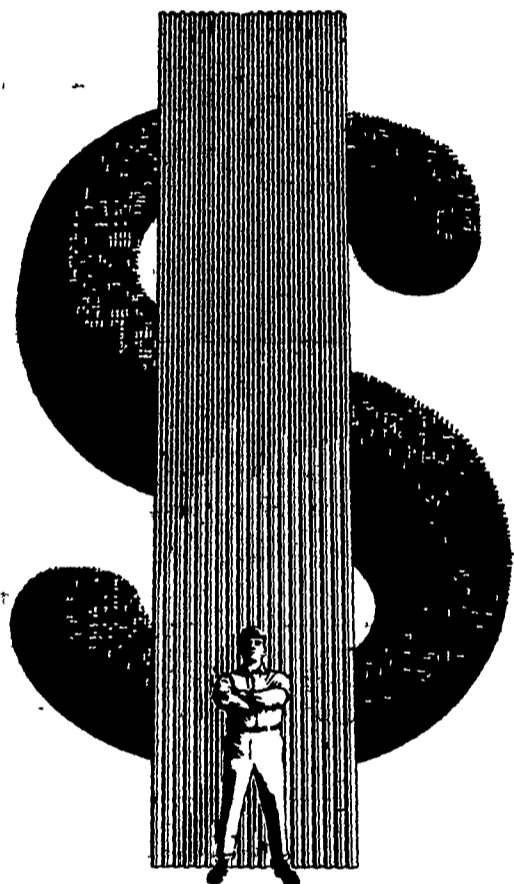
Transportation is probably the most difficult problem facing Honduras. Honduras is a country about the geographical size of Pennsylvania. Its hard roads would reach from the Ohio state line to Pittsburgh and from Philadelphia to Harrisburg. Its dirt roads would connect Harrisburg and Pittsburgh and reach from Philadelphia to Scranton. These dirt roads are impassable during

2 to 3 months of the year because vast areas of Honduras are in a high rainfall area. Some areas get up to 150 inches of rain per year and as high as 50 inches in one month, a total more than we get in a full year in Lancaster County.

Honduras does have about 234 miles of railroad. But of this 234 miles there are 3 different gauges, making the convenient interchange of railway cars impossible.

Airplane travel is not at all reliable. Vast areas of Honduras

(Continued on Page 7)



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