

## Reports on activities of ex-participants from Central America <Part 3>

As the third report on activities of ex-participants from Central America, in this chapter, we would like to report on 4 ex-participants whom we visited in Nicaragua.

### Mr. Leonel Pineda Reyes - Participated in the Vegetable Cultivation Technology Course II in 2006

Leonel was a research staff at the Farming Technology Institute of Nicaragua (INTA). In the training course in Japan, he conducted a research focusing on potato. He was very enthusiastic about implementing his action plan after returning to his country. However due to a major reduction of the budget for the institute, it became difficult to even maintain his core duties let alone implement the action plan. He became fed up with the situation and left INTA at the end of 2007, and joined an agricultural material company. He really liked his research job and was very unhappy to change the job that time, however, he has been using what he learned in Japan in his current job. His current job is to provide technical support when the company sells materials and equipment to farmers. He said his advice related to fertilizer application design based on soil analysis, cultivation management and pest and disease control is often based on what he had learned in Japan.

In his case, although he has changed his position from the government to the private sector, we could feel that his experiences in Japan are contributing towards agricultural development in Nicaragua.

That day, he invited me for dinner at his house. He showed me the photos from the time of his training in Japan and talked about his memories. His children greeted me in Japanese falteringly and courteously. I could feel that he and his family really like Japan.



Leonel and his family loving Japan: The son said he would love to go to Japan some day and twinkled his eyes.

### National Autonomous University of Nicaragua – Leon (UNAN-Leon)

We accepted three participants – Mr. Miguel Barcenas Lanzas, Mr. Jorge Luis Rostran Molina and Mr. Adrian Catin Chiong – from this university during the period 2007-2009. They are teachers and field practice coordinators at the agricultural ecology research section and teach around 150 students.

They have been utilizing experiences from the training in Japan and cooperatively conduct experiments and research activities. They developed an original Kuntan (rice husk charcoal) maker and steam soil sterilizer, in conducting banker plants and training/pruning trials, and other varietal experiments.

They remarked that varied Common Experiments were a particularly good experience for them in the training

curriculum in Japan. Because they conduct research activity and also teach students at the university, it is important to establish experiment design properly, evaluate results exactly, and to transfer them to the students in an appropriate way. They could gain new viewpoints through the experience of Common and Individual Experiments in Japan.

What they are focusing their energy on is experiments with tomato seedlings. In their area, it was common for farmers to plant tomato seedlings in the main farm at the stage of three true leaves development however, they noticed that already grown large seedlings with the first flower are planted in the main farm in Japan. They are expecting to expand the growing period by using large seedlings. Already, they have started preparing media for raising seedlings, however, have not found appropriate plastic nursery pots for nurturing large seedlings in Nicaragua. They are trying plastic wrap which is used for fruit seedlings, however, it isn't able to keep sufficient soil for root balls formation. One challenge for them is to find a nursery pot substitute. In order to prevent ex-participants stopping their activities because of small obstacles like this, it is necessary to establish a system to continue supporting ex-participants after their return to their own countries.

In the university environment where research and education activities can be conducted simultaneously, it seems possible to actively and effectively utilize the experiences in the training in Japan. In addition, the ultimate beneficiaries of their activities are young people who will be working in agriculture in Nicaragua and related field. Therefore, the ripple effects of their activities are considered significant. Furthermore, in the case of UNAN-Leon, the three ex-participants have been collaborating to utilize experiences gained during training in Japan, which have been leading to notable achievements. This case indicates to us that it is effective to deliberately accept several participants from the same workplace or in related organizations within a training scheme with a view to effectively internalizing training achievements in their own work after returning to their jobs.



Kuntan was produced in the drum. Kuntan is used mixed with planting soil.

Soil is put into the blue drum. Water is boiled in the black drum in front and steam is sent to the blue drum via a pipe. The innovation of the three ex-participants in UNAN is remarkable.

