**F14CF - Interview farmer #14 male, Mistrato - 15-7-2022**

**Specialties/difficulties:** Note: the farmer would sometimes refer to *arrobas* (@). It is an old weight unit, equivalent to approximately 25 pounds.

**Thank you very much for participating in this research and maybe you could start with a personal introduction.**

Like saying my name and such

**Name, age…**

I see. My name is [name]. I’m 54 years old. I’ve lived in this place for 43. I came here from another region in the country due to violence reasons. My family had to be displaced. My father and my mother along with me and 9 other siblings. We established here in the year 79. We came from a region that was completely a ranching one. We didn’t have any knowledge about coffee.

**Oh, really?**

No. I knew it, I had seen the fruits but I had never worked it. At some point a relative had a coffee plot there, on the place I was born and there is where I knew it for a very little time. When I came here, I completely got to know it. And with a little of ignorance the plot came down due to the lack of administration. Because when you don’t know about something I you don’t seek from help by someone who knows it, the most likely thing is that you will fail in that new profession. And that was kind of what happened to us. All the coffee plots were done, they became unproductive, at the beginning the production volumes were very high because there were barely pests and diseases. Back in those days *roya* arrived and without knowing how to handle it or… I don’t know, the ignorance itself on the profession you’re doing leads to not doing things the way they are supposed to do. And like that, things go down. Then there were roya resistant varieties and we got into it with them. We continued producing coffee, now better understanding the cultivation. But I tell you, my parents were gone, we were a little alone, we became sick, a little bit… The workforce is not easy to get. There is not much work opportunities… There is a lot of work opportunities but not much people working.

**It is a challenge here.**

It is a challenge here. (To someone/something else) Stop. Get out.

**You have said that it is around 12 hectares here?**

Yes, approximately.

**And the majority is coffee?**

No. It is divided. It is divided in grass and coffee.

**Grass meaning cows?**

Yes, cows. That’s it. Grassing grass.

**And the cows are for milking?**

Right now we don’t have cows of our own because my health wouldn’t allow me to work with cattle. And there is also a small are as a forest reserve.

**Then the hectares that you have in coffee is half of it or?**

No, I think it is less than half. It might be only around 2 hectares of coffee, more or less. For approximately 8 000 or 9 000 trees.

**And what is the approximate production of these trees?**

Let’s see, this production is approximately… In a good harvest it is of about 500 @s, 800 @s.

**In total?**

In total. Yes. Depending of the management you have with it.

**Could you describe a day? What are your activities in a day? At what time do you get up?**

Usually, here we get up at 6 in the morning, because it is very cold, to make breakfast for the workers, when there are any, or for myself. I direct them in their work. If it is collecting coffee, I tell them how to do it. They already know more or less how to do it. And labors like these. Cleaning the trees. What else can I tell you? The house. Cleaning of the house.

**And up to what time do you usually work?**

Approximately until 4 in the afternoon. Meaning the work day goes more or less from 7 am until noon and more or less from 1 pm to 4 pm.

**And how many days in a week do you work?**

5. Sometimes 6. And other times all the week because you’re never done with work.

**There is always something to do.**

There is always something to do. You always find something to do.

**And with how many people do you work with in the plot?**

We are currently working with 4 and the people living here are 6.

**And who are those living here?**

My brother and me. My brother [name] and myself.

**And 4 other people?**

Yeah, but no. They come from somewhere else.

**Oh, you live here with 2 people and those 4 come here to work.**

To work and then they go back to their homes.

**And do they work here all year long or…**

No. Sometimes by seasons. But if they want to work all year there is work all year.

**And what is what you like, you enjoy from the activities here?**

Oh you have to enjoy from work. Being happy with what you do. Loving what you do. I like what I do. I like producing food. My thing is to produce food and I like to produce it organically. I like providing people with the best products out of my work. Give the best of me with my work. To provide health and wellbeing. That’s my goal.

**So you produce organic?**

Yes, we produce organic. We use little herbicides. We are barely using. Little insecticides, too. Neither. Well, nothing. Oh, I forgot to mention. I also have bee colonies. Although the summer here was over about two or three years ago, so we’ve had only winter. Lately the apiarian production has completely dropped. The hives are disappearing and we are recovering again.

**Do you sell the honey?**

Yes, we sell the honey.

**So you have different sources of income. The coffee, the cattle, the honey.**

The cattle... And we also have banana trees planted.

**And banana trees? Ok. You have said that the coffee sector or coffee cultivation was new to you when you came here. What was it that you would do before.**

Cattle.

**Cattle.**

Yes, I was raised with cattle. I lived for a short time in the place where I was borned. I was brought from that area at 10 years old.

**And what area was it?**

A department called Santander. Here. In the middle Magdalena region. Due to violence reasons, we were pretty much displaced and we ended up here, in a calm place. Although it has also had its conflicts. Here we also had some challenges because, even though there was not an armed conflict as there was there, there was a lot of stealing.

**Stealing?**

Theft, yes. My father at the start was a victim of theft. They would steal animals and they would extort him, for him to handle in… Yes. So there was a big problem at the beginning.

**How did you begin with coffee here?**

That’s even a longer story. Where I used to be, there was a populated area with people from all over the country. Some people living there, ended up in this area, and bought a plot. And since they were really good friends with my father, they went back and led him here. They showed him the way here. He came and looked… They brought him to this plot, so he came and looked around. He negotiated it and immediately went back, sold a plot that was likely three times the size of this one. He sold all of his cattle at a very low price. And then he bought this and came without having knowledge on coffee. People advised him to stay there, they didn’t want him to come. That coffee was too complicated and such. That when it matured it falls. Well, that you have to collect it or it falls. And it turned out that when we arrived here, we arrived in the middle of the harvest. And indeed, since we didn’t know a thing, people would go and do whatever they wanted and collected a branch, half of the coffee in it humid and the rest lost. No control.

**And how did you learn?**

Life teaches you. You learn from mistakes. You learn from mistakes and some nice people who had knowledge and would advise on somethings. But it is mostly what you learn from mistakes, to not repeat them. And coffee itself teaches you. Any plant you have teaches you how to handle it. You know coffee is a fruit coffee and as any fruit tree it requires trimming. And you have to learnt what to take and what to leave because there are some things that are beneficial and there are others which are malefic. Like everything. Therefore, you must know which are the good ones and which are the bad ones. Which to take out and which to leave during trimmings.

**Do you belong to the association here in the municipality?**

Yes. To the association and to the farmers’ cooperative.

**Both?**

Yes. Committee.

**And why?**

Well, they say you must be affiliated in order to obtain the benefits and aids. The thing is that alone you’re not capable. You always require help. Knowledge, because we don’t know everything. So, in order to be part of this, we need to know what this is, learn from this, to avoid making mistakes.

**So you receive trainings and…**

Yes, I have received trainings about bananas management and coffee itself. I would do my own seedlings to plant. I didn’t like buying them. And to sell them, too. And I was doing very well with that. My seedlings were very famous. They were sold nicely. But now I can’t work with them anymore and there is no one making them.

**Are there things you don’t like from work and you would like to change?**

Let’s see. To change it, but changing what? Yes. Change is good. Everything that is wrong. What doesn’t fulfill expectations. What is not generating income. We have to change the work models. We have to change… I would change… There should be schools teaching and training on how to work. The thing is, the biggest problem is that farming has not been recognized as a profession?

**Oh, no?**

No, I don’t think so. Or rather than a profession, an art. So it is worked however… If you don’t work a specific way, you won’t obtain the desired results. Then, what is missing is a lot of knowledge because with the educational model we have in our country, which is trying to stop production, since it has strictly prohibited that a minor above 10 years old or… Yeah, below 18 to work. When these works are learned to be done since you are a kid. So what happens is that you deliver to society a bunch of lazy people who don’t like to work, who didn’t learn to produce anything. And then we, the ones that used to work, the ones that knew a little, are disappearing. And the ones left didn’t learn absolutely anything about working in the fields. Then there is a bigg problem regarding production deficit. It is alarming to see how the malnutrition indicators have increased because of the food security crisis we are facing. We are importing everything. Excuse me asking you this. How many does your country fit in mine?

**How many… I’m sorry?**

How many times does your country fit in mine?

**I don’t know, maybe 30 times or more.**

I think so.

**More, more.**

I think that your country is not larger than the size of our Cauca department. Somewhat the size of the Cauca department. And you have invaded us with milk, vegetables and what else? What else do you send over here?

**How many people?**

No, what else do you send here aside from milk products and produce.

**Yes, a lot of milk.**

And look at the huge grassing fields we have.

**In the Netherlands?**

No, here. Here. We have much more than you and yet what we send you compared to you is little. What is it, coffee? And what else? What do you import from here?

**Many things. Many things we don’t have such as coffee, cocoa, banana. Many things like that.**

Oh, ok. Nice. We are exchanging.

**Yes, yes. Then, you don’t feel as valued?**

No. I feel undervalued.

**Undervalued.**

Yes. Because farming is undervalued, underestimated. It is the worst paid thing there is.

**And for example, from the income you receive from coffee and banana farming, can you live properly here?**

No. You subsist. You subsist. Because when we are talking about living properly, what are we talking about? About not having needs. And yes, there are unmet needs. But we know how to go overcome them.

**Then it is enough to, well…**

Yes. To live you don’t need to have such a quantity of life. All you need is tranquility and peace of mind. Everything else is extra.

**What transportation means do you have here? Car and…**

Car and motorcycle.

**And do you also use that to transport coffee and banana?**

(Background conversation) Yes. To transport coffee.

**You use the motorcycle or how do you do it?**

With the motorcycle. You tie up the coffee lump and we go to the town with it.

**Do you sell it to the association and also to the cooperative?**

But since my nephew has a coffee store that you saw there, you were there…

**That’s his coffee shop?**

Yes. The coffee is produced here. I actually produce a special type of coffee here. A minimum quantity but nobody else has it.

**And do you toast it here?**

No. It leaves from here as *pergamino*, then takes it to roast there and then he sells it roasted.

**What is more or less the price you receive from this special coffee?**

What is it? Make it around 15 000 pesos above the base price.

**Per @?**

Per @.

**It is more than normal coffee.**

Yes. It is more than normal coffee.

**Do you also participate in meetings and such things in the association and the cooperative?**

Yes, of course. I do.

**And how are these meetings? What do you discuss on?**

Sometimes we discuss on the low coffee prices. On the high fertilizer prices.

**And are decisions taken there?**

Yes, but nothing is done to improve that. Currently the coffee price is better but the supplies are sky high.

**Do you have… Is it possible to save here?**

It is difficult. It is difficult because the expenses are always high. But being careful, yeah, you can save something.

**And here in the house you have electricity, water…**

Yes.

**Internet?**

No, not that.

**Not that. And is that something you would like to change?**

Yes, it is something I would like to change.

**Is this land your property?**

No, this is family patrimony. This was inherited by our parents. There are only 7 siblings left. My mother passed away already, 15 days ago. Less than 15 days ago we buried her.

**Oh, I’m sorry.**

Thank you very much. And now we only have to unify… I don’t know what they are thinking of doing but we have to do something about it. Starting and inheritance trial and look into what corresponds to everyone.

**Then the land is everyone’s.**

Yes, although the one that has been administering it and working it has been me. The crops and everything that there is has grown under my leadership. My direction.

**What are your dreams? Are there things you would like to accomplish?**

Truth is, I don’t have that many dreams left. No. I don’t have many desires. The only thing is to finish my trip peacefully and that’s it. Yeah. What do I need more for?

**How is life here in the community? Do you have much contact with the neighbors or with the town?**

Yes, a lot. A lot of contact. Relationships are good with the people. We help each other in what we can.

**It is calm**

Yes, it is calm. We are all a community. Many kilometers around, we know each other.

**I would like to do an exercise. Here I have some cards that represent different topics or life aspects and I would like to know from you, what relevance they have for you in order to live well or to feel good. And if they are the most important, the less important or perhaps somewhere in the middle. And I would like to discuss one by one, if that’s ok.**

**(Intromission by other people in the background)**

**I would like to begin with education and knowledge. Where would you put it?**

But what is this about? I didn’t understand what you explained earlier.

**For you, what aspects are important for you? For your life? To feel good? And I would like to know if this aspect, for example education and knowledge, would be the most important or the less important or maybe somewhere in the middle?**

No. This, education and knowledge I would put it high.

**And why is that?**

Because what can you do without education and knowledge? It is the base for personal orientation. It is what tells me where I’m going to. It can guide in my way. Without education and knowledge I am no one.

**And what type of education have you had?**

What type of education? Well, the academic one hasn’t been much. I didn’t even finish high school. But I like reading a lot. You also get a lot of information there, a lot of knowledge. There are so many things that are not taught in schools and institutions.

**You learn more in practice than…**

Yes. Because there are many things wrong. Mainly nowadays, with the current education system we have here, the kids come out of school knowing less than us who didn’t study.

**Are there things you would like to learn more about?**

Yes, of course. I feel like I don’t know anything compared to what I need to learn.

**And the housing?**

Where do I go if I don’t have a house? Nowhere.

**And how is that house for you?**

Oh just a house that has utilities, complete ones. Two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen… it is the room I like the most, the kitchen. The part I like the most.

**Is there something you would like to change or improve regarding this?**

Yes. Yes, of course. To change or improve? For example, I’m currently living in a house that needs an improvement. A restoration. I would like to do that. That’s what I would like to change.

**And self-determination? To be able to take your own decisions.**

Of course. That’s why I like. It is awful to let others decide for yourself. Where does freedom end up? I would put it here.

**In the middle.**

Yes.

**And now, are you able to make your own decisions?**

Yes.

**Ok. That’s good. And physical health?**

Is it allowed to repeat? Yes?

**High?**

Yes.

**Taking care of the environment?**

Can I repeat again?

**Yes, it is difficult with these topics.**

It is possible to repeat high?

**Yes, you can. Yes. And why is it important?**

What do I do if the world is a desert? Where do I live? Where do I live? Who will provide food? Who will provide the air I breath? The oxygen. I could lack food. I could lack water for I don’t know for how long. How long could I last without oxygen? Seconds.

**And how do you currently take care of the environment?**

I like planting little trees. I don’t like throwing trash all over the place.

**(Someone else) Can I take your picture?**

What did she say?

**Oh, if she could take a photo. And do you use fertilizers in the plot?**

Yes.

**That you do. Are they chemical fertilizers?**

Chemical ones.

**Why do you use it?**

Organic ones… We are diving into the organic ones, too. There is a transition so you have to… You know here we are working to earn money. For that, you need production volumes. Therefore, the transition from the organic-chemical, has a low, a loss. If you have a crop that is adapted to the chemical fertilizer and move it to organic, what will you obtain? A decrease in the production and therefore losses. It won’t ever compensate the work you have to do, which is a very hard work.

**Has the weather changed here?**

Yes.

**It has? Is it noticeable?**

It is very noticeable. The cloud forest is disappearing. When I moved here it all was covered in mist. White. Nowadays you don’t see that. And it used to be every day. You would look at those hills in front there and you would see they were covered in mist. You don’t see that anymore.

**Then is that something you noticed too in the crops?**

In the losses, in the production volumes.

**You do?**

Yes, you can notice it. It is evident.

**It decreased then?**

It is lower. Look. When we came to this plot, the variety of coffee used was a bush-like one. The one I mentioned I produce here for my nephew. There were approximately 5 000 trees in the plot, I don’t think higher than that, and the production volume was incredible. But the variety was changed and what happened? That volume decreased to less than half. It was reduced. The number of trees was increased but the number of lumps decreased.

**And what varieties do you have here?**

There is *Castillo* variety and a variety called *supremo.* There a bush-like which belong to the native ones, old varieties called, arabigo.

**And satisfactory work?**

Yes. Satisfactory work. Of course.

**What importance does that have for you?**

You have to love what you do. I think that someone who is happy is not that who does what he wants but loves what he does. And to feel good with what you do. Do it with love, with determination. And enjoy it, as I said before. Enjoy what you do. Love every moment in life.

**And do you feel satisfied with work?**

Yes. Yes. I feel satisfied. As I said, I don’t have many wishes. I don’t desire wealth. I don’t desire power. No. I am good.

**You are good. I’m glad. It goes there?**

Let’s put it there.

**And social relationships?**

That I’ll put here.

**Ok. What are your social relationships like? Do you have a family?**

Very beautiful and united. Beloved. A group of people take treats me well wherever I go. Yeah. I love everyone who loves me. And those who don’t love them I love them anyways.

**Leisure and entertainment? Free time?**

Yes, I like entertainment.

**What kind of games?**

Leisure. For leisure I like to read. And I like to play pool.

**Pool? You do that in the town?**

Yes, in the town. But I’m thinking of buying a table to do it here. To practice here.

**Do you think you have enough time to do those things?**

Yes. Of course. If I have time to work I also have time to rest. To relax myself. For everything. Leisure and entertainment. Yeah, this one would go somewhere here. I would put it as the lowest but…

**Less… the least important between these things. And public participation? Maybe you are good in the community, in the politics maybe.**

Very important, too. Of course, my participation in politics is little. In religion it is minimal although I’m not an atheist. But I think public participation is very important. Of course. To opine about politics.

**There. Do you participate in the association and the cooperative. Is there something else you are involved in?**

I used to be in every association but because of my health condition I have retired from all of that.

**But usually you like participating. Why is that?**

Because of everything you learn. Everything you learn in life is useful. If I see it is good I take it, if I don’t like it, I don’t. As simple as that.

**And safety?**

Very important. Safety. I will put it next to this.

**High, too. And here, do you feel safe?**

Yes. Thank god I do. I live nicely. The one who is not within a problem or in the wrong path has no reason to feel unsafe. No. You live well and walk calmly.

**And mental health?**

A little of bad character. In the past few weeks I’ve been afflicted. Well, all of that… To have mental health is… It goes here.

**And to finish I have nutrition.**

This one…

**Also goes high. And do you have sufficient food for you and your family?**

Thank god. Yes, thank god.

**Here I also have some white cards because I don’t know if we are missing a topic that for you might be important and we haven’t discussed.**

No. What could we be missing that I need to mention? No. I think everything is there.

**If you could change something regarding these topics, to improve something, what would that be?**

No, I don’t think there is anything I need to change.

**Satisfied?**

Yes.

**At the end, I would like to show you… Well, this is the concept, the idea, we are working with. Because we are interested in the residues that are generated in different plots like the pulp or the cocoa skins. The idea is, if it can be transported into a plant, it could be like this, to transform this biomass in other products.**

Fertilizers

**That’s an example. We are currently researching technology that could transform it into biocrude and biocarbon, biochar, that could be used as fertilizers within other things. And on the other side, this biocrude can be used to produce different thigs. For example, biofuel in the maritime sector, that’s the project we are working with, but it could also be used for planes and bioplastics. All these other things.**

Oh what a wonderful thing. Perfect.

**Well, what do you think of this idea. About using residues to generate other things.**

I think it is the best idea and it fills me with joy knowing there is people working on this because this is a big problem. The residues.

**It is a problem?**

Yes. But I think one of the best prowess someone can do is to transform disadvantages into advantages, right?

**And why? What are the problems with residues?**

There is not a consciousness regarding the benefits provided if they are utilized, nor on the damages it causes if you don’t take advantage of it. So, maybe it is that no one pays attention to it. We think that everything that will bring lots of money is what can use for the crops. There are people who are producing fertilizers from some residues and they say that the reason they are not being sold is because people don’t believe they work. Why? Because they are too cheap.

**What residues are generated in all of this plot?**

Look. We are generating a lot of coffee pulp. Now that I am transforming banana to sell it fried, the banana skin is also there. The residues from the kitchen. Potato skins. All the residues from the kitchen.

**And what is it that you currently do with all of these residues.**

We throw them around.

**And afterwards? You leave them there?**

Yes. All of this is fertile soil because of that. Worms eat it. What is degradable, like the products I mentioned, are thrown in next to the plants, next to the trees. Oh, the coffee pulp. That pulp is later taken and you mix it with lime you mix more soil and use it to fertilize banana trees and the coffee itself.

**What do you think of this idea. If there was a possibility to do something with the residues, would you be willing to…**

Of course. Better said, I’d be the first one.

**And why is that?**

Because, before anything else, making use out of it. Why would we throw all of this any random place if you can get a worthy use out of it and you will make it useful. Productive again.

**And under what conditions you would be willing to provide it?**

What would I be willing to provide to help?

**I don’t know if you would require of an economic compensation or something else, I don’t know**.

Of course, and the knowledge on how to transform that because I don’t know how to do it. I need a complete infrastructure to dispose of those residues. Maybe some machinery to transform it, to start the process which I don’t know.

**Neither do we. We are doing research. What do you think of the idea because currently you do the beneficio process here in the plot and transport the dried beans to the cooperative. What would you think about instead of doing that, transporting all of the cherry to a central location and it would all be processed there? What do you think about this?**

A wonderful idea. Or I would like to have the transformation facility in the plot itself, if it was possible.

**You would be interested in participating in that?**

Of course.

**And why is that?**

Because I want to contribute to the world a little of the time I have left. To help to not produce that much contamination. To not contaminate that much. Get rid of some trash and make it useful. To convert these disadvantages to advantages in our favor.

**Why do you currently sell the dry beans and not the fruit? The cherries?**

Because you earn more money selling it dry. It is more work because of the drying.

**But you also receive more money?**

Yes, of course.

**And do you see challenges or obstacles to do this?**

Maybe, there are always obstacles for everything. But tell me where is it that there are no obstacles? If we are defeated by obstacles, where do we end up? Obstacles are there to move them aside.

**Well, these were my questions. Thanks a lot. I don’t know if there is something else you would like to add or tell us?**

No, I think it is ok like that. If you have any other question or any other curiosity, we are fine, formulate it.

**No. Thanks a lot.**

No, thank you. It has been a pleasure. Susan?

**Susan, yes.**