**F20CC - Interview farmer #20, male, Belalcazar, 21-7-2022**

**Thank you very much for taking the time to do this interview, and I would like to confirm that you agree to do this interview, that it is known to be anonymous, and that we will use the information in our publications.**

Yes, of course.

**Thanks**.

Gladly, anytime.

**Perhaps you could start with a little personal introduction.**

We have lived here on this property for 25 years. We are displaced people. The armed conflict touched us too, so we were displaced from some complicated areas. Then, we arrived here, we arrived with nothing, with a small family, aimlessly. We were lucky that they were selling this little farm, so we already negotiated, to pay the fee, credit, and thank God we have been here on this property for 25 years. Excellent. This property used to be coffee, and because of the climate change and so many pests already affecting in coffee, then it was time to change the crop. We switched to cacao, which was kind of a cleaner, healthier crop, and that contributes a lot to the environment. We are still stuck in the crop; I think will continue with it. We, as a family, are already getting ahead, almost everyone is already working. Our son is the region's agricultural technician, a coffee, and cacao technician.

**From the association?**

Yes, from the Association, yes, and he works with Fedecacao. And there, we get the family ahead, thank God, and here we go. As far as we get.

**How many people do you live with here?**

Here we live four people. My wife, her mother, a daughter, and a son, who just came to sleep last night.

**Then, he comes from another part of the country, from where...?**

Here, here this property, they have come from many countries to visit it. They came from approximately five or six countries, I think. Here in the commission from Peru, 60 arrived, for instance. Here they were doing a training, and many people come to be trained here. We give training on pruning, grafting, all that. We train those who seek to get the crop ahead, it is easy to train them, and they are not charged anything.

**How many hectares does your property have?**

There are fifteen squares, like almost ten hectares.

**Ten hectares. And is it all cacao?**

It's all in cacao. Cacao then from highest to lowest; there are good clones, bad clones, like everywhere.

**Before it was coffee. When did you switch to cacao?**

This used to be coffee, and now it is cacao. Approximately twelve years ago, we began the cacao process. And the cacao is here right now. We have already finished the last process of planting cacao.

**Why did you change into cacao?**

Well, it was changed, first, because of climate change. It was a marginalized area to buy coffee, already very hot. Then, another, is that there is no staff to work the coffee; a lot of labor is needed. In contrast, cacao does not require as much labor and is very cheap to produce. So, I think we will continue with cacao now, yes.

**Hence, for example, how many people worked on your farm with coffee and now with cacao, more or less?**

When it was coffee, we were 15, 16, 18 people working. And right now, we work only two people.

**Two people?**

Two.

**The entire year? Or are there also harvest seasons?**

In harvest, almost the same, the same. In harvest, in *traviesa*, we are the same, my wife and me, who work at the property. We don't need twenty more people.

**Are there times when you harvest, or do you harvest all year round?**

No, there are always two harvest times, the harvest and the *traviesa*, which we call. Two good peaks always, and there, one continues all year round, seeding all year round. That is not missing, the seeding.

**When are those harvest peaks?**

The harvest peak is in the middle of the year, and at the end of the year. And now, the seeding because it is every month, approximately every twenty days.

**Can you describe your activities on a typical day? What time do you get up, what do you do...**

Well, when cacao is collected, I get up at 6 to pick it up, to harvest. It is 4 – 5 days just collecting, harvesting, and then one can already peel all that. So, to peel that off, one is already looking for a worker, or the son helps us, or a girl who […] with us, the daughter. She is studying, so on Saturdays she does help us with what it is about peeling. But in the week, one goes away of all that. And the banana tree follows. We have bananas, little bananas. There are also planted bananas, soybeans, […] and fertilized.

**On the same property where you have cacao?**

On the same property.

**So, do you start at six and until when?**

Six o'clock in the afternoon. Thus, we are, from six to six. And when we apply manure, fertilizers, it is also the same, but I do that myself.

**What do you enjoy about your activities?**

I enjoy everything because I really like the work.

**Really?**

I like the work, and I like what I do. And working on one's own, I never get tired or anything.

**Are there also things you don't like or would like to change?**

I would like to change what? No, everything is all right. The only thing I don't feel good about is the prices of cacao, of beans, which are very cheap.

**Is it cheap?**

It is cheap. It is 100,000 right now, but they did not want better prices.

**How is the price now?**

It is like 100,000 an *arroba*, it seems.

**According to you, what would be a fair price?**

A fair price? If it would be around 150,000 *pesos* per *arroba*. Always... A good price that leaves us with more profit.

**Does the price vary a lot, or is it stable?**

It is not stable, it always varies. In a week, sometimes three, once, and twice.

**Do you sell all the cacao to the association?**

Everything is sold to the association.

**Are you a member?**

Yes, I am a member.

**And how long have you been a member?**

We have now joined the association; we are the first. And we have chosen this one.

**Why did the association arise?**

The association arose, firstly because of climate change, and obviously because there was a lack of cacao, and Fedecacao got involved in that, suddenly the Luker, and we were already on track in a small group, and there it depends on the association… We were people who wanted to get ahead with our crops, and here we go, and we are like a big family now. We are about 400 partners. We are from three municipalities, the people of the association.

**How did you learn to do this job?**

I learned this job... The training, the training, was given to us by Luker.

**Luker?**

Luker collaborated with us a lot, and here is [name], who was the previous technician, and he always gave us a lot of training, and Fedecacao, and Luker.

**Because the association sells cacao to Luker, or how is that relationship?**

Yes, the association, in commercial galleries Luker, that buys everything from them.

**Everything**?

Everything. The whole production goes to Luker.

**Does the association also receive money or contributions from Casa Luker?**

Well, look, in that case, I don't know very well, but there is always a little contribution, I think. Not much, but something is something.

**So, you came here 27 years ago, and before that, did you also work in coffee or cacao?**

No, we were just coffee growers. Only coffee. Coffee and nothing else. Changing from one crop to another is not so easy. It is always complicated because you have to adapt a lot to your crop and, starting another crop, it's always complicated, it's not that easy. Not really.

**Therefore, do you receive help from Fedecacao?**

Yes, Fedecacao, thank God, has helped us a lot. Currently, they are renewing crops due to Fedecacao. And that helps a lot.

**Where do you live? Here?**

In this house. In the property house.

**Do four people live here?**

Yes.

**Do you have access to electricity, water...?**

Tap water, yes. Tap water, there is the aqueduct of the village, we have internet, television, everything. Thank God.

**And if you could change something in your house, what would it be?**

Changing something in the house? Undoubtedly, the floors, put like a floorboard. Because this year, I already changed the polishing. Nothing else than that.

**How is the security in this area?**

Very good. Around here it is very safe, and nothing is lost. We are in a very safe part. We, the neighbors, take care of everything because you don't see crime, you don't see anything. Very safe, yes, thank God.

**How important is the environment to you?**

The environment, everything in life. The environment. We take great care of the environment. We make our contribution because not all people do it. We collect, here, there is garbage, then we have the little tanks to store garbage. How much trash we collect goes there. We don't like that they burn garbage, that they throw it out there, or anything like that. So, we pick it up. And the mayor's office has asked us for doing that every month, the garbage of the village.

**How do you take care of the environment on the property?**

Taking care of it. Not cutting the trees, planting. Instead of cutting down, sow. I really like planting trees.

**Do you use fertilizers?**

In cacao, yes. Only in cacao. It's the only one I use because no other chemicals are used, or poison, or anything like that.

**Anything like eat pesticides or something like that?**

Nothing of that.

**How much fertilizer do you use?**

So, they are fertilized twice a year.

**How much more or less?**

120 per tree.

**120...?**

Grams.

**Do you own the property?**

It is mine, yes.

**Does your income now depend 100% on cacao, or do you also have other sources of income?**

Banana and cacao.

**Is banana also sold to the association?**

Yes, the association. A banana association, I also sell banana to them. As associates.

**In your opinion, can you live well on the income you receive?**

Yes, even so, one survives with that because with how expensive everything is... you no longer live with that.

**Is it possible to save money?**

It is our duty to save money, very little, but we have to save money. Of course.

**If you could have or receive more income, what would you like to invest it in?**

Undoubtedly, on the property.

**In what?**

Include more technical elements. Technical stuff. Manual handling is difficult, you cannot do the same, it is hard.

**Is it possible to include technical equipment in cacao?**

Yes.

**Which kind of things?**

Technologies regarding cloning, pollination. Throwing a little more organic fertilizer and all that.

**Do you have dreams? Are there things you would like to accomplish?**

Dreams? As many as I could think of... Many dreams, but perhaps I will never be able to fulfill them. The idea is... We are saving money to buy a little house outside the village and then leave the farm. We are already tired of working.

**Why?**

Because it is very hard. So, the idea is to buy a house, and it's already an addition, and we can leave. There are only two of us left, me and my wife. Hence, I cannot stand it anymore.

**It is more comfortable.**

Yes, more comfortable. And we will rest a little.

**I would like to do an exercise. Until now, we have discussed different topics, and here I have different cards with different aspects of life. I would like to ask you how important this aspect is for you in your life, to live well, or to feel good. I would like to discuss them one by one, and for you to put it here if it is the most important, if it is the least important, or something in between. Well, I would like to talk about that, and start with social relationships.**

Socializing with everyone around?

**Yes, or have a good relationship...**

Yes, with our neighbors, with the family, with those living in the house. Yes, it seems very good to me. Yes. I can place it there.

**Yes, wherever you want. So, for you, social relationships are the most important thing.**

Yes, they are very important because interacting with all the people around us brings many benefits. Because if you don't socialize with anyone, then you go around the bend.

**Mobility?**

Does this mean transportation or what?

**Yes, transportation, moving to different places, roads...**

Access roads? I think it is very important because if there are no access roads, it is like immobilizing. It seems important to me, so it is here.

**Which ways of transportation do you have or use?**

Car or motorcycle.

**Do you have a car and a motorcycle?**

Yes.

**Is that also used to transport cocoa?**

Sure, that is everything for loading.

**Leisure and play? Having spare time to do things...**

Recreation?

**Yes**.

Well, over here.

**Less important.**

Yeah, it is not that important, no.

**What do you do when you have spare time?**

Play soccer because it is the only thing that... I have the field there. I like it, we have soccer here. It is because I like that and nothing else.

**Do you think you have enough spare time?**

On Sunday.

**On Sunday. Do you work from Monday to Saturday?**

Yes, and on Sundays I play sports.

**Is it enough for you?**

Yes, I think so.

**Satisfactory work?**

What does that mean?

**That you do a job that you like, or that you feel satisfied with what you do.**

Important. Yes. Because our job is done because one does it because they like it, it is natural for them, and one's devotion to work.

**For you, the work you do now, do you feel satisfied?**

Yes, of course.

**Public participation?**

Public participation... very little. In public, almost not. Less important.

**Because you participate in the association. Are there other things, in politics, perhaps, or in the community?**

In the community, I was president of the board, but I resigned. It was very hard to handle all that. It is complicated. For four years. I didn't like that.

**Why?**

Many people want to be charge you responsible for everything, and it is very hard. Then, working for everyone, that's very hard like that.

**So, not now...**

Not now, but I did everything I was told, I worked that penance. But once and for all. You work for others, it is very hard, and no one appreciates it.

**Because do they fight a lot?**

Because as I told you... because people do not care what you do for the community. Very little. I do it, I don't do it, I should do it… it's all the same to them. So, one feels bad for that, that people thanked or something like that, but no, not many people do it. And it cannot be that way. One works and works, and that is not acknowledged anywhere, not even a thank you or anything, so I kind of didn't like that.

**Self-determination? Make your own decisions.**

I think this is important because you make your own decisions in life, good or bad, but you have to make them. So, I think it is important, yes.

**Now, do you think you can make your own decisions?**

Yes.

**Taking care of the environment?**

Super good. I really like taking care of the environment. We have fought, fought, and fought about it. We don't like that they burn garbage, that they leave garbage, that they throw garbage... We fought. When I was president, I fought here for that. People burn garbage everywhere, jars, poison jars, banana bags, plastics. It was so dark, and you inhaled all of it. Therefore, we used to threaten, we wanted to sue and all that, and they immediately stopped littering. So, in that case, I really like the environment. We have planted trees and all that.

**Has it improved here?**

Yes, it has improved. If the environment was not so much in this system... Whew...

**Safety?**

Safety? Very important. If there is no safety, there is nothing. Here.

**We put it with more space.**

Yes, security is very good.

**But now then you feel safe?**

Yes. You feel safety. Before, it was complicated here. Then here they used to rob. Thus, at six in the afternoon there was already one with the doors closed and everything. Very closed, a lot of surveillance.

**Here too?**

In all that, throughout the region. And that is past. Now it is healthy, very good safety and everything.

**Can you have the doors open?**

Open doors, you can leave anything out and nothing happens. Safety is good.

**Nutrition?**

Nutrition, food, important. If there is no nutrition, there is nothing. Over here

**Do you have enough nutrition for you and your family?**

We cultivate what is... There are bananas, there are beans, there is chicken, there is fish, rabbit...

**Do you have it for self-consumption?**

For self-consumption. We are missing the hens, the eggs. So, from the farm we get all that. Nutrition.

**Education and knowledge?**

Education... Over here. As far as knowledge is concerned, one knows the most important things, right? And in education, well, unfortunately we could not have a very good education because we come from a red zone because there the process to study is very complicated, because of the conflict. Hence, education was very little, as I tell you.

**What education did you receive?**

I just received primary school. And that sometimes.

**And then have you been working?**

To work because we had to work... Since one could walk, one had to start working hard. Study for a while, work, and knowledge because thank God we have a lot of knowledge with all the things we have done, the training and all that, and it looks like we have learned many new things. Things that are beneficial for oneself, and the community as well.

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

Well, there are so many things that one would like to learn that it is almost impossible. Right now, we are learning how to make chocolate, chocolate bars and all that.

**To process it?**

Yes, to process. We are in a course about that, with SENA, and we are already taking off, we will see. We want to learn as much as possible.

**How do you know about these courses or trainings?**

Well, that is through the association and the Ministry of Labor and Agriculture, which are offering these trainings. And yes, we have learned a lot, thank God.

**And the SENA is near here?**

SENA, in Manizales and Pereira. But the courses are held in the school of the village.

**Do they come here?**

Yes, to the courses.

**Physical health?**

Physical... It is the most important thing in life, health. And the physical. I'll put it here.

**How is your health status?**

My physical health, thank God, very good. I never get sick or anything. I have a good physique, good everything. Thus, we are fine on that aspect.

**Residence?**

Residence? Well, I don't consider it the best, but I don't consider it the worst either. I would put the residence here. Yes, I have the little house more or less, we have made some construction works, and it is very good there. We have all the services. All. There are some things missing, but it may be that over time we will get them, that they will improve for the better. That's the idea.

**And mental health?**

Mental health? I think it is good too. It is okay. We are fine in terms of health, thank God. Mental health? Super good.

**Here I have some white cards. We have discussed different things, but maybe there is an aspect or two aspects, I don't know, that are missing, that are very important to you, but we haven't discussed. Or is it complete? Which can also be.**

Well, I see it as normal, I don't know.

**Of all these aspects, if one or two of these could be changed or improved, which would it be? Which one would you like to change?**

Undoubtedly... Clearly, this.

**Nutrition?**

Yes, to have it improved, even better. In nutrition is living, the good life.

**What is missing? Or what would you like to have more of?**

Well, there are so many things in common... Well, since the situation is hard, nutrition is the most important thing in life. For instance, taking care of more things, more like state aids, I don't know. For example, from mayor's offices, but that does not happen here.

**Would you like to receive more help?**

More aids for more clean crops, all that, I don't know. To get clean crops. That they improve clean cultivation. That you plant it, and not have to wash it in poison, even that. That this is part of the food and everything, and health.

**One question because you have a son and a daughter, are they studying?**

There is one, the girl, the smallest, who is still studying. She already did high school, she already did one of those studies, but this year she went to work, with the chocolate course that we are doing, she stayed. She went to Pereira to work now, with few studies. Thus, to learn about chocolate, she had to stay because I think she is the one who will continue in the process of chocolate bars and chocolate. And the boy, well, the son, the technician. He lives here, but he works there in the morning and at night he comes back, he goes everywhere, and he comes here at night.

**In the end, I wanted to show an image of the concept with which we work because we are interested in the different residues that are generated in this region, such as cacao husk, but also coffee pulp. We are looking at different options, and the idea is that this biomass can be transported to a plant that can be like this, in which the biomass is transformed into different products, and with that technology, a biocrude can be produced, like this, or a biocarbon. And that biocarbon can be used again on properties.**

In the same crop?

**Yes.**

Excellent!

**And biocrude can be used to produce different products, and we are researching to produce fuel for ships, for the maritime sector, but also for aircraft, perhaps. Or it can be used to produce bioplastics, paint, or all of those things.**

Imagine that. And one throwing all that away. Well, this decomposes for organic fertilizer, but it does not do anything beyond that.

**Yes, because what waste is generated on your property?**

What is the husk, the shell, and from the banana, you chop it yourself, and it decomposes for organic fertilizer. But yes, many husks come out. Before, we used to pile it up.

**Do you throw it on the ground?**

Yes, and it breaks down, and it becomes earth again.

**Why do you do so?**

Because it is tradition, and what are you going to do with it? What else is done with it?

**If there is an opportunity in the future to bring it to a plant like this, would you be willing to collaborate?**

Of course. Yes, because you are going to give that a tremendous use, and what happens? That is going to be clean products, right? No chemicals or anything, and they are beneficial for the crop itself. It is the best.

**Would it be possible for you to transport the cacao husk to a place?**

I think so.

**Does it look viable?**

Yes, it is feasible. We, in some trays, carry our processing out. It could be done like that.

**And now do you process, such as fermentation, on your property as well?**

Yes. Of the bean, yes.

**What if there is the possibility of, instead of doing that in the field, bringing all the fruit to a central place?**

That is the idea there.

**Really?**

Buying it all, and it would go to one place. Some work is being done on that, there is a project. On that plant over there.

**But do you have to remove the cacao husk?**

Of the mere bean, yes.

**But if there is the possibility of transporting or selling all the fruit, would you be open to that?**

Yes, of course.

**And do you see obstacles or difficulties to do that?**

I don't see obstacles at all, anywhere. I think there are not because the only obstacle is that this exists there, right? Which could be the husk processing plant, right? There, everything is included, right? To get this and this out. Then you need this. This is raw material, but we have it.

**But from your point of view as a producer, as a provider of that biomass, do you see any difficulties?**

No, I see no difficulty. Nowhere. Only what the plant costs because you know what it is worth. But, then, I collect this, and take it to one place, that can be done, yes.

**Thank you very much, those were my questions.**

Well, it was a pleasure.

**Well, I don't know if there is anything you would like to tell more or add.**

I don't think so, that's fine. Well, that, in the foundations, as in many countries, an NGO that collaborates with their fertilizers because already in Colombia, it is very horrible and very difficult for them to collaborate with all that, it is not. They ignore us. Nobody is keeping an eye on the field or anything. We have the field completely abandoned. So, now for us to do all that, it is very difficult because that would have to be oneself, one with its fertilizing resources, and if there are no resources from the government, there is nothing.

**You do not get any aid from the government…**

Nothing. And the government does it pitifully. When it throws pesos at it, it seeks to get as much as it can, but never gives it back. And so, we are getting fed up with this. And very good in other countries that get […].

**Will the government change?**

Yes. Not anymore. This month I'm going to eat worse than next.

**Worse?**

Hopefully, God wants it to be like that, but I am not extremely positive about it.

**So, you don't have much confidence in the government, in its support?**

No, I do not believe them. I hope I am wrong. If the government does not support the field, there is nothing. Wealth is in the countryside, and unfortunately, the countryside is abandoned.

**What support would you like to receive?**

So many supports that I think I would spend the day counting them. Subsidies, all the subsidies, the credits, the fertilizers, maybe good varieties of seeds, all of that. There are many things that actually never happen, nor will happen.

**Then, from whom do you receive that help now?**

Those little aids, very little, maybe from the government, but that's minimal. Minimal. Here, if one does not have the means to buy things is poor, the one who does not work, because there is no help from anywhere.

**Thank you very much for the conversations and your time.**