**F5CC - Interview farmer #5, male, 50, Belen - 30-6-2022**

**Specialties/difficulties:**

* **The term “cacotas”: could be translated as the remains after drying, but I do not know if there is a particular word for that in English.**
* **Vereda**
* **Marquesina**
* **There were a lot of phrases in Spanish that I could not really translate, but I left comments as to what they could mean.**

**Maybe first you can introduce yourself.**

My name is name], I grow cocoa and other crops such as banana and short-term crops, but normally I produce cocoa and banana. This farm is located at Belén de Umbría, Risaralda, we are at 1420 meters above sea level. The environmental unintelligible is optimal for this crop as well. I manage the crop with the required phytosanitary part and the agricultural part, both crops. The important thing is that I like what I do, I have been dealing with cocoa for a lot of years, I have done it as an association and individually as a technician, I´m a technician of agricultural crops with SENA. So, I apply all that knowledge that I have learned elsewhere into the crops and in my farm.

**How many hectares do you have?**

In total there are 5 hectares, 4 of banana and 1 of cocoa.

**Since when have you been growing cocoa?**

Six years

**And before it was only banana?**

Yes, only banana. I began with cocoa because it is a crop that is very specific and nice, it is a crop that changes the agrochemical concepts. Other crops such as coffee, avocado, unintelligible, require a lot of chemicals, and cocoa does not. At a first stage it might require some but once it goes into the productive stage we can eliminate insecticides, fungicides, chemicals, it only uses organics compost. Harvesting is very different so it´s a very good crop.

**All the farm is yours?**

I have it in association with my brothers.

**Do you work together in the farm?**

Altogether, yes.

**How many brothers?**

We are 4 in total, but here with me there are 2 and my son then we are 3. My son also works with me.

**That´s all the people that work here or are there more people?**

No, only us.

**Do you live here in the farm?**

Yes, I live here with my dad, my mom, and my brothers.

**Could you describe your daily activities?**

On a normal day? I start working at around 6:30-7 am, right now with the weather, we must take advantage of warm days because weather has changed a lot and when it rains a lot, we take the most advantage out of it because our work is sometimes not enough, so I start between 6:30-7 am. Then I have programmed some chores, for example today I worked on the bananas, weeding out. I did that today, then I planned this afternoon to be with you, then tomorrow I have other chores, so I program myself to see what I´ll do on banana, what I´ll do on cocoa. It normal to program my day.

**Until what time do you work on a day?**

Normally until 5-5:30 pm.

**Do you think that you have enough time to rest?**

Yes, normally, it´s funny because my parents say, “You work a lot”, but I do not get tired. I do it with a lot of pleasure, to my rhythm which is a bit fast. But no, normal tiredness of hard work like using the scythe or fumigate, it can be a bit tiring, but normally no, I rest well.

**What do you enjoy then?**

This; the field, the calmness, there´s no noise, sitting down and eating a banana, eating cocoa, mandarins. I am 50 years old; I have lived in other parts of South America, I lived in Mexico, I lived in other places, but I think that this is where I want to die, in the field.

**Could you tell a little bit more about what you did before being here? You were somewhere else?**

Yes. At the beginning of my life, I didn´t really like the field, I used most of my life working in other cities commercializing merchandise like from the street. Since 2010 I started working on the field, on the farm, because we have this farm since 22 years ago, so I started working here. I realized that I didn´t like the city anymore, I didn´t like the noise, like being in other countries was no longer my thing.

**You were born here as well?**

Yes, at Belén de Umbría.

**In the farm?**

No, at another town.

**How did you begin with this?**

Because my father, my mom, my brothers have always been from the field; we were born on the field and stayed there. We went out a bit to look for other kind of stuff in other countries and in the city, but one comes back where one was born. Comparing life on the city and life on the field one chooses, and I chose the field.

**How did you learn?**

The chores here? Through my dad, it is like a generational replacement, my dad taught us. My grandparents, my dad taught us how to work in the field and it stuck, we never forgot about it. Then I became a technician, I studied, I finished high school and then went to SENA to become an agricultural technician and I started to practice that on the farm.

**You started with cocoa 7-5 years ago?**

Yes, but I had other crops, I used to work with lulo, there in the jungle where they sell it at Belén de Umbría to Postobón, I´ve also had passion fruit, other crops. But I started cocoa here 5-6 years ago, yes.

**Why cocoa?**

Because a cocoa association was formed in Belen de Umbria, and we generated an idea – Lorena, for example, she was at the beginning with me – an associative idea and we made a project to plant cocoa in Belen de Umbria through the Ministry of Agriculture, the government, and the municipality. That´s how I got started. Since I was part of the head of the association, I did it here to take the initiative, for people to see that we could do it.

**Are you still part of the Board?**

I´m in the Cocoa Association from Belen de Umbria but I am not part of the Board because I left Umbria for 1 year and a half to different parts. I am part of the association but not of the Board.

**Are there things that you don´t like about this job?**

Yes, there are things that I don´t like or that I feel that something is missing. The field is complicated because of the costs of production, the cost of the supplies is high, there´s scarcity in the workforce.

**Do you work with other workers?**

I have had moments when I have other people out there, because time is not enough and the crops are big, so I have had but there have been difficulties because there is no constancy. Nowadays, for example there are few young people that work on the field, they are missing constancy, and here in the field something important to get results is being constant. With the little that you have, being constant and efficient. If you are not efficient with what you must do, that´s bad because you lose money and you lose time, weather doesn´t help, cost of production is sometimes low, so it´s complicated.

**Do you go out frequently to other communities or other places?**

Here in Colombia? Yes, normally I get invited or I´m called by people that I know because of cocoa so the call me for advice. They pay me, I go to other towns and departments. I have been at other departments giving advice on cocoa and teaching about the processes of cocoa and banana.

**Which transport do you use?**

Either motorcycle or I have a truck.

**How do you communicate with other people?**

Through telephone, WhatsApp. Through the telephone my friends call me and that´s it.

**Do you have internet access?**

Yes, I have access here.

**How do you look for information about the sector?**

Information is in the network, on the internet, WhatsApp chains, groups. I know a lot of people that are associated, I know people who are related to agriculture so that´s how.

**Do you think that you have access to enough information?**

Yes, access to information, I have access to what I need.

**You´ve said that you are active in the association, and you also participate in other social groups, communities, maybe politics.**

Regarding politics it is difficult. I like somethings but others I don´t. I think that it´s not the place for me. I have seen that everything is about benefits, people get into it looking for a common benefit, not a group or social one. There´s where I´m like “I´m not getting into that”, you could go there and fight with arguments to say “Do not do it like this” but you won´t find support, because regularly, not all of them, but people involved on that only get in for a personal gain, not a social one. So, for me, it´s not worth it.

**Do you receive support from the government somehow?**

No, not me, I´m not involved in that neither I receive support.

**You live here at the farm. What kind of house do you have? Could you describe it a bit?**

It is comfortable, we have drinking water, which is the most important. We have energy, access is close by. Access to the town or the most necessary places, like a hospital, is nearby. It´s comfortable, I normally live here but I also go where my girlfriend, Lorena, lives, she sometimes come here, I sometimes go there.

**Is the house from your parents?**

It´s from all of us, the farm is from the family and the house is part of that.

**If you improve something from you house, what would it be?**

Like to make it more comfortable? From the family perspective I think it´s fine, but on the personal level I want my place.

**Your own place?**

Yes, like, here it is for the family, everything is shared but I am more about having my own place, my own spaces, my own things, my own conditions. I like more to tend to people than to be tended to. I would like to have a place where I can tend the people that come, rather people tend to me, I like it better like that.

**What is the thing that prevents that from happening?**

It is a process: the idea is there, the land is there, I´m adapting it. I´m missing money, the economic part because it is not easy, it is not cheap, with this thing I must go step by step, one at a time.

**So, it’s the house for tourism.**

Yes, that´s the idea for the future. I already have the land, which is the most important part, we are adapting it to the project´s vision, the next step is to build the cabin, but we need time and money so step by step.

**Why do you want that tourism?**

I like a lot to teach what I know, I like when people ask like, “Hey, Juan Carlos, how do I plant a cocoa unintelligible”, sometimes they ask me like “What is this disease on cocoa?” so I answer them and then “How do I fix it?” and I answer. So, the idea is to have the cabin, but to have a place where people that Lorena know, people that Diana know, people that you know can go, like “Hey, Juan Carlos we have someone who wants to know about the process, can we go to your farm, we eat there and you show us around?” So that generates other stuff, it generates the economic part because people pay. So, I want to do it but do it nicely, that it is a nice experience for someone to get there and be like “Wow!”. Like, what did you feel when you arrived? There´s nothing, a tire with a piece of wood. So, that´s the idea, I know that maybe a lot of people won´t unintelligible but unintelligible, that´s so cool. That they are like “Where is the farm? Where is the crop? Let´s go!” That’s the idea.

**You said that you have energy and drinking water, is there something that you need related to infrastructure? Like maybe roads**

Access on the main road is good. It has been recently paved, around 2-3 months. But it generates other problems, this used to be uncovered, it was only rocks, so for that to be better they´ll do it but it generates other negative things such as that unintelligible that is there affects me because I allowed them to come here with a machine to excavate to extend the road, pave it; it turned out well, but it generated me a problem. I have that problem because I let them to use the machine there.

This access is a unintelligible, winter also affects. That is normal everywhere.

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

For me the environment is the main thing, money yes but, without oxygen we have nothing, without water we will not drink money, so for me the environment is the main thing. That is why I like cocoa and bananas. Bananas are not that demanding with the agrochemicals; more manual control can be done. I use a crop that does not need insecticides, fungicides to control disease, everything is with the scissors. So, for me that is the most important. Water is important; we take care of it. For me it is the most important.

**How do you take care of the environment in your farm?**

Normally I try to not generate waste inside of the crops, that bags or plastic are not left. I have a pit, so I store the waste and what I can I take it to Belén because there they collect plastic and bottles. So, I store it and take it there, unintelligible, but normally I contribute. The thing with trees is something that one must know how to handle. In a crop like this, of banana, or a cocoa crop, if I want to see production, I must control the shade, I must put shade with the trees but not inside the crops, they must be put on the periphery. But not inside the crops because it creates a problem and it becomes a thing of economic loss because the tree breaks off, a very strong shade on a crop may lead to some banana plants to not producing, a lot of shade in a cocoa crop will generate them a lot of problems and disease, because one thing is shade and another one is humidity. And since the weather has changed a lot, with a lot of water the plants that grow below a tree are damaged and die. So, we need to control it.

**What type of fertilizer do you use and how many times do you use it?**

On cocoa, normally I use urea and potassium, which is what cocoa crops need to get pods like that. For one of those pods, a lot of potassium is required, approximately 500 kg of potassium/year/hectare. I have tried other kind of fertilizers such as organic ones, those are complex, they are very costly to produce because they need infrastructure, and demands a lot of workforce, so it must be done step by step.

Regarding banana, normally each month I do an agrochemical fertilization with urea and potassium, and the rest of the crop I do manually.

**How much do you use?**

Normally for banana, 100 grams per plant

**Each month?**

100 grams each month

**How many trees of cocoa and banana do you have?**

Of cocoa there are 700 trees and 6200 banana plants

**About the living still, do you feel safe in this community?**

Safety like, from danger? It is good. Around 10 years ago it was complicated, the area was complicated because there was paramilitary presence, guerrillas, it was complicated. But since then, that was over, it is okay, people are normal, you can walk at night and nothing happens, nobody will come to ask you for things, it is very calm. It changed a lot.

**Do you think that there are people that are being discriminated here in the community or the area?**

Discrimination? No, I haven´t heard of it neither I do it. I teach my son about that. I think it is stupid to discriminate others because they think differently, that´s why I don´t get into politics, because they attack you because you think differently. So, not in this area.

**What are your main sources of income?**

This, the field. Production becomes a “caja menor” if you cut banana each 15-20 days.

**Ah okay, the whole year?**

Yes, the whole year each 15-20 days you know that you´ll get 1000-2000 kg of banana and that you must take into account that that amount will need work, fertilization, so manage it like that. That obviously generates profitability for personal expenses like food, services, phone, occasional expenses that may exist, but the profits come from the crops. It is not easy because, for example, a package of urea here in Colombia is around 250,000 pesos, so that will increase cost.

**Where do you sell bananas?**

In this area here where the coffee growers are, the place itself is called La Esperanza but this is La Florida. It is very high on banana crops so the people who buy bananas come here, they are from Umbria, in there there are 55 banana buyers. They but fruit, each one will pay a price and normally one will sell to the one who pays the best. This week it is around 1400 per kilo. They are like “Do you have banana?” and we say, “How much are you paying?” and they say, “1300-1400” so we know that we will sell to that person, that we give the bananas let´s say today, and people will pay immediately or during the weekend like Saturday or Sunday.

**They come here to pick it up? Or you must take it somewhere?**

No, we cut them, then take them inside the farm to a specific place where they can load it up and that´s it. They weigh it and take it.

**How is the price for you?**

It is fine right now because it is enough of our expenses. But months ago, before the pandemic it “hacia el mandado”. Due to the growth in the demand for food, it has been increasing to more than 1000 pesos per kilo, 1000, 1200, 1300, 1400 pesos per kilogram, so we make do. By volume we can get around 3000… right now I´m not putting banana out because I haven´t begun to cut it, one of my brothers has a crop here and he is cutting it. Normally with those 1200, 1300, 1400 it is balanced a bit, it is not like we will get a lot of money with it, but the expenses are balanced a bit.

**Do you sell cocoa to the association?**

No, cocoa is bought by Lorena for the chocolate. I already know the post-harvest part, like how does she need it for the chocolate process, so she prefers me to do the post-harvest, or we do it together, I do the fermentation, the drying and she takes it, I sell it to her.

**What is the price?**

Right now, in Belen de Umbria, people are paying 85,000-90,000 per arroba, an arroba is 12.5 kilos. They pay 85,000 pesos for that, but for that same arroba, Lorena´s company pays 110,000 pesos. So, the price increases.

**Do you think that you have enough income to live well? For your needs?**

As I said, in this moment, I can live with it, I cannot exceed myself in my expenses in other things, for example I don’t drink alcohol, I don´t smoke, I do not gamble. So, the people that drink and party every 8 days and have a lover and everything, what do they do for a living? Me that I keep things on that level, I get by, I do not become rich. My mentality changed, like getting rich no matter what. If you have that mentality right now in the field, of becoming rich and getting money by whatever means, no, this is not the place, the field does not make you rich, it gives a calm, comfortable way of life where there will always be food on the table. But to get rich, no.

**Do you save money?**

No, my savings is more like investing them in something. If I´m left with 200,000 -500,000 pesos, I already have in my mind what I want to do with them. That money is invested in what I want to do.

**You said that you studied until high school. Then what formation did you have?**

Yes, I know a lot about agriculture. I focused on the field and the farm. I like a lot agronomy, so I studied to be agricultural technician with SENA, and I read a lot so I get a lot of feedback from that.

**Do you think that you have enough opportunities to get the information that you find to be useful?**

I could do more, right now that now I´m in the field, time is not… I can do it and I have done it, I can say “I will go 1-2 days to take a course at Pereira or Manizales” and I can do it, I´m the owner of my time. But I know if I go 2 days, I generate here a delay in what I need to do, for example today. Today in the morning, the last 2 days the weather has been complicated, so today it was very sunny, and I said, “Today I must fumigate”, if I don´t do it today, tomorrow it´ll be raining. So, when I go 2 days I´m like “unintelligible and couldn´t be done”. So, I get organized with what I must do, and I take advantage of everything that happens each day so that we get a return on all the investment that we got. But yes I can do it.

**Are there other things that you would like to learn?**

Yes of course, always! We can never be closed to learn new things, each day we can learn more. That´s why I want to carry out the project because in the end, I like to get feedback from people that know more things, that have different ideas, for example you in your country like, “What do you grow there? How do you do it? We could do it here, let´s do it here”. I have had people from London, Europe, they have come here to learn, and I have taught them, before the pandemics I had a project about an irrigation system that I made, a project from England, I did it here as well. There´s stuff that I have been open to try, for people to come and do it here like, “Juan Carlos, here we could run a pilot for a crop” and I say, “Sure, let´s do it”. That´s what I want, get feedback, and learn a lot.

**Do you have 1 kid or more?**

I have 2 kids, Juan Carlos and Valentina, she is 23 years old. She lives in Cali and studies psychology at the university.

**And does Juan Carlos study as well?**

No, he did the military service, got a girlfriend, has a son and lives at the town but works with me here. Every day he comes and goes.

**Are you satisfied with your life?**

Yes, now yes. Not before.

**Not before?**

Before no because as all everyone else, human beings look things or ways where we shouldn´t look for them or we think that life is like, “uno puede ir como una rueda suelta”. And sometimes one crashes, and complains, we pay the price. So, since I had life different than the one I have now, I paid for that. So today now I am satisfied, I can go anywhere to drink some coffee, I can go there to take my black coffee without feeling like I´m being watched or looked for, like having problems with enemies for stuff done in the past. So, even when there´s no money, money here is not excedent, it is a limiting factor, but regarding calmness I am very satisfied.

**What changed?**

Because of the circumstances. There was a point in my life where I made mistakes and that drove me to pay with being in jail, was 8 years in jail. I was detained, I was in Mexico, Central America, and Colombia, so that drove me to 8 years. I lost some experiences with my children when they were younger, that made me feel like, in my way of thinking, God – I believe in God – that we were not born to cause harm. Specifically, you who are a very nice woman, and me too, do you think that God took the time to create something so nice and then we end up living on the wrong way? We are the ones who take the decision on how to live. There are things on life that we do not know why they happen, but when you know that the things that you are living are a consequence of what you did then you are like, “It´s time to stop, stop because you cannot live like this”.

Mentality started to change, I needed time for that. Human beings sometimes need to be at the bottom to then say, “This is not it but where then?”. It is a that point where mentality changes and that leads to teaching others that that´s not way, that it should not be like that. So when you start doing things correctly unintelligible, I tell this a lot to my son, attitude changes, the way of thinking. If you wake up being at peace, you sleep at peace, you´ll know that´s the way. Why have money if there is not peace? Why be somewhere if there´s no peace? Why study something but you feel you don´t belong? When not are not studying what you want to, so that’s not it. Look for what gives you peace. I think the biggest treasure is to be at peace with oneself.

It is a complex thing, it´s a lot of history that happened, of things that I went through, things that generated in me pain, crying, sadness, distress, some needs, but I can talk about it because I´m alive.

**What are your dreams?**

To continue living until the end at peace, at a peaceful place, surrounded by honest people. I like honest people a lot, that say things as they are. I like people that show who they are, that they are not wearing a mask, that´s why I don´t like clowns. unintelligible, they show happiness but inside they are crying. I like people like that. That will say things, I like original people because you can learn but you can teach new things. I would like to continue living until the end surrounded by people like that, at ease, that say things as they are, that they live unintelligible. For example, I have been invited and called to things that were part of my past, but I say no, I don´t like it and I´m not interested because I know that I will not have peace and nothing good will come out of it. So I want to keep living in this places, living at peace.

**How´s your physical health?**

Excellent, my son even tells me, “Dad, you don´t get tired?”. I say “No, I don´t get tired”. I have good energy; I wake up early and work until late. Obviously, age comes with some pain and other stuff, but I have learned that the mind is the one in charge. When you let your mind convince you to not get up because of the aches, or because the weather is cold, but no, I wake up in the morning, I take a shower, I have a coffee and then I go. So, I feel good.

**Where do you buy food?**

At the town, in Belen.

**Do you have a vegetable plot?**

Yes, I´m working on it. There where I showed you. A big plot with everything that it needs, I´m starting to grow stuff in it. I think that if you are in the field, in your farm and don´t produce what you eat, you are screwed.

**Why?**

Because if you are at your farm, why go to the town to buy tomatoes if you have the soil for it? That´s why I´m working on my plot. I have hens, they lay eggs. I have been working a long time on it, but life has changed a lot, and cities are getting complicated, food is going to get complicated. I think there´s going to be terrible food demand. So, if your farm is not self-sustainable, that produces food, eggs, fish and chicken, you will depend on the market so, when that is no longer there, what will happen?

This is the fish tank, to put some fish on for selling and eating. There in the hen house I have the hens, I have the vegetable plot and whatever the farm produces.

**So, you have enough food to feed yourself and your family?**

Yes, and to sell.

**How is your relationship with your family?**

Good. There are differences in all families, where everyone thinks different. So, when a person thinks different, it can generate problems at times. Yesterday I had some trouble with a brother of mine, where he says that I have something against him, and my mom support him like “You have something against him”, and I say “Mom, no, I don´t have anything against me because he is my brother”. I am against his attitude, there are differences in some things because we are different to each other, but I will never have a negative thing against my brother because he is my brother. But I say, “Brother you have a very unpleasant attitude: what you say, that things are complicated, that I have to be on careful about how I say things to you so that you are not offended”. That part is problematic for me because I do not keep things, I cannot just take things and stay silent, because then I´m like “Why didn´t I say something back?”, so that gets me some trouble because I am not capable of absorbing things, but my personal relation with my family, my dad, my mom, my brothers, is excellent.

**Do they also work on cocoa and are involved in the association?**

No, they are in the farm working on banana. But I manage cocoa by myself or with Lorena. unintelligible. But about banana, they are involved. The thing about cocoa is mine, the thing about water is mine, I did the thing with the hens, I did the vegetable plot, I will do the cabin thing. God willing.

**How is your relationship with the community here?**

Good, I was the president of the communal board of this “vereda”, I was part of it, I participated in the paving as the president of the board. I like social activities a lot, but I got distant a bit because they also generate trouble: it´s like you should solve everyone else´s problem. So, who solves mine? It´s like “As president you have to go tomorrow to meet the minister”. So, who will take care of my farm? I prefer to be from the position where I am at right now, I can do things with people that I know I can work with, but from here, not there because that generates me other responsibilities that make me leave my own. When you have responsibilities or take other´s responsibilities and leave yours unchecked, you will begin to realize that it is a load. And who placed that load there? Yourself. I rather be away from boards or things that give me juridic responsibilities because I have done that. I prefer to be on my own thing and then I know how I can help, which gives me more satisfaction without anyone else realizing it, I prefer it that way.

**We have talked about different topics but now I would like to do an exercise, but we need a bit of space, can we do it here? Here I have cards that represent the different topics that we´ve spoken about and I would like to know how important are for you these topics to be okay. Also, I would like to know what opportunities you have to achieve them. I also would like you to rank them, we´ll go one by one. The first one is public participation, how important is that for you?**

Yes, it is important. It is important as it can generate opportunities for everyone.

**Where would you put it?**

I think that´s where ideas are born, opportunities for other people. Related to the field, I would put it here.

**Taking care of the environment?**

Here of course.

**Ah even higher, we had already talked about it. Mental health?**

Here

**Also. Education and knowledge?**

Also, yes

**Living place?**

Living place, yes, it is also important.

**Nutrition.**

Yes, it is also important, if you don´t have health, you cannot generate.

**Self-determination?**

Also

**Also? All of them are at the same level?**

Yes. I like to self-analyze myself. If you don´t self-analyze, like your way of life and attitudes, you can go through life thinking that everything is fine but that´s a lie. unintelligible. Like this morning I was thinking that Colombia has chosen as a president a person that has strange thoughts, thoughts that I don´t share. I think that only time will tell if the election was the right one, because I think he was very incoherent with what he proposed, like things that is showing now that he won´t be able to do. So, if you don´t analyze yourself and are not “determinante” in those kinds of things, you will go through life thinking that the problem is yours. If what the new political trend doesn´t work, then we are the problem. We as people are the problem by thinking that someone else will change our life. We are the ones who generate change, I do not depend on a left- or right-wing politician to change my life, it is me who is in charge.

**Right now, do you have self-determination? Can you take your own decisions as you please?**

Yes, of course. Not before, nowadays yes. Before, other people thought on my behalf.

**What about safety?**

Like familywise? I think also. If it´s about safety in the job work, I normally tell my workers that safety comes first. An accident could happen. unintelligible

**Social relationships?**

Also, higher up. Because everything is about relations. If you and I had had a problem, to have this interview we would have had to solve that difference, if not, it would not have worked. It would have been like “No, I´ll stay here, I don´t like him”.

**Satisfactory work?**

Also.

**Do you have that right now?**

Yes. There are some missing things but it´s taking it one step at a time. Like this pond I did it by myself on 3 nights, I worked until 7 pm with my shovel. It gives me satisfaction because I did it, but if I hadn´t put in the work and the attitude, I would have never finished it. There are some things missing but I did it.

**Physical health?**

As well. It´s part of everything, without it I cannot do the things I want to do.

**Finally, I have leisure and entertainment.**

I also put some time into that. Not that much, I don´t think it´s that important but yes.

**I have some blank cards. Do you think there´s a very important topic for you but that we haven´t discussed?**

My relationship with God. I think I don´t need a place nor a person to tell me… I feel that I must have my mind willing to have that relationship with God, that that makes me be a better person. Because there are people with a lot of studies, like with bachelor´s degree and post graduate degrees but they are empty. So, to have something to offer, you must have in your mind… I have spoken with a lot of people that are atheists, they don´t believe in God, but they are missing something. I was in place where I thought I had everything, but when I got there, I felt that I never had what I needed, and it was that, my relationship with God. Personally, I think it is important. The first thing I do in the morning is to put myself on my knees and I talk with God, and I give him my day, what I´m carrying, my emotions, I ask him for peace, I ask him to help me take decisions, that he is with me every day, even if I make mistakes because there´s things that I need to change about me but I know that the main thing for unintelligible is to have a good relationship with God.

**Is there something else?**

Important? Yes, I have another one. My relationship with my girlfriend. Because everyone has a place; the place for my father, my mother, my brothers will never change. But with whom will I sit down to have a cup of coffee? Pick a different woman every 8 days to drink coffee? It´s better to sit down with someone that has shared years with me, that knows me and that I know her, and that we have ideas focused on better stuff. I think a couple is important in each person, in this case as a man, to have someone to share all that stuff with.

My children are also an important part in the process, they are part of who I am. I think differently, that if I had continued what I was doing before I would not have been able to give them anything good.

**In those things that are important to you, are there things that are missing or that you would like to improve?**

Yes, there´s always things to improve on my life, like some attitudes. Sometimes I´m very explosive, sometimes I want things done fast. I think that everyone will work at my pace but no, so I have been learning that, I have been doing that for a while. I work at my pace and way of doing it, but I accept that others can do it as well at their own rhythm and time, so that takes off me an emotional load, from stuff like “why is he taking that long”, I stopped thinking in that way and I stopped thinking that my way is the best way.

There are things that I need to change and others that I have a difficulty with, for example, I am very perfectionist and that generates trouble. If I see a shoe lying around just a little bit out of place, I have to correct it, I am not capable of not doing that.

There are things that I need to change but they are not that important to be different.

**Finally, I have some questions because I am doing a study about waste. What is the main waste generated in you farm?**

Within the house itself, plastic waste because normally everything comes in a plastic package, like the waste from the butter, disinfectant, detergent, the package for the meat, there´s a lot of that waste because normally every 8 days we buy food here for everyone.

**And from your crops?**

Some packages, like from agrochemicals, because we must use it to control invasive weeds like that grass, which we must control using an herbicide. So, the waste is unintelligible and I store that waste. Sometime, when there are programs at Belén where they ask for them, I take them, but if not, I store them. I take them to a pit where I separate plastic, , cans, aluminum, bottles. There for example we have the waste from the cocoa crops. Whatever is from the crops or food remains, like peels, go there and from there they go to that pit where we have a compost with Californian earthworms, and they do the composting. What we take out of it is organic matter called hummus to use it in the crops, in the vegetable plot. I try, with my knowledge, I promote here the idea of not throwing the trash where it doesn´t go, I have containers for each kind of waste, do not throw in it in the crops.

**What about banana? Like the leaves.**

Everything stays within the crop. I know we can generate paper, cellulose for paper and cardboard, from the pseudostem, “raqui”, from the bush, it can be done. But for the moment, within the crops we do the postharvest and inside the crop it is chopped with a machete and that is biodegradable and is left there.

**Do you transport cocoa?**

The pod? To whom?

**Like to Lorena?**

Yes, or she comes here to pick it up when its dry. Let´s say that on Saturday it´s put there on the “marquesina” to dry and depending on the weather, in 4-5 days it is already dry, and I send it to her or take it.

**So, you transport it.**

**I would like to show you an image of what we are working on. The idea is for cocoa waste, the “cacotas” or coffee pulp to be collected and transported to a biorefinery where other products such as “biocuro” and biocarbon are produced, which can be used again in the farm. The “biocuro” can then be converted into biofuel for the maritime sector or planes, or also to produce bioplastics or cosmetics. What we want to understand is that it is possible to collect that waste from the farms and to see if the producers are open to that new system. Is there the possibility to sell or collect the waste that you generate on the farm? Would you be open to it?**

Yes, of course, knowing what it is about, I generate waste from the banana post-harvest, it is a bigger volume. Yes, the know-how is there. There are people who could do it, but it is complicated because of the access to the farms. Taking out banana pseudostem that could weigh around 80-90 kilos, so it is complicated. I have a project that I would like to make inside the farm itself, to generate cellulose but since I have already a lot of expenses… But if somebody wants to do a project, of course. I wanted to do a project here in the “vereda”, but it is complicated because we do not have the final client or the person that will invest on it and take the raw materials.

**Under which conditions would you be willing to do it? What would you need?**

Knowledge about how to do it. I have the basics, but the economic cost is high, the workforce right now: for a worker´s wage is around 50,000-55,000 pesos a day. So, the project must be structured such that we know how many work hours there will be, or what will be the demand for the workforce to take out certain amount of raw material to be able to do the process, where will it be done?

I have everything to do it, like the space, it can be done but the economic thing… and the final consumer has to be identified: how much they pay, what are their expenses.

**You do the fermentation and drying in you farm. If there´s the possibility to take all the pods to a common place where everything is processed, is that an option to you?**

Yes, like to unify the different types of fermentation. At Belen we were going to do that as well, to get together the cocoa farms but it got to a point where it was non-viable because of the costs. Because there are some places that produce cocoa that are 1 hour away by car. How much will it cost to the producer to bring 200-300 kilos of “cacota” for the process? This project was with the government, with the Ministry of Agriculture and I told them “This project is complicated”. So, we decided to give to each producer the place for fermentation with their “marquesina”, teach them how to do the post-harvest with the fermentation and drying, and then that each one takes it to the association with those characteristics. Why? Because we told them which clones we had at the farm, we told them which clones were specifically different for the fermentation because it was too expensive to have a plant where all cocoa from all the associates was processed. So, it was non-viable. But, yes, let´s see what it is about.

**What benefits could this new system generate for you if it works? What would you like as a benefit?**

Personally, we must arrive to this. This is where it will all come because everything is changing. Everything is getting together, like taking care of the environment, new fuels, the biofuels, new energy, so we must get there. We must make some progress to see about the country´s policies or about whoever wants to get into this with us in Colombia, the producers. At this moment there has been talks about an Agricultural Reform for the whole country, so we do not know how it will happen.

Personally, I try to be open to all of this, there are some people that don´t. But we must be open to this because this is the future.

**And for your farm, personally, which benefits would you like?**

Economically, that will open everyone´s eyes. If producing a kilo of banana will cost me 500-600 pesos, so somebody comes with the idea that “I will produce that same kilo at 300 pesos” and one then becomes interested. So, when you tell people that production costs will decrease, they will pay attention. They will be interested like “What do I have to do? Do I have the same level of production? Do I have the same number of kilos per bunch? Does It cost less?”. When those things happen and people talk about having a different cost-benefit than the one we have right now, everybody will like that. Also, everything is moving now towards to taking care of the environment because it is changing.

**You say that everyone would like it, but it would also maybe involve a change in the way things are done. What do you think about that?**

I am very open to change, I like it. I like to change the way I do things. I like a lot, for me it is not hard. Having people doing that is another thing, when it involves associations and communities, there are very closed people to change and different things, but I am open to those things.

**Thanks a lot! Is there something more you´d like to share?**

No, I don´t know if there´s something else you´d like to know. It had been days since I had talked this much.

**Well, thank you so much!**