**F23CF - Interview farmer #23, male, coffee, Santa Rosa, 68 - 22-7-2022**

**Specialties/difficulties:** The audio quality was bad. There is a lot of noise and the ratio with the voice volume gets very bad at moments.

**Well, the first thing is for me to ask for your authorization to record the conversation. Thank you, for participating.**

Unintelligible. Right?

**Thank you. Then, firstly, your authorization to do the recording. If you say yes.**

Yes, of course.

**Perfect. Then, secondly, tell us a little about you. What do you do? How old are you? Where is your plot?**

Well, I am [name]. I am 68 years old. 100% coffee farmer, since I was a kid. I’ve been a coffee farmer since I was a kid. I’ve been involved in coffee quality processes and so far, it has gone well. And I hope it goes better.

**What do you mean by coffee quality processes?**

Well, we have done differentiation processes to obtain a differentiated coffee. We have done different fermentation processes, regarding on the fermentation time, coffee harvesting, fruit selection and all of those things had led us to obtain good scores and cups profiles.

**And how easy was it to change those ways of looking at coffee?**

Well, it was not easy. It was the crisis that pushed us to do this. It was the crisis we had many years ago when producing a coffee @ costed 80 000 pesos and we would sell it for 60 000 pesos. Then we realized we had to look for alternatives because it was not viable and I didn’t want to stop being a coffee farmer. And so we opted to investigate and implement formulas. Can you stop it for a moment?

**Yes, of course.**

As I was telling you, this was not that easy but it was because of the circumstances, right? Since I didn’t want to stop being a farmer, we opted for looking for alternatives to turn the crisis into an opportunity. And we have achieved. We have developed some coffees, maybe not the best ones, but for sure some good ones with 86.25 points. We have sold that coffee with a very good percentage and we are very happy. That is what I can tell you until now.

**How big is your plot?**

Our plot has an area of three hectares but not all of it has coffee. We only have two hectares with coffee. The rest is grassland and we have some family cattle there.

**Who is your family?**

My family consists of my wife [name], and my 5 kids and my 5 grandchildren, all involved in coffee. They live in the city but with hopes of being able to come back to the country side, because we think it is an alternative since the city auspices but doesn’t provide that many opportunities while in the countryside, we have some advantages and it is that we have a very soft environment, a very pure air and water and overall the family unity. We are constantly together and fighting to improve more every time, right?

**What are the bigger challenges you have faced as a coffee farmer? Are they challenges? Are they struggles? Which ones have they been?**

Well, I think that the biggest one was the coffee crisis with the low prices. The low prices for my coffee and the high costs of supplies that I require to cover… that I require to consume permanently, right? It is an inconsistence. But that hasn’t been the unintelligible. We are still heavily in debt, trying to cover on big debts in this crisis but there we are, trying to do it. We are desperate to move forward.

**Such a hard worker. Tell me, a normal day of yours, how is it? At what time do you get up?**

A normal day of mine and my wife. We wake up at 5 am in the morning, we do the coffee. She goes and prepare the grandchildren for school. I go about my activities in the plot. Processing, fertilizing, clearing weeds and well, farming activities are multiple and you kind of have to do them at the same time. I don’t have much workers, particularly because my family, the moment I asked them to, they help out. In the first place, I don’t have resources and secondly, I have created a consciousness that of a coffee farmer and very cooperative. And that has allowed for me to not get more into debt. Because of my family’s cooperation, the company goes well. With a lot of struggles but we are moving forward. Our plot has 2 050 meters high. You have to walk a lot to reach it but there we have everything anyone might need. Air, water, fruits, crops.

**You have energy there?**

Yes, we have electric energy.

**Water?**

Yes. The only thing we don’t have is a road. But the rest, we have it all.

**How long do you have to walk in order to get to the plot?**

To get to the plot we have to walk 60 minutes. After getting down of the him we walk about 60 minutes.

**And the transportation, until the point you say you can reach with the jeep, is it constant?**

The transport, yes, it is constant. There are 4 schedules during the day. 4 schedules during the day during the weekdays. On Saturday and Sunday, transport is way smoother. That’s what I can tell you.

**And how long have you lived in that plot?**

We have lived there for 34 years. 34 years. We came expelled from El Cairo Valle. We had little money and we invested in a small plot. We got trusted with 60% of the plots value. They trusted us with it and we finished paying it and we are going. We are doing well.

**In this coffee farming world, is it possible to save?**

Yes. It is possible because, well, saving is a habit you should acquire. Because if you wait for things to land on you, well… I mean, you save because you have a goal. Because, usually, people let themselves go with the consumeristic society. We are saving. How are we saving? I think that when we are planting a new coffee plant, we are generating savings because we will have a better production tomorrow. If I buy a ram or a couple of rams, man, there is a piggy bank right there. There are some resources that I will have tomorrow. So it is possible to save, despite the unintelligible.

**For example, for you to relax. For you to rest, what do you do?**

No, when I’m going to rest, I rest, despite anything else. If I say “Today I’m not going to work and I’m going to rest” and that’s it.

**And what do you do when you rest?**

Well, I stay in bed until late. I get up and take a shower. I drink my coffee and go lay down on the hammock. Unintelligible because if I have some beers, I drink them. Because it is my day, my time. And when I want my wife to rest, because she never rests, she gets up at 5 am and goes to bed at 9 am, for her to rest, she is very hard working, I tell her “today you’re not going to do anything. We are going to go to the town. We are going to drink coffee here and we go there for breakfast so you can rest”. For her to get out of this environment and for us to live something different. That is my life in the country side.

**Very hard working. And, for example, why are you a coffee farmer? What is it you like the most about being a coffee farmer?**

Because I learned to be a coffee farmer. And I’m not only a coffee farmer that sows and harvest. No, no. I am someone that goes from sowing the seed until delivering a cup I know the process. The whole chain.

**And how did you learn that? How did you learn the process of the production chain.**

Well, my father was a coffee farmer but he was a bad farmer because he didn’t know the process.

**How come?**

Let’s say he was a bad coffee farmer because he didn’t have the possibilities we have nowadays. Right? I mean, nowadays there are way more… Let’s say, the country side is reached more, for example by the federation, the coffee committee, with orientation and other things. I have learned that, right? I learned it and I fell in love with it. The most important thing is not to do things only for doing them but to fall in love with them. When you fall in love with things, you are… You will never be a viticulturist but you will be a coffee farmer and you will be delighted doing this job. For me, a day, like I told you, I get up at 5 am and go back home late, when there is no light anymore, and I can only think “oh god, where did the day go?”. So for me, it is entertainment, my job. And on top of that I get together with my family. I have a large family, a very pretty one. And as I was telling you, solidarity and the cooperative spirit I inculcated into my family, has made it to be a strong family, always pushing forward, that will reach things and look forward to what can be achieved.

**And if you want to learn something new, how do you do it?**

Well, firstly, I look for it. But I don’t have much more to learn. I know everything related to coffee. Well, not everything but I think that I should… Right now I am working for my kids and grandchildren to learn something new. I am old. I am on my way out. I am playing the last… In this cycle of life, I am playing the last pool game and I don’t have much I can do. But yeah, I’ve cared for my family. I want a generational turnover. And that’s what I am doing. These kids that just got in, they are in love with the country side and when I talk about selling the plot, they are against it. And I say “It is good that you are in love of this land because it is for you”. That’s what we got it for. That is the idea. I’m learning every day because life is a school, right? I’m an analphabet. I don’t know how to write nor read. But I defend myself. I don’t that to happen to my kids.

**What is it that you enjoy the most from the plot? What is it you like the most?**

Everything. Everything. From the plot, I enjoy everything. If I eat an orange. If I eat a berry. Everything… there is just everything. If were to ever go to my plot you would see there is a kitchen garden. There are some bananas, there are some yuccas, there are lentils, there are bees. And all of that, we sow it. Plus we have water and the natural environment. So, we enjoy everything.

**How do you get the water? Do you have water sources nearby? And what do you do to take care of it?**

Yes, we have good water. And one of my kids, my youngest daughter, the one in charge of the plot, she is in love with the plot. She is a very good horticulturist. My daughter Diana Maribel.

**And she lives there with you?**

Yes, she lives up there with us since the pandemic. For her, the pandemic took away her job. So she moved to the plot and that was good for me. Because now we have more company and there are more production possibilities. Especially nowadays, working on farming at the coffee region, the challenge is the workforce. There is not workforce. I have it. I need to escalate because I still provide very good workforce but we need to see how we do it in the future.

**What risks… Is it a safe area? Is it calm? How is that?**

It is very safe. For now, there aren’t any risks. Very calm.

**Where is that located? How is the rural town called?**

[place]

**Where is that located?**

It is between Chinchiná and Santa Rosa, over that region. By the north.

**Ok. And, how often do you come here to Santa Rosa?**

Weekly.

**Once a week. What do you come for?**

Well, normally to do groceries, to pay obligations at the bank. To ask for loans. Paying utilities. Usually those are the reasons I go out to. Or for medical appointments.

**About the association, you belong to the association. For how long?**

Since it has existed.

**And how has it been for you?**

It has been very good. The association has taught us a lot. It has allowed to explore markets and clients. Thanks to god, because I was selling coffee up to 40 000 above the official price. Thanks to this, to the interrelationships existing with the association, I got to meet some clients that have coffee stores and are paying for my coffee up to 40 000 pesos per @ above the official price. With an 88 factor. So I think that we have been doing fine.

**If you want to communicate with someone, how do you do that? Do you have cellphone? Internet? Those things.**

Via cellphone.

**Do you have internet?**

Yes.

**That too.**

Yes, in my plan, of course. Via WhatsApp, through all of these networks. The one I use the most is WhatsApp.

**And, for example, to communicate with people from the association, is it through phone? Through WhatsApp?**

Through WhatsApp.

**Do you use fertilizers?**

Yes.

**How often do you fertilize or how…**

Every six months. We fertilize every six months and we work based on soil analyses.

**Oh, so smart.**

Of course. To assess the deficiencies or strengths from the soil. As such, the analysis shows me what fertilizer I should use and how much, right?

**And herbicides and such? That too.**

But less.

**Just when you need it or…?**

I only use herbicide to break weed’s cycles. Usually I trim them with sickle or machete.

**That is what you use the most?**

Yes.

**Regarding changes you might have witnessed. What changes have you observed in the coffee farming culture? What changes have you seen?**

I’ve seen, like I said before, people moving forward. We don’t give all of the coffee to the cooperatives but now there are clients that wait for our coffee and that is reflected on better prices.

**And it wasn’t like that before?**

No, no. It is something only from 10 years ago until now. It has been… We have observed these possibilities and they have really helped us.

**You house has all the commodities? Bathroom, kitchen…**

Yes. My house has everything, yes. Bathroom, kitchen, dining room, hall. And as I told you, an amazing atmosphere. A spectacular view.

**Do you have neighbors?**

Very few, luckily. Because there are very bad neighbors out there and I don’t intent to try them out. I have two neighbors. The closest neighbor is 10 minutes away and I live amazingly because my house is… I have a lot of privacy in my plot. Nobody goes through there. It is only us. In that sense, I live amazingly.

**Very good. How do you do to communicate with the association? Do you have meetings? Assemblies?**

We have meetings and an assembly, usually once a year. And when there is something that has to be discussed, we do an extraordinary meeting. If there is any issue that requires urgent attention, then we do an extraordinary meeting?

**And the grandchildren, to study, how do they do it?**

They walk. They walk what I have to walk. Even more, because the school is even further down in a town called [place], and they walk even more than I do. Unintelligible. Because I raised them like that. Null laziness. Aim towards success, whatever it takes.

**And what do they say? What do they want to be when they grow up?**

Some want to be agronomists. The one that finished school is waiting for news on a scholarship for university but she wants to study agronomy or tourism. And the other ones are still in sixth grade. I don’t know, they still a couple of sardines but I hope they go after something that benefits everyone, specially themselves.

**What do you think about… What decision have you taken that makes you feel very proud about?**

The best decision I ever made in my life is to form a family. I fell in love with my wife when I was 19 years old and we’ve been together since. We have been together 48 years, or 50, what do I know, I can’t remember, but always in love of my family and my wife. She is a great woman. That is my best decision.

**And what do you regret about?**

Man. About… well, I’ve lost a lot of time in my life. You always do. Bad businesses. Bad investment. I do regret about that.

**What would you like to change at this time of your life? About coffee or about your life. What would you like to change?**

No, I would like to change, of course. To improve more every day.

**What?**

To improve. I would like to be a better coffee farmer and a better unintelligible. Right? I would like to be a better coffee farmer and the best neighbor, of course. I want to be that. Which is not hard for me to achieve.

**And about your health, how have you been doing?**

I have been fine, with some issues of course but no, nothing that forces me to lay down.

**When you have to go to the doctor, how do you do it?**

I come here, to my EP and…

**You ask for the appointment.**

Yes, you ask for the appointment via phone and… We usually come every three months, my wife and I, because we are older people. Very old. So we have periodical controls but we enjoy of good health.

**Everyone at home?**

Yes, everyone.

**Do you have any special diet when eating or…?**

No. The diet is a very normal one. Usually we have salad, because we produce it, beans, rice, a little of everything. Yeah, it is a normal diet.

**A normal one.**

A normal one.

What is it that motivates you? What makes say “this is my motor; this is my hope”? That things that pushes you to do things.

Well, my grandchildren and my kids. Particularly, yes. Because you feel that were able to do very little for your kids. Because, look, you raise your kids and you are shy with them. When they are 10, you realize you didn’t provide anything for your kid. So one will unwind with the grandchildren and gives them all of the love and… Grandchildren are good because of that. They allow you to get out that repressed love that you carry inside and give it to them. You don’t deny it to your grandchildren. I have the feeling that I denied a lot of love to my children because of being shy. But now I give it to my grandchildren, as to compensate for my kids.

**So cool. Regarding your family, I think it is very important, do they all live there at the plot?**

No. Not everyone lives at the plot because, for now, it doesn’t provide enough to sustain everyone. There are 7 but, in my family, we are 12.

**And the other one, where are they?**

The other ones are here, working in Santa Rosa, Pereida, and… yeah. Currently, there are 7. We are aspiring to, if our production improves and we are able to sell our coffee at better prices, I can tell my other kids “come back here, I will be able to pay for your social security. So we can all be together”. That is mostly it. I don’t aim for money but for that company and to live. To live with dignity. I don’t want money; I want to live with dignity together with my family.

**I am going to ask you for a favor and it is how to grade this. For you what is the most important? Here I have a paper, where six means the most important and one means the least important. Right? For you. So, for example, for you, social relationships, how important are they?**

Social relationships? I think they are really good.

**And what scale would that be? One? Six?**

Five.

**Five. For you, self-determination, meaning being decisive, where in the scale would it be?**

I would be… I am very undecisive, so I would give it a four.

**Four. Mobility. Moving around, having good transport… How important is that to you?**

This one at six.

**This one at six. Education? How important is education for you?**

Six.

**Security, being…**

Six.

**Six. Done. Leisure, playing, entertainment, how important is it?**

Entertainment is very important, a six, if we are talking about fun. I don’t support leisure. Leisure can lead to very bad things.

**Health.**

Health, of course.

**How important is it?**

A five.

**Five. Mental health? Being at peace…**

Of course. Six, too. It is important for a good life.

**Taking care of the environment, how important is it?**

Of course, of course. Yes, without the environment we can’t live.

**Where should I put it? Five? Six?**

Six.

**Six. Participation. Being listened to, participating in meetings from the association, for example. All of that. How important is it**?

Very important. Six.

**Six. Nutrition, eating properly…**

Very important, too. Also a six.

**Six. A satisfactory job, doing what you like.**

Very important, too. Also a six.

**Ok, let me move this over here, I ran out of space. And housing? Having a nice space to live in.**

Of course. That is formidable. A six, too.

**Now, I want to ask you something and it is… Well, the project aims to identify what it is that you do with residues. Therefore, I want to ask you, what do you do with the coffee residues at the plot?**

No. The coffee residues we are using them very well because we have a pit. And so, the residues are being decomposed and are being utilized at the plot. We are applying it a process to transform it into food.

**How long do you leave it there?**

Well, that gets oxidized in 15 or even 20 days, depending on the temperature. When there is a good temperature, decomposition becomes easier. Or depending, when there are good temperatures, it reduces the workload on removing them, on shoveling.

**And the shoveling, how often do you do it?**

That you have to do it, at least, every 15 days. For there to be a faster decomposing process, so that the moment to use it also comes faster. We are…

**And you use it at the plot?**

Yes. All of the residues. Banana peels, yuca, potatoes. All of this goes into the plot and gets decomposed. Toilet paper. All of that is getting decomposed to contaminate less. At home, what we haven’t figure out what to do, and so far, we have been doing something very bad, is with plastics. We burn them. It is very far as for me to bring them here. That’s the only thing. We are destroying those containers through means of fire.

**How do you do to take the coffee out of your plot? Do you carry it?**

No, that is very easy. On the beast. We have a beast and on it. It doesn’t matter if it is 50 kilos, it doesn’t care. What I worry about is there not being a production. If there is production, I bring down the coffee, no matter the lumps.

**Ok. Regarding those residues, let me tell you a little about it. This is the proposal and what we aim to is, with the coffee residues, these here would be the plots. To collect that, take it to some sort of factory and what we aim to is to obtain a biocrude, for what? To move ships. And a biocarbon would be obtained, too. An organic soil improver. Some sort of fertilizer. And so, there would be a possibility for that carbon to go back to the plots. A part would go to the maritime sector, with the biocrude, and the other part goes to the maritime sector.**

What residues are we talking about?

**Here, they consider all of the residues that are not used to produce food. As such they could be forestall, agricultural, even urban residues, invading species that are not being used, weeds. All of that could be used in this process. What do you think about this idea?**

I think it is very good but the issue would be the distance to where I am. That is limiting for me because, you can imagine, if I’m going to pay a transporter to bring down a load from over there, he charges me 30 000 pesos.

**For the ones that are close by, why do you think nothing has been done yet with the residues?**

Due to the lack of consciousness. I think there is a lack of consciousness?

**And how can we generate a change of consciousness?**

To change the consciousness?

**Or how can we create consciousness in people for them to do that?**

It is very difficult. You can see how people on the streets eat a candy and throw the foil on the floor. We are lacking consciousness on conservation and everything. To do way more aggressive campaigns to see if people here… For the communication media, such as radio, television and press to take a very decisive role in this, right? Because in television… if they force you to eat something that you don’t need, why wouldn’t we get forced to do something that will benefit all of the world and particularly yourself?

**I don’t really know. But do you have any doubt or any question?**

No, I think it has been perfect.

**Well, thanks a lot. That would be all.**