



## CARIBBEAN PACIFIC CONSORTIUM: SUMMER INTERNSHIP FOR PROMOTING CAREERS IN AGRICULTURAL FIELDS FOR PUERTO RICO AND OTHER USA TERRITORIES

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### ABSTRACT

The 2009 Summer Internship of the Caribbean Pacific Consortium was organized by the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Puerto Rico to receive seven (7) participants for four (4) weeks in June from American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Island, Northern Mariana Island and Palau. One participant from each one of these countries, except Guam that sent two participants. The group was diverse: two females and five males; five college students of agricultural sciences, an extension agent and a research assistant. The group had the opportunity to visit places of agricultural interest and places of cultural interest. Among the places of agricultural interest: six research centers of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Puerto Rico, the USDA Tropical Agricultural Research Station (TARS) in Isabela, Alzamora Farm, La Montaña Farm, laboratories of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and several agricultural businesses representing our agriculture. Among the places of cultural interest: Old San Juan, Ponce, Mayaguez, El Yunque, Hatillo Dairy Festival and others. The internship was evaluated on seven items using a 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent) scale. Overall, participants scored the experience as very good, and commented that they are committed to implement in their countries technologies observed in Puerto Rico. In summer 2010, the internship will be held in Puerto Rico for the third time, thereafter in one of the US Pacific Territories.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Provide opportunities for students of institutions of higher education within the CariPac consortium (US territories in the Caribbean and Pacific) to learn about the agriculture, the geography, and the culture of other countries in the environment of an international experience.
2. Strengthen the relationship of the University of Puerto Rico with institutions of higher education within the CariPac consortium.

### INTRODUCTION

The University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus, and its Faculty of Agricultural Sciences are gaining international scope. Our Faculty of Agriculture is now part of the CariPac consortium, formed by institutions of higher education of the US territories in the Caribbean and Pacific (American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Island, Northern Mariana Island, Palau, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands). A grant obtained from USDA-CSREES for 2009-2010 made possible the implementation of a summer internship for students of higher education. Some of the countries choose to send professionals instead of students.

The summer of 2009 is the second year that Puerto Rico organized the internship (Gonzalez et al., 2008). Next year the internship will be held in Puerto Rico and each participating institution will send at least one student.

### PROCEDURE

#### Administration

1. Puerto Rico appointed a director.
2. The director worked the budget, coordinated lodging and transportation, appointed a coordinator, and maintained communication with the participant countries.
3. The coordinator prepared the program, identified three graduate students to serve as proctors, supervised day to day activities, and solved unexpected problems.

#### Modus operandi

1. The participants lodged in private facilities outside the campus because facilities inside were not available.
2. A rented van for the whole month served as transportation.
3. The proctors, graduate students from three different departments, were in charge of guiding the interns to the activities planned.
4. From Monday to Friday they have visits, workshops or lectures of agricultural interest.
5. Saturdays they had visits of cultural interests.
6. Sundays were days to go shopping and rest.
7. The participants made a final written and oral report the last day.
8. The participants evaluated the program both written (using a questionnaire of items in a 1-poor to 10-excellent scale) and orally.



Interns with part of the staff

### RESULTS

The following are samples of visits or activities of agricultural interest



A grafting workshop in Alzamora Farm



In Corozal learned about plantains, Zigatoka and yams from Agenol



In Cali Nurseries found ideas to implement at home



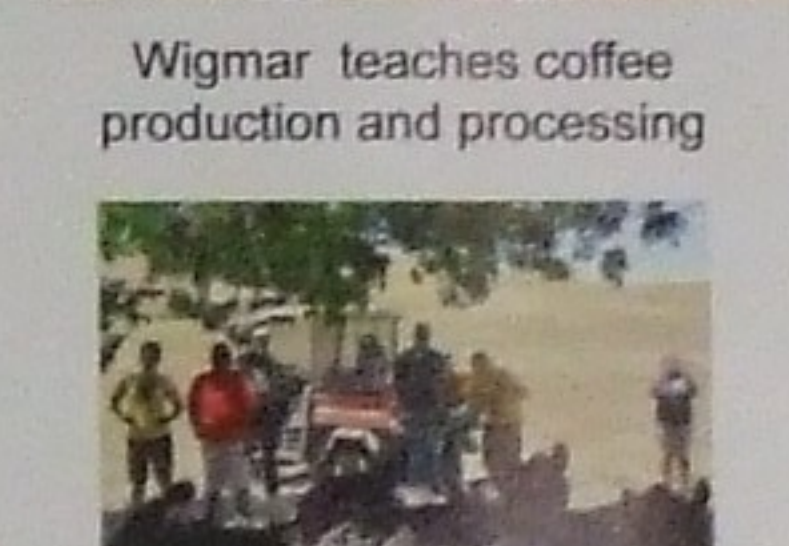
Wigmar teaches coffee production and processing



Learning about vegetables from Agro. Angel Portalatin



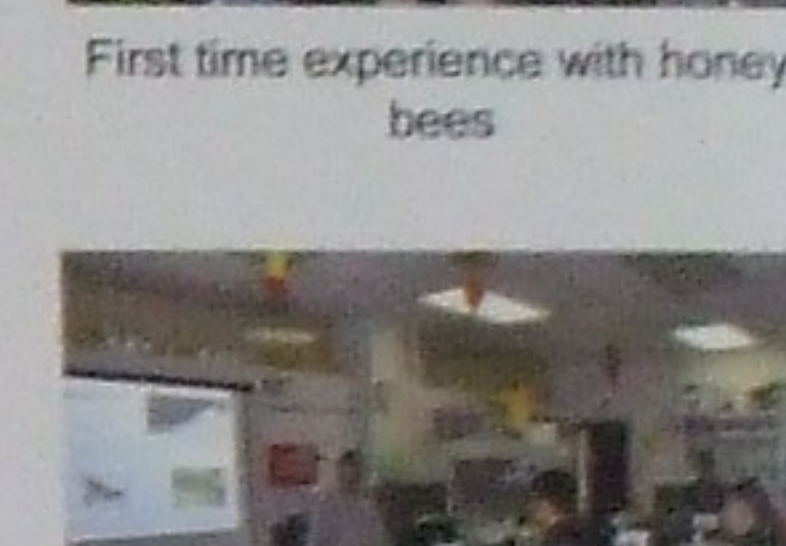
First time experience with honey bees



Altamira Farm: beef cattle, sheep, goats and hay



Agro. Morales showed coffee ecological processing equipment



Class time: Entomology

The following are samples of visits or activities of recreational or cultural interest



El Morro - Old San Juan



Caguana: Taino Indians site



Hacienda Carabali: ride on horseback



El Yunque

The following comments written by the interns are indicators of the results:

1. We visited the Southern Research Station where we viewed an extensive mango field with a high percentage of the world's total mango cultivars. The visit to this location broadened my horizons towards expanding and selecting the crops in which to pursue when farming.
2. The animals that they were farming were not new to me, but the practices that they were incorporating came as quite a surprise. There are many useful techniques that I will be sure to use and share with some of the farmers back on Guam.
3. I was excited to ride a horse for the first time in my life, which is an experience I will never forget.
4. Now I would have advantage over my classmates.
5. Mr. Angel Portalatin's vegetable farm has also given me an image and picture on how an individual farmer should be devoted in farming from the beginning to the ending. As I observed and listened to his point of view pertaining his farming activities, he is a type of farmer that a farmer should observe and adopt the skills and knowledge that he has gone through. I learned a lot from this gentleman.
6. To conclude this short report, I would like to come back to Puerto Rico for pleasure and enjoyment in the future....

### CONCLUSIONS

- The internship was successful in terms of knowledge transmitted and learned by participants (participants scored the experience as very good, and commented that they are committed to implement in their countries technologies observed in Puerto Rico).
- The College of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Puerto Rico is contributing effectively to the success of the CariPac consortium.

### REFERENCES

- González, A. L., G. M. González and C. Santana. 2008. Caribbean Pacific Consortium: Promoting careers in agricultural and related fields for the future needs of Puerto Rico and other US territories. In, Proceedings Puerto Rican Society of Agricultural Sciences Annual Meeting, November 2008, Faro Suites, Isabela, P.R.