

Session 4

Celebrating my country



‘Cocoa is like having a cow which you milk every day; with coffee it’s a once-a-year harvest.’
Harry Espino, a farmer with two children

Nicaragua is known as the land of lakes and volcanoes because of the number of lagoons and lakes it has, and the chain of volcanoes that runs from the north to the south along the Pacific side of the country. By 2006, tourism had become the second largest industry. The majority of tourists are from the US, Central or South America, and Europe, with the main attractions being the beaches, scenic routes, and the beautiful buildings in cities such as León and Granada. Of the many volcanoes, only around seven are now considered active, and many of the rest offer tourist activities such as hiking, climbing, camping and swimming in the crater lakes.

Coffee, chocolate and honey

Nearly two-thirds of Nicaragua’s coffee crop comes from the northern part of the central highlands, to the north and east of the town of Estelí. Harry Espino is one of many farmers there. He is married with two children, and farms both coffee and cocoa. Harry has noticed that the changing weather affects his coffee crop. He likes the fact that cocoa is harvested more than once a year, so it gives him and his family a year-round income.

Climate change has been a problem, and has allowed many diseases to develop in the coffee crop. Harry started planting cocoa a few years ago with the help of the technicians from Soppexcca, who showed him how to sow, handle disease, and plant the grafted plants. For many farmers, the future with climate disruption may mean that they can’t grow coffee any more, as coffee needs cooler weather to grow. If the temperature rises, they will need to shift into cocoa, the key ingredient in chocolate. Growing and producing different crops and products is called diversifying. It means that if one crop fails, there are other crops and products that still bring in money.

Bering Ramos, a young farmer, says that she didn’t have any idea how chocolate was made until she visited a chocolate factory that was close to her farm. While there, she was able to see the many processes that are needed to transform the cocoa to chocolate. Many cocoa farmers haven’t ever tasted chocolate!

Arlen Joel Lopez Pineda is a young farmer who lives near Jinotega. Climate change was affecting his crops.

ready to be harvested by the bees, it rains, and the bees don’t come out of the hives. The farmers harvest the honey from February to May,



and there are three harvests. In the dry season, the bees are fed with a liquid mix of sugar and water to keep them strong. After that, a special screen is put in and they get to work producing the honey. Once the honey is extracted, it is put it into a sediment tank, and then it is poured into the pots and labelled. Producing honey is something pretty. It is not polluting, and is helping to pollinate the flowers.'

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for the beauty of Nicaragua. We pray that you will help the farmers find the best crops to grow and the best time to grow them. We thank you for the bees of the air and for the wonderful way that you have designed them to keep every other aspect of your creation going. We pray your protection over the bees and that you will help people understand just how important they are. Amen.

Active prayer

