



Doing Good That Is Good™

The newsletter of FARMS International

Cuba Update: March 2015

Providing revolving entrepreneurial loans to poor Christian families - Galatians 6:10

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Cuba is in the news! The present administration of the United States is exploring the lifting of a fifty year old trade embargo and easing other restrictions as well. This may well have ramifications that are not obvious to either side. Currently, the leaders of Cuba are holding fast to the status quo for their small island nation. Only time will tell if any of these moves will benefit the average Cuban citizen.



What we at FARMS can say for sure, is that our programs are helping many find hope and a better life. We began a program to help Christians with small businesses and agricultural endeavors in 2012. The growth of the program has been amazing. This exemplifies the work ethic and even more so the faith of the Cuban church family. This past December, two of our board members, William Wingenroth and Chris Eby, graciously paid their own way to visit our program there and to establish a new loan committee. They had a tremendously successful and encouraging visit. We are sure you will enjoy this report. God is so good!

True local ownership is what FARMS is all about! One reason FARMS is so successful is that we allow each loan committee wide latitude in adapting the program to the local culture. This creates real ownership. Our first committee in Cuba has demonstrated this with its hog production program.

Hog production report from Cuba:

One of the first loans given in our Cuba program was for a hog breeding facility. Many in Cuba have expertise in hog production and pork is a staple in the Cuban diet. The loan program is unique in that a bred sow is loaned out to a farmer to raise until she is ready to give birth. Just before the sow gives birth, she is brought back to the breeding facility for care and birthing. Depending on litter size, one or two piglets are retained by the breeding facility as a service fee and the "loan" repayment; the rest of the litter are kept by the loan recipient. These piglets are grown and sold to provide income for the family. This cycle can then be repeated with the same or another family. The committee's breeding facility will raise the piglets retained as payment and then sell them. They use this income to maintain the facility, to pay staff and to provide further funds for the loan program. **The revolving loan fund is multiplying as a result of this policy**, enabling more families to have a loan for a project. They also grow chickens at this facility.



Project holder Daniel showing us his pregnant sow.



The committee president looks over the animals received for the service fee of FARMS loans. These animals will be raised and sold to fund the program and provide capital for new loans.



This is the hog rearing and breeding facility maintained by the committee

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New Loan Committee starts in Central Cuba

Report by Bill Wingenroth, FARMS board member:

Pastor Ramon invited a group of 15 faithful church members to attend a meeting where we explained the FARMS International program. At the end of the meeting we asked who would be willing to volunteer for the loan committee training. We had eight people that said they would be willing to serve on the loan committee; three women and five men. Their response was enthusiastic and eager.



Bill Wingenroth and Chris Eby conducting the FARMS training

One woman had worked on a government farm as a poultry farm manager but was laid off when the government closed the farm. Another woman and her husband had a small piece of land but her husband lost his job on a government vegetable farm after the farm closed down. One man was a manager of a government pig farm until it closed and he lost his job. One other man lost his job in a government owned concrete block plant when it closed down. Their stories were similar to many others and depict the struggle Cubans face.

The average income of the group was about ten US dollars per month. Most get their rice and beans and cooking oil by using government rations cards. The average weekly offering for their church of 30 members is about four US dollars! Even though these people are poor, they are hard working and try to support their church with what they have.



**The "Good Samaritan FARMS Committee"
Chris Eby and Bill Wingenroth back row**

We were surprised by how the members of this new committee were so intently listening and participating in the training. They really seemed to have a grasp on how this program works. They shocked me with how well they did their homework each day and how well they worked through sample projects.

Those we trained shared that the biggest obstacle for them in starting any new project was lack of capital. Sources for loans are nearly nonexistent. It is even difficult and nearly impossible to start a simple bank savings account! It became clear that these people were not looking for a handout, but were industrious and showed a lot of initiative. They were so grateful for FARMS training that they called Chris and I the Good Samaritan Team and as a result they named the committee the "**Good Samaritan Committee.**" They are now proposing

that the church be named the **Good Samaritan Church.**

Background information for this new program:

They estimate in the immediate area that there are about 150 believers. They hope to help about 12 to 15 families at a time. Their church began in 2012 and now has about 30 members. Their goal is to see Christian families helped out of poverty, as well as being discipled. They also want to see increased tithing for their churches as well as seeing new people coming to the Lord.

Some of the proposed projects are: organic vegetable farming, fruit orchards, raising chickens, hog production, barber shops, sewing, carpentry, and bakeries.

Please pray for the Good Samaritan Committee. Pray that they will sense God's encouragement and be successful.



The "Good Samaritan Church" and training center



Gunhild "Gunny" and Gareth Miller

In January, the former wife of FARMS' founder, Gareth Miller, went home to the Lord. Gunhild, or Gunny, was a supporter of FARMS and became active after Gareth's death to ensure that the mission would continue and flourish. In her honor, we have established a memorial fund that will go to the work in Haiti, a mission whose good works she continued to follow long after Gareth's death. Below is a letter from their daughter, Grace.

Memorial for Gunhild T. Miller

Reverend Gareth Miller always felt called to be a missionary. He and my mother, Gunhild, applied to serve as missionaries early in their marriage. They were denied the opportunity to serve in Burma because of my father's defective heart. That was the irony, since there was nothing defective about my father's heart or his love of service. God had a different plan.

Although my parents began their married life in Virginia in the church field, my father never lost sight of his call to mission service. While in the Virginia piedmont, God blessed him with the inspiration for FARMS. Dad realized that one of the best ways to talk about God's love was to

show His providence. God blessed Dad and all of the future missionaries of FARMS with the knowledge, resources, contacts and supporters to be a vehicle for His goodness to His children throughout the world. My mom appreciated the devotion that Dad had to the mission of FARMS and shared his love for the people they met through FARMS.

Gunhild, herself, was God's servant and devoted her life to teaching both children and adults. Although she worked at the State University of New York as an Associate Professor of English, Mom never stopped sharing her love of language and literature. She was a specialist in Mythology, the Bible, and Shakespeare. After Mom's retirement, she continued to inspire those around her with impromptu quotes and verses from scripture and hymns.

*Mom and Dad are now reunited in heaven, surrounded by their many family and friends. Their legacy of care, love and focused service remains with us as we continue God's work. As my father would say: **"May the Lord bless you and make you a blessing."*** Yours in Christ, Grace

New project report from Baracoa by Chris Eby, FARMS board member

The Baracoa region is located at the far eastern end of Cuba. This region is hilly and well forested. Our original committee is doing a pilot project in this area to explore the start of another committee to serve the churches of this region.

The first project is a woodworking shop run by a pastor and a couple other men. The loan will be for a concrete floor and new carpentry tools. At present, the shop had only rudimentary tools, slowing production. This area has a good access to quality wood and the market is wide open for good furniture. Those that will be involved are excellent carpenters. This project will provide income for at least three families.



The hills and forests of the Baracoa region

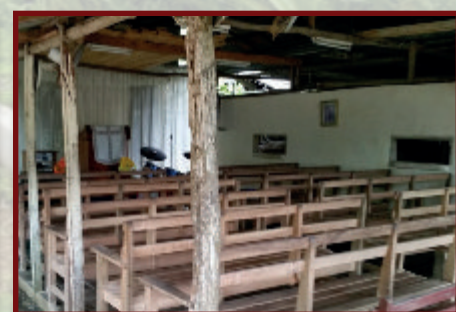
While visiting this area, Chris and Bill met with other business people in the area and not surprisingly, sensed a real interest in the FARMS program. The tithing generated by this project will greatly bless this small church.



The present carpentry shop, that will be upgraded with a concrete floor and up to date tools.



Bill Wingenroth, (2nd from L) discussing business opportunities in the region.



Pastor Nord's church in Baracoa



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Cuba!

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Adonis received a loan for hog raising. He was one of many very needy families that the committee has chosen for loans.



Second from the left is Pastor Iri, his wife Yani, and their two daughters. The FARMS committee president is on the right. The other two men work at the hog and chicken rearing facility run by the committee. They all were extremely dedicated and skilled workers.



This tractor was purchased with a special gift from a donor in New Mexico. It is rented out to project holders to haul feed, pigs, and crops. It is also used to plow. The operator is paid from the rentals. This project has made possible a job as well as a more economical way to hire a tractor for the FARMS project holders. It has been a real blessing to all involved. The profit from its operation is paid back to the revolving fund.

New tires were purchased before our visit, but not yet installed.

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