

Through the organic agricultural cooperative, **COPROEXNIC**, we have sold \$1.5 million worth of sesame seeds from 2011-12 crops. These have all been processed and shipped. We are the largest exporter of Nicaraguan sesame now.



The **organic cotton** yields for 2011 were down because of the late rains last fall, but as of April all is ginned, sold and shipped...about 130,000 pounds. We may be expanding cotton in this next growing season IF the government gets everything lined up in time for field preparation in June. The government is promoting large-scale conventional cotton and their new cotton regulations might conflict with organic practices. Also, we do not yet know if the government will offer the credits for organic farmers that will make additional planting possible.



The farmers will be planting **organic peanuts** in this growing

season for shipping to Once Again Nut Butter and Nuts to You, the companies that buy our sesame.



We have an **oil press** and are pressing by-product cotton seed and sesame seed to make biodiesel...we only use the waste seed. When we find the time, energy, and money we will make the only Nicaraguan produced dark sesame seed oil for cooking... there is a large Asian population and people like us in Nicaragua who love it! We have also bought the equipment to make our own **organic insecticides** out of neem.

Now that the rains have started, the cattle feed project will go mostly dormant while cattle eat all the good grass growing. It will start back up after the rainy season.



**César went to a Fair Trade Conference in Minneapolis, MN,** to

represent the interests of our growers and workers here. He went to make the case that to be truly fair trade, the people who grow and work must represent *themselves*, instead of people who are successful and from wealthy nations speaking *for* them.

For coffee & organic food suppliers:

[www.their-buckscoffee.com](http://www.their-buckscoffee.com)

[www.onceagainnutbutter.com](http://www.onceagainnutbutter.com)

[www.buildingnewhope.com](http://www.buildingnewhope.com)

For organic clothing & video:

[www.maggiesorganics.com](http://www.maggiesorganics.com)

**After a long and arduous journey, the Genesis Cooperative has given up... understandably so.** They have been “making do” while we wait on the law suit against Jack Coker of Coker International, who received \$150,000 from the CDCA to purchase spinning plant machinery and never honored his contract. They and we have been hoping to see a resolution of the lawsuit we filed a year and a half ago to be able to get machinery and complete the dream of a cooperatively owned spinning plant. They have put time, sweat and hope into the project...the building and their cooperative.

In April after extremely difficult conflicts they walked away. It was a painful time – to say the least! – when they turned all of their frustration against us, particularly Mike and César. They had been working for the agricultural co-op, COPROEXNIC, hand sorting [cotton](#) to earn some income while we waited on the lawsuit, when they received



the bad advice that they should insist on us giving them title to the building so they could rent it out... and they acted on it. In February they locked themselves in the building with all the cotton and cattle feed operation and refused to let [COPROEXNIC](#) in to get access to its cotton.

[Genesis](#) went on television and said horrible things about César and Mike and accused us of defrauding them on the machinery deal. César responded with an interview about the lawsuit and Jack Coker. Over the following weeks, whenever Mike, Becca, or César talked to the press about the situation the reporters always said, “But you have done so much for them.” Yes, but their dream had died... and it is painful and heart wrenching to see a dream die. It took us two months of not reacting to their anger and calmly offering what we could to help them out before the situation was finally resolved.

It was hard on everyone. They shot off homemade fireworks every day; put up signs; blockaded the gate to the industrial park; occupied the building and held the cotton hostage; went on television... they did all the things that we would admire and advocate, except that their anger was misplaced... it was not we who had taken the money and smashed their dream, but we were here and in sight. And they did some things that were not good... slandered César and Mike; wrote hateful signs; tore up property; kept 30 poor people from working in the gin, the cotton and the cattle feed; and one member assaulted Sarah. The advice they had taken was bad and it caused great sorrow to all.

**BUT it is resolved now.** We gave each member of Genesis \$2,000 in recognition for all the work they had done... they wanted much, much more, but the CDCA has many other projects to keep going. The Genesis co-op has joined COPROEXNIC in a separate lawsuit against Jack Coker as third parties that were damaged by his actions. This is good because they had alleged that we'd never filed a [lawsuit against Coker](#) in the U.S., not understanding that our U.S. suit is proceeding very differently to the way a Nicaraguan lawsuit would proceed. Genesis has gathered the cooperative's belongings and has left, except for one lone member, who still holds the vision and wants to participate in a spinning plant when the lawsuit is eventually settled.

**We thank all of you** who have helped sustain this cooperative through the last five years. The [spinning plant](#) dream is not just a dream for Genesis, or for us, but is the dream of so many of you who have visited, worked alongside the Genesis folks, donated, [loaned](#), talked up, hoped for, and dared believe in this project. The dream is not dead for the CDCA. We still hope to have the lawsuit settled in our favor, to pay off the loan we took for the machinery, get the building out from under lien, and be able to buy spinning machinery.

**[Health Clinic](#):** In March we hosted the **Boston College nurses** and a **brigade from Bucknell University** (Lewisburg, PA). The Boston College nurses saw patients, taught the volunteer health promoters, and did home visits with new mothers and the elderly as well as a couple of home bound patients. One of the students worked with us on the [asthma program](#) with her professor and we now have a great brochure to hand out as well as more knowledge and equipment. Our asthma support program involves 20 families with asthmatic children.

The [New Mother Support program](#) has 20 pregnant and new mothers participating. We have a volunteer promoter “godmother”- *madrina*, who visits the mothers







once a week until the baby is 6 months old. She gives them a handmade bag (made and filled by two of our board members) with diapers, vitamins for the mothers, diaper pins, a receiving blanket, onesies, a suction bulb, etc. The babies are weighed, head measured, checked for illnesses and developmental progress. If they are not doing well, the *madrina* gets the mother and baby to the pediatrician. From 3-6 months the babies are monitored bi-weekly and after 6 months they are monitored once a month. The *madrinas* encourage only breast milk for the first 6 months.

Soon we are starting **dental hygiene classes** in the preschool and primary schools in Nueva Vida, including fluoride treatments.

We will also teach dental hygiene in the high school along with **other health promotion classes** in the Nueva Vida community. Class topics include: dengue, H1N1, sexual health, and adolescent pregnancy, as well as other health questions teenagers have.

The **Bucknell brigade** had two new doctors visiting with them who saw patients. The students worked on the security wall, the incinerator, and the little guard house for the night watchmen (we have no watchwomen).



photo: Paul Susman



JUBILEE HOUSE COMMUNITY  
 "You shall not oppress one another for I am the Lord your God."  
 —Lev. 25:17

she has had a successful tour and still has a working spine.

**Becca, Paul**, and their daughters are back from a speaking tour in Ireland and family visits. Becca spoke at Quaker Meetings and Rotary Clubs. We are part of forming a Rotary Club in Ciudad Sandino and hope to build relationships with Clubs the world over.

We wish to share with you sufferings of our staff in the

**JHCommunity: Sarah** is in the States as this goes to print, wrapping up her speaking tour. She has spoken to fewer groups to make it easier on her injured back.



Ciudad Sandino Rotary Club - March 2012



Francis



photo: Ben Stechschulte

Pedro

past few months: Due to a house fire, **Francis**, one of the hospitality staff, lost most of her house and belongings - but no one was hurt - (her house is rebuilt and rewired much better and she has been slowly recouping her belongings). **Pedro**, one of the construction and maintenance crew, lost his son to a brutal beating. **Jessenia**, our health promoter, was in the hospital almost two weeks with a horrible infection that started from an insect bite.



Jessenia

## Reflection:

It is hard to write a coherent reflection on Genesis at this point because I am still angry with them. We had supported them all the way and yet we wonder what **we** did wrong, but I think that is the wrong question. I think that the better question is what happened inside the members of Genesis that made them act so irrationally, apart from getting bad advice.

When Coker took the money, it took almost a year before we realized that we had been had. Mike, lawyers, and so many of you started a campaign to get him to send Genesis the contracted machinery... while Genesis plodded along waiting. When that did not work, we filed suit and we worked with lots of people trying to see what other legal and financial avenues were open to get the machinery... while Genesis waited.



There is an insane frustration that comes from being oppressed and having to rely on someone else to take up your cause. There is a helplessness that swallows you whole and an anger that takes root, which is what I think happened with them more than a year ago... and their anger festered until it finally popped.

Coker was a non-entity to them... and so they made us the enemy. **We** had "stolen the money." "There was no suit." **We** had "used them to build a building that we wanted." **We** were the embodiment of the oppressor. This became their reality because in truth **they** were indeed helpless when it came to Coker, who was far away, unseen, untouchable and unreachable.

I hope they heal. I hope at some time in their lives they can look back and see that Mike, César, and Becca had their backs. And I really, really hope that Jack Coker has to pay for some of the pain that he so casually inflicted. Then maybe we all can start healing.

– Kathleen

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Online tax-deductible contributions are for the general operating budget (designations also accepted), and may be single donations or recurring.

### Give a Mothers' Day Gift and help new mothers in Nueva Vida.

For a minimum gift of \$35.00, you may request **Grits, Greens, and Gallo Pinto**, our unique and versatile cookbook  
Email: [Sarah@jhc-cdca.org](mailto:Sarah@jhc-cdca.org)

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via [SlightlyTwistedSpoons@jhc-cdca.org](mailto:SlightlyTwistedSpoons@jhc-cdca.org). Please allow 6 weeks for delivery.



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