

## COMMUNITY AGROECOLOGY NETWORK (CAN)

### La Roya Focus Group at the UCA San Ramon

21 March 2013

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

18 men and women farmer beneficiaries of the Jovenes Sobal Project  
8 men and women Youth Leaders from the 8 cooperatives in the project  
5 staff members of the UCA San Ramon  
2 members of the Board of Directors from the UCA San Ramon  
1 CAN staff member  
**34 participants total**

#### **FORMAT of the FOCUS GROUP**

Heather Putnam of CAN and Yadira Montenegro of the UCA San Ramon facilitated the focus group. 34 participants broke up into 5 groups to answer 10 questions related to the impact of La Roya. Groups then shared with everyone else and compared answers, discussing them and adding to them in some places.

#### **SUMMARY of RESULTS**

##### ***What kinds of coffee and management systems are most and least affected?***

- The varieties most affected are Caturra, Borbon, Arabiga, Paca, Malaco, Catuai. The least affected are Catimor, Pacamara, Maragojipe.
- The lower altitudes are more affected than higher altitudes.
- Areas with less shade cover are more affected by La Roya than well-shaded areas.
- Organically managed and conventionally managed cafetales are affected equally, according to the participants.

##### ***What are the impacts of La Roya?***

- Between 50% and 100

##### ***How are people responding and what should be done?***

- **Farm diversification:** Everyone saw that diversifying on-farm into other crops and products, as well as off-farm into wage labor was necessary to get through this crisis, over the next few years. One group mentioned the danger of food production being neglected as people focused on coffee renovation, and urged more focus on food production in the face of this crisis.
- **Government intervention:** Two of the five groups argued that the government needs to intervene at the national level and in a strong way.
- **Renovation of coffee areas:** Participants are overwhelmingly seeing this as a current strategy and one that should be promoted in the long run.

**FULL ANSWERS**

**1. What varieties of coffee are most affected by La Roya? Which varieties are least affected?**

**Most affected:** Caturra, Borbon, Arabiga, Paca, Malaco, Catuai

**Least affected:** Catimor, Pacamara, Maragojipe

**2. Higher altitudes or lower altitudes are most affected? Areas with more shade or less shade are most affected? (#s refer to # groups that mentioned this response)**

**Altitude:**

Both higher and lower altitudes are affected equally by La Roya – 2

The lower altitudes are more affected - 3

**Shade:**

Areas with less shade are more affected – 4

Both areas with less and more shade are equally affected - 1

**3. Which areas are most affected – conventionally managed coffee fields or areas managed organically or without chemicals? (#s refer to # groups that mentioned this response)**

Both are affected equally – 5

**4. What percentage of your coffee plants have been affected by La Roya?**

- It varies depending on the zone and place, but between 50% and 80% - 2
- 90% of coffee fields affected – 1
- 100% affected - 1
- 65% of coffee areas affected - 1

**5. How is La Roya affecting your family?**

- It is affecting us economically because many depend so much on this crop, not just individuals but entire families – 4
- It is affecting us psychologically, as we think about next year's harvest – we already know that it will be so much harder than this year – 1
- We don't know what will happen to our children who are studying – will we be able to pay their school costs?
- We don't know where to find resources to assist us in renovating our coffee.
- We are already in so much debt, and this crisis only makes it more necessary to take out more credit and fall even further into debt.

**6. How is your family responding to the crisis of La Roya?**

- Renovating coffee plants - 5
- Diversification/planting other crops – 3
- Looking for outside work - 1
- We are not responding very much, we don't know what to do - 1

**7. How is La Roya affecting family food security?**

- It has an effect on families' ability to purchase food, since coffee income is so important for buying food – 5
- Less money available to purchase medicines – 2
- People need to spend more time repairing and renovating their coffee areas, and consequentially will be spending less time producing food crops; this will lead to less productivity in gardens and basic grains - 1

**8. This year, in what ways will your household respond to the loss of the coffee crop?**

- Take advantage of other alternatives, like salaried work, planting home gardens, and planting other crops like cacao– 2
- Plant more basic grains and vegetables - 3
- Renovate coffee fields – 1
- Plant more fruit trees and banana/plantain trees (*chaguite*) – 1
- Improve shade cover over coffee fields - 1

**9. What assistance is needed from the cooperative, the community, the government and other organizations?**

- Financing and credit, long-term and low-interest - 3
- The state/government needs to develop a national-level strategy, or a regional one – 2
- Assistance funding labor in the community – 1
- Exchanges with other cooperatives and communities to learn from their strategies for dealing with La Roya - 1

**10. What are the measures we should be taking to maintain our livelihoods in the face of La Roya?**

- Farm diversification into other crops and products - 3
- Look for other alternatives for salaried work - 1
- Branch out into tourism – 1
- Save money and costs in other areas, like electricity and water, and overall – 1
- Explore and implement more appropriate practices in the coffee fields that will improve yields and protect against diseases – 1
- Select and use uncontaminated seeds varieties – 1
- Work more, make more effort – 1
- Do soil analyses and start seedling nurseries now - 1

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- Change the varieties of coffee we cultivate – 1
- Concentrate more on home gardens and basic grains production - 1

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