Community Profile: Marlon Alvarado
Santa Teresa, Nicaragua

Marlon Alvarado is located in the municipality of Santa Teresa within the southwestern department of Carazo. The community consists of 127 persons residing in 36 homes. Previously called Nancite Dulce after the plant that bears small, round, and sweet yellow fruit, the name of the community changed to Marlon Alvarado nearly forty years ago in honor of a Sandinista combatant from Masaya who died in the Sandinista Revolution. Emerita Vega serves as the political secretary of Marlon Alvarado. Rooted in the community-based Sandinista Defense Committees that established leading up to the Revolution in 1979, Vega’s role has primarily revolved around knowing the priority needs of residents and communicating them to the municipal government in Santa Teresa.

Most families in Marlon Alvarado have the land around their houses cultivated with vegetable gardens and a variety of fruit trees. Nearly every family has chickens and roosters, and some also have pigs, horses, goats, dairy cows, cattle for meat, and oxen for plowing the land and drawing carts. Many of these plants and animals were received as part of the government’s bono productivo alimentario, which provides support to rural families in production of animals and diversification of agricultural crops in family parcels.

Larger fields, many of which were received as part of the agrarian reform process of the 1980s, are privately held and principally worked by men in the community. The major crops grown include maize, beans, rice, sugarcane, and sorghum. The producers consume the crops, sell through local markets, and share to some extent. In addition, a collective of ten community members maintains a field of about ten acres.

The ATC organizes trainings in collaboration with local NGOs and the National Technological Institute to lead workshops on small business development through the popular economic model, such as for the production of piñatas, fruit jams, hammocks, and other value-added products. The ATC has also held trainings in Marlon Alvarado for women to learn skills related to agriculture and livestock management.

One of the ATC’s major focal points in Marlon Alvarado as elsewhere centers on the transition to agroecology. As part of this transition, the ATC has supported families in the community in planting three types of seeds—canavalia; mucuna; and gandul—which act as cover crops that protect and recuperate soils as well as serve as inputs into an alternative animal feed that makes the community less dependent on having to purchase costly animal feed for their pigs and cows. The community is also implementing a collective agroecological parcel with a combination of fruit trees, vegetables and annuals, and dragon fruit.

Created by Friends of the ATC
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