



DIVERSIFYING INCOME: Dioselvina Cruz passes eggs to her sister Luzneida Cruz. With the help of Coffee Kids' partner ICSUR in Chiapas, Mexico, 41 men and women are learning chicken production techniques to help ensure a healthy and affordable supply of meat and eggs in their communities.

COFFEE-FARMING FAMILIES SEE FOOD PRICES DOUBLE

While U.S. consumers fret over gas prices, a food crisis threatens millions around the world. Coffee Kids staff visited families in Chiapas and Oaxaca, Mexico, this summer, and learned about the effects of the international food crisis and how they are confronting the problem.

According to women working with Coffee Kids partner organization FomCafé in Oaxaca, prices for basic products such as corn, oil and rice have more than doubled since October 2007. The price of many vegetables has increased 50 percent or more. “Before 2008, families spent about 60 percent of their income on food, but today families are spending almost all of their income on food. Salaries have not risen, money being sent home is lower, and work is scarce in many rural communities,” said José Luis Zárate, international program director at Coffee Kids. Families in the United States spend about 10 percent of their income on food.

Coffee Kids partners the Association for Research and Training of Southern Mexico (ICSUR) in Chiapas, and FomCafé in Oaxaca

are working in coffee-growing communities to build capacity and reduce reliance on the annual coffee crop, which does not provide enough income for families. Many of their efforts are also helping families deal with the food crisis.

Prices for common goods in Mexico:		
ITEM	OCT. 2007	JULY 2008
Cooking oil (liter)	u.s. \$1	u.s. \$2
Corn (kilogram)	u.s. \$.28	u.s. \$.47
Rice (kilogram)	u.s. \$.70	u.s. \$2

The ICSUR is helping farmers start to raise and sell mushrooms and chickens to diversify their income and bolster family diets. Women working with FomCafé are learning about organic gardening, cultivating food for their families and selling the surplus locally. “Many of the women commented that thanks to these projects they have access to fresh, organic foods for their families, something they couldn’t afford otherwise,” Zárate said. “The same is happening with the women working with ICSUR in

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FLYING THE COOP: Coffee Kids international program coordinator José Carlos León (left) poses with members of ICSUR's chicken production project. ICSUR has established four chicken coops for demonstration purposes in the communities of Pantepec and San Francisco Jaconá, Chiapas, Mexico. Many of the participants have now established their own coops.

Chiapas. Without these productive projects, it would be difficult to afford meat or eggs.”

While food security is the major issue families in Mexico are confronting, ICSUR and FomCafé also promote projects in health-care, education and economic diversification.

STI CERTIFIES TEA PROFESSIONALS

At a celebration held in July in New York City at the Millennium Broadway Hotel, the Specialty Tea Institute recognized the first group of tea professionals to complete its Level Three Tea

“ The STI Certification Program ” was launched in July 2002 and is considered the most sought-after educational program in the tea industry.

Certification Program. Fifteen students graduated after completing a series of foundation and advanced courses requiring a total of 80 to 100 hours of class and study time.



LEVEL THREE: Ready to celebrate their STI certification, graduates (from left) Karen Hartwick, Gretchen Iler, Gillian Niblett, Amy Lee and Mohammed Hanif share a toast.

Each student was awarded the title of Certified Tea Professional (CTP). Tea Association of the USA President Joe Simrany was there to congratulate the students, and STI Chairman Richard

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