The farm and the peninsula are very pretty. Most families live in houses with wooden walls and palm leaf roofs. The housing for temporary workers, and for us, is more substantial. There is a concrete floor, brick walls to a height of four feet, wooden lattice above that, and a palm roof. The school and the dining room, like many other day-use buildings here, are simply palm roofs over poles with one or two walls of boards or bamboo. The school, where I am writing tonight, has benches, tables, a desk, and a blackboard.

We have been asked not to walk away from the area right near the buildings because of mountain lions. One night a pack of coyotes came too near and the dogs went wild. There are several rooster who seem to crow from 2AM until 4:30 PM. This makes them unreliable alarm clocks, which is unfortunate since no one on the farm has a watch or a clock, as far as I know.

Sunday is devoted to hymn singing, baseball, and a fiesta for people from the entire peninsula. The baseball game is here at San Marco, but the party is on another farm. There is a pinata for the children, cock-fighting for the men, and dancing and food for everyone.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Sandinista government has taken dramatic steps to reverse the harm plantation agriculture brought both to the people and the land. Although the economy is in terrible shape, they have initiated major environmental programs to help the land recover. Cotton depletes soil fertility very quickly. Many of the areas cleared in the last 60 years are eroding badly. To combat this erosion, and to raise the fertility of the soil, ambitious reforestation projects have been initiated. We worked on one such project.

The trees planted this summer will be used domestically for furniture and construction. The areas currently being reforested are the tops of the hills, and breaks between cotton fields.

Another aspect of the commitment to sound environmental management which impressed me is how pesticides are handled and used. For many years Nicaraguan agriculture, like large plantation agriculture anywhere, has depended on large amounts of fertilizer and pesticides. It is not practical for Nicaragua to "kick the habit" suddenly, although applications are carefully timed to reduce chemical dependency, and experiments in natural pest control are being vigorously pursued at the University of Leon. We talked quite a lot with an entymologist there who is developing new pest control programs.

During the Somosa years, DDT was routinely used. The FSLN decided not to use DDT, and had simply left the old stocks of DDT in storage. Now, the extreme shortage of foreign exchange and especially the US embargo and US pressure on multi-national corporations not to trade with Nicaragua, makes it very difficult for Nicaragua to buy pesticides, just as it is very difficult for them to buy medicines. As a result they have begun to use some of the old stock of DDT. We saw