



Maritza Ivania, one of the first group of women to become organized with la FEM, walks through her field of native corn.

to the continued use of our native seeds. When confronting this type of dictatorship, Nicaraguan farmers' life plans become entrapped in a struggle for their own existence.

These efforts focus on the organization of groups of women who specialize in the production of organic and foliar fertilizers whose cost of production, when combined with resources found within their communities, are very beneficial. With actions like these, we are also confronting the effects and damages created by "coffee leaf rust" that have devastated coffee farms in Nicaragua.



In spite of their adversities, cooperative members managed to export over 60,000 pounds of organic, fair trade coffee to the United States and

Denmark, with special allies, such as Just Coffee, whose support and solidarity has been critical, not only economically but also emotionally.

In the north of Nicaragua, there is a popular saying: "Big problems, big solutions." In the face of climate change, La FEM and the farmer cooperatives are showing their ability to move forward with adaptation efforts in order to strengthen organizationally and improve the quality, productivity and yields on every farm.

Included in these laudable initiatives is the effort to establish an organic fertilizer plant to produce more than 350,000 pounds of or-

ganic fertilizer per year. The fertilizer would be applied to the fields with the purpose of achieving organic agriculture in every production cycle.

In the same way, La FEM has been working for over ten years to promote and articulate different tasks meant to rescue distinct varieties of native seeds. Each year, farmers harvest between 450,000 and 500,000 pounds of beans, one of the main staples in the Nicaraguan diet. The women of La FEM have become empowered in validating native seeds that are resistant to droughts and pests, which is precisely relevant now given ongoing climate change.

In the area of agricultural production, La FEM works with new strategies to strengthen varieties of native crops that are adaptable to

the region. The women farmer cooperatives rely on four seed banks in order to guarantee quality and plant the seeds at opportune times in each growing cycle. These crops are produced in the rainy season, as well as year-round in areas with irrigation.

These and other actions have only been possible thanks to the level of consciousness and integrated empowerment reached on behalf of farmers, driven by La FEM. These actions emphasize the defense of women's rights as a fundamental focus of the struggle against gender violence.

It is important to point out that last year, during a forum sponsored by La FEM and the Spanish NGO Paz con Dignidad, a study was presented to women farmers by the Multinational Observatory on Latin America (OMAL) about the negative impacts that businesses like Unión Fenosa, Repsol, Telefónica or Banco Santander have on Nicaragua. The forum helped raise awareness about how to avoid acculturation and preserve the national culture.

Stand with La FEM and support the rights of women, farmers and citizens as they care for their people, their land and the food that supports us all.



Cristhian Guzman Merlos speaks about how being organized with la FEM has greatly impacted her life at a celebration for the international Day of Rural Women.