

# The Pontis Story

*We walk side by side with very poor, rural farm families in Latin America, sharing their burden working out of poverty.*



## Poverty is an Overwhelming Burden in Rural Latin America

Latin America has the highest poverty in the Western Hemisphere and Nicaragua is its second poorest nation. The rural poor are caught in a spiral of hunger and uncertainty as they attempt to live on \$25-\$50 per month (\$1-2 per day), far below the Nicaragua poverty threshold of \$450 per month.



## From Subsistence Farming to Enterprise Farms

Subsistence farming, focused on staple crops such as corn, beans and rice, is a trap for rural families. Normal challenges such as weather, poor markets for their products or land issues destroy any headway made toward better lives. High dependence on chemicals takes a harsh toll on the soil and farms are bare and produce low yields. The 68% of the rural population who live below \$2 per day will always be poor in this situation, even with hard work.

## Pontis Small Farm Education and Assistance Model

Classroom education and on-farm mentoring transform farms, families and lives.

- **Model Farms** are hands-on classrooms where we prove sustainable, less-chemical dependent small farm methods.
- **Training Centers**, co-located with model farms, provide up to 50 local farmers a comprehensive program covering the full spectrum of agriculture and business skills needed for an enterprise farm. The program consists of four 6-month classroom modules.



- **On-farm Mentoring** brings Pontis agronomists to farms where they coach farming methods and business practices.
- **Micro loan Program** gives farm families capital to start cash crops such as chickens, peppers, tomatoes, passion fruit, papayas and others with strong market demand.

At Pontis Nicaragua we work with farm families to transform subsistence farms to enterprise farms. Enterprise farms are based on both solid agricultural and business practices. They are less chemical-dependent and use modern practices to produce yields 30-100% higher. The farms are run with financial discipline and spread risk over multiple crops. They grow cash crops for additional income and use savings to fill the gaps during unexpected events.

## The Power of Small



In the early 1800s, the US was in a similar situation as Latin America is today. Most families lived below the now defined poverty line. Moving West, the pioneers used small farms to grow out of poverty. Two centuries of economic expansion have since built jobs in cities to replace farm jobs displaced by mechanized farming. Small farms, done well, provide a road out of poverty as countries and economies grow over time.

At Pontis Nicaragua, we believe God uses small things, like farm families on 3-5 acre farms, to make big transformations, such as virtually eliminating poverty in Latin America (a goal we hope to be part of achieving in our lifetimes).



*The **big thing** in our hearts is helping farm families on **small farms**.*

## We Start and Finish with Families



Every Pontis program is ultimately about family. We aim for food and faith in every home. Strong relationships between the Pontis team and farm families, within communities, between our US partners and Nicaraguan farmers, and for all with God are the key outcomes we target every day.

*You make the difference, one small farm, one life, one family at a time.*



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*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and "you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*  
*Jesus Christ, Matt 11:28-29*