

Farm News from March



Some people get excited about seeing deer.



Not us and definitely not our two dogs Galeleo and Figaro. They've seen so many deer that they've just come to accept them as

part of the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, not a good part, especially if 3 acres of your farm is devoted to growing vegetables. Lettuce and carrots must taste pretty good because they certainly ate a lot last year! What to do? Enter Coco, our 20 pound Shitsu/terrier cross. There's nothing that bothers her more than the sight of deer in the yard (maybe squirrels). When we release the barking fluff ball from the patio door she rips through the snow and puts the unsuspecting deer on the run, back to the habitat where they belong. Too bad she's so short because she ends up running through the snow instead of on top of it. That handicap doesn't slow her down. Even blinded by the snow she still won't rest until she can't see another deer!



If you were looking at the instrument panel of my VW Golf you would think it was part Christmas tree because almost every warning light is lit up. Not the first time but definitely the last. There's a new car on the farm which doesn't burn diesel or gas. My new Subaru Solterra is fully electric. We did the math: my pickup truck uses \$0.30 of diesel to drive one kilometer, the VW uses \$0.12/km. The electric car uses \$0.015 worth of electricity when we

charge it at home. So far, my savings in fuel alone has almost covered my first payment. A bit inconvenient to charge but I must be spoiled. Eighty years ago, the people on this farm were riding horses to town.



Our pigs are never bored, there's always something to do and demolition seems to be a popular pastime. This month we've been working on repairing the houses they give birth in (farrowing huts). We move the wrecked ones into the warm shop. With the addition of a steel frame, insulation and paint, they are better than new. There'll be lots of pig babies born before these houses need repair again!



Who would have thought that the "Farm News" could make such a difference in people's lives! I can't imagine the appreciation the Cuban farmers feel for those who donated to help them to switch to solar. Some as donated as high as \$1000! There would be smiles, hugs, meals and lifetime friendships. That's why I keep going back! I asked my friend in Cuba how things are going. Here is his reply:

"Jerry we are facing now a very bad situation here in the country. The cars are not running anymore. The most of the people that works in Varadero are without job and sitting at home. But the situation with the poorest is terrible, not only because the energy problems, they can not afford to purchase the minimal supplies for living, specially the food. In general, we are not living a real life, we just surviving."

Dr. C. Jesús Manuel Iglesias Gómez

First Nature Farms is a family farm in the Peace Country. Once a month, First Nature Farms owner Jerry Kitt writes about his experiences on the farm. We acknowledge the homeland of the many diverse First Nations and Métis people whose ancestors have walked this land since time immemorial. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Treaty 8.

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are writing with deep gratitude to thank you for standing with us in the early days of the SOLidarity With Cuban Farmers initiative. Your generosity and belief in this work have already made a powerful impact.

Since launching our project on February 23rd—just after our group returned from a two-and-a-half-week tour visiting small-scale farms, organipónicos, and other agro-ecological sites across Cuba—we have raised an incredible \$39,000 CAD. This milestone belongs to all of you who have contributed to a worldwide effort to support our Cuban brothers and sisters, while offering a direct and tangible solution to food and energy insecurity on the island.

These funds are now being mobilized to support the procurement and installation of solar energy systems on small farms, including panels, essential components, and technical assessments. At a time when Cuba is facing a severe fuel and economic crisis—intensified by the ongoing U.S. blockade—your support is helping farmers access reliable, renewable energy to sustain food production and strengthen community resilience.

We are especially encouraged to share that two solar projects are already underway, in their early stages: one site in Matanzas province and one family farm in Sancti Spiritus province. In addition, other installations are now in the planning process. The progress we have made together represents not just infrastructure, but hope: the ability for farmers to irrigate crops, preserve food, and reduce dependence on scarce and costly fuel. These small farms and co-operatives, which produce up to 80% of the nation's food on just 20% of its agricultural land, feed not only their families, but their neighbourhoods and communities.

During our time on the island, we saw firsthand both the challenges food producers face and the ingenuity and determination with which they meet them. In fact, these farmers have been trailblazers in the agro-ecology movement for decades, demonstrating ways to grow healthy and abundant crops with minimal access to fertilizers, pesticides, and large machinery. Now, without fuel and a reliable power supply, Cubans are adapting yet again, and many farmers have already begun the transition to solar energy—they just need a helping hand. Our initiative was created for this very purpose, and your contributions are directly supporting the people and communities we had the privilege to work alongside and learn from.

This is only the beginning. As these first projects move forward, we will continue to share updates, stories, and opportunities to stay engaged. Your support is helping to build something important, lasting, and rooted in solidarity.

From all of us, thank you for making this possible. Muchas gracias.

In solidarity,

Equipo SOLidarity, With Cuban Farmers

Naomi, Ron, Nairn, Courtney, Josh (Canada) and Chucho, Eduard, Juan (Cuba)



Who we are...

SOLidarity With Cuban Farmers is a grassroots project (launched in February 2026) organized by a group of Canadians and Cubans working toward **energy and food security for small-scale, organic farmers** in Cuba.

We work in partnership with Cuban NGOs like the **Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation (FANJ)** in Sancti Spiritus and with small solar companies based in Cuba (providing equipment and expertise) to **facilitate the procurement and installation of solar systems on farms, organipónicos** (urban market gardens), and other agro-ecological sites across the island.

What we do...

We are raising funds to purchase solar installations to ensure small-scale family farms—which constitute 20-30% of Cuba's total agricultural land while producing 70-80% of the nation's crops—can continue feeding their families, neighbourhoods, and communities amid the fuel crisis and tightening of the US economic blockade. Each system will cost between \$4000 - \$6000 USD (depending on the farm) and will power pumps, generators, and other equipment—guaranteeing farm resilience and energy/food security for years to come.

All funds raised will be used for:

- An initial on-farm technical assessment to ensure that each solar system will best meet the farm family's needs
- The purchase of solar panels, inverters, batteries (when appropriate) and all wiring and hardware, and in some cases, irrigation pumps designed to run on solar power
- Installation support to the farmer by qualified solar technicians and training/follow-up for ongoing maintenance and troubleshooting



How you can help...

Scan the QR code or visit the website below to learn more about our initiative and make a donation to assist Cuban farmers in feeding their nation.

In solidarity. Gracias.

SOLidarity With Cuban Farmers

www.theurbanfarmer.ca/solidarity
@solidaritywithcubanfarmers

