

## Jose Garcia – Graduate 2015

“I want to keep working. Maybe get a ranch and keep producing healthy food for the people in this country.”

When Jose Garcia says he knows agriculture, he means it. From oranges to limes, from broccoli to peas, from watermelon to onions, Jose has planted and picked it all. “The climate here is very similar to my hometown in Guanajuato, Mexico, and everything grows well.” For the last 17 years he has worked in agriculture in the United States, and he means to continue to keep doing it better.



“So far everything has gone well here. It is something that I have always enjoyed and I want to keep doing.” Jose is putting into practice a combination of his life-long experience in agriculture and what we learned from taking the Farmer Education Course (PEPA) in 2015. He first learned about Alba while working with another farmer who had taken the classes and he was inspired to branch out on his own. He hopes to continue to grow the small Zapatillo Organics Company from “a little simple farm, into a ranch.”

For Jose, it is appealing to be able to change the nature of his work. “It’s hard to go from paycheck to paycheck, from one thing to the next, obeying the orders of someone else.” Instead, he looks to Alba as a way for him to “not have to depend on anyone.” Of course, that doesn’t mean he won’t need help. “I think the best thing would be to bring in a lot of people to work together, to help each other while working the land and just to do it the best we can.”

Being here working on his own plot means a lot, especially for his family back in Mexico. “My wife lives there with three of our four children. She is a homemaker and depends entirely on me.” Jose wants to build something beautiful, and someday, “share that beauty and my land with my wife. I want to bring her here...to be together.” Jose knows that “it may start small, but little by little, year by year, working here, I will continue to do what I love.”

