

## Exploring Ethos Farm

April 27, 2012

### Sunset World Digs into Agriculture and Reaps the Benefits

*By Matt McDaniel*

Raquel Garcia Dennis, whom everyone simply calls Dennis, is a natural farmer. He comes from a farming background and has a love for all things agricultural. Unfortunately, about eight years ago he developed stomach cancer.

At the time, Dennis was a driver for Orlando Arroyo Marroquín, president of Grupo Sunset World Group. The doctors said Dennis needed to be in a quiet environment without the stresses of rushing around and chauffeuring people all over the place. Dennis knew that his boss had a piece of land languishing with a neglected, off-and-on-and-offagain foray into papaya farming, so he went to him with a simple request: "Why don't you send me out there?" Dennis told Orlando how much he'd enjoy being back in contact with nature, and promised to give the company some produce in return for the favor.



At first, Dennis brought back a small basket of tomatoes once a week. But before long, it became two baskets. And then one day he asked for a truck.

### Farming in the Yucatan

The region around Cancun does not have a strong agricultural industry; most of the consumables are imported from other parts of Mexico or from international locations. This part of the Yucatan Peninsula

doesn't have much in the way of agriculture because the ground is so poor in topsoil. It's a rocky jungle landscape, so farming is challenging and takes some ingenuity.

Most of the area's hotels and resorts — because they require large quantities at guaranteed times and of a specific quality — are unable to purchase produce from the region's small farmers, who tend to be the type operating little roadside stands. So while Sunset World has always used Mexican produce, it previously had to come from further-reaching parts of Mexico.

Yet today, Sunset World Resorts & Vacation Experiences operates a farming development called Ethos, which produces several tons of fruits, vegetables and ornamental flowers every year for Sunset World's properties. This past year's numbers were 26 tons of tomatoes, 35 tons of papayas, 15 tons of limes, and 16,000 bird of paradise flowers. Not surprisingly, Sunset World decided last year to expand the farm and make it even more important to their overall operation. Now, the farm also is growing cucumbers, watermelons, peppers, zucchini squash and fine herbs. What's more, Ethos now has 16 additional varieties of exotic tropical flowers, including valeriana, iris and antorcha.

"We actually just had our first cucumber harvest a few weeks ago," says Annie Arroyo, brand director. "Right now we have seven hectares of plants, and we're going to expand even more into coconuts, onions and potatoes."

And what about the papayas, which were the farm's original residents? "For the past eight years we've been using all the papayas that come from the farm. Last year we finally got up to speed where almost all of the papayas that were consumed in the hotel came from the farm," Annie boasts.

"All of this is for our own consumption in the hotel. If we end up having more than we need, we're selling it to other hotels in the area," she continues. "It's been a great addition to our food supply because it's a really high quality product, and we're giving jobs to local farmers."

### **Environmentally Friendly**

Because Ethos is Sunset World's farm, you would rightly expect the operation to be environmentally conscious, given all they've done in the past. "It's a really neat closed circle," Annie relates. "We're really lowering our carbon footprint because we're not bringing in produce from far-off places."

*The rest of this article is for registered users only.*

*Login now or [Register Free Here](#) for full access to all articles, groups and forums.*

---

Tags: [Annie Arroyo](#), [Cancun](#), [Mexico](#), [Orlando Arroyo Marroquin](#), [Sunset World](#)

---