

Pineapple program delivers new variety and new income

LA LIMA, Honduras — Fintrac's pineapple program in Honduras has been a long time in the making but is generating sales and production area continues to expand. In 2006, sales reached \$210,000 with 16 hectares under production. In the first quarter of 2007, sales reached \$45,700 and second quarter sales hit \$146,233. Projected sales in 2008 are expected to reach \$428,000 from 60 hectares of production.

The pineapple program originally started in 2005 at the end of Fintrac's CDA program when planting material for MD2, the most popular variety on the international market, was brought by the program to Honduras. After planting, pineapple plants take 14 months to bear fruit.

The program continued when Fintrac's RED program donated suckers for planting. To join the program, growers had to contribute the costs of seedling production and had to donate suckers – equivalent to what they received – to new growers. The selected growers originally started with 15 hectares of production.

The 14 original clients growing pineapples are doubling planting material, and new growers have started planting.

Farming partners Omaro Acosta and Gustavo Ferrera Quiroz started receiving technical assistance with the CDA program and had success with yuca, sweet potatoes and a different variety of pineapples. They were one of the lead clients selected to grow MD2 and started with 1.4 hectares after receiving 76,000 suckers from the project. Sales totaled \$15,789 from their first harvest of MD2, 275 percent higher than with the other variety they grew. Their yields were 46 percent higher than their yields with the other variety and they earned more at the market for them. Because of MD2's consistent quality and size, they also earn more per fruit. Now they plan to double production next year.

Fintrac's RED project is a three-year program designed to significantly increase rural incomes and employment opportunities throughout Honduras. It is providing support to 742 lead clients and more than 10,000 beneficiaries. By July 2008, the program expects to generate \$30 million in new sales by lead clients alone.



Pineapple yields have taken off at Omaro Acosta's farm. At left, he cuts a fresh pineapple. Acosta and his farm partner, started growing MD2 pineapples after receiving 76,000 suckers from USAID.

Photos by Fintrac Inc.