



SUCCESS STORY

Retiree finds new career and new source of income



Photo by Fintrac/Julio Torres

Salvador Carcamo proudly shows off one of his papaya plants nearly ready for harvest.

“I had to proceed by doing it, learning about techniques and varieties I had never seen before.”

– Salvador Carcamo, papaya producer

Not one to retire quietly, Salvador Carcamo decided to start a new career at home on his farm in Tejutla, Chalatenango. He started by building a well and then got in touch with USAID’s Agricultural Diversification Program (USAID-ADP).

“This land was used for grazing cattle for about 20 years,” Carcamo said. “But it was never what you might call ‘profitable,’ simply because it was not used to its potential.”

A USAID-ADP technician first recommended a high-performance papaya variety with a known market identified by the program and then helped him design his 0.7-hectare farm and install a drip irrigation system.

Though Carcamo had prior experience growing papaya, he had never grown on this scale or cultivated with modern growing techniques. The technician taught him about planting density, managing pests and disease, fertilization, and dozens of other crop management techniques.

Within a year of starting with USAID-ADP, he turned his small plot into a modern papaya farm that generated more than \$30,000 in profit, about 11 times his annual profit of \$2,500 from cattle activities.

“I no longer depend on the weather,” Carcamo said.

Carcamo now produces more than 7 tons of papaya each week that he sells to the buyer introduced to him by USAID-ADP.

“I had to proceed by doing it, learning about techniques and varieties I had never seen before,” Carcamo said.

As production rose, so did his need for help. He hired two permanent employees and also hires other employees part time for help during harvests.