



## SUCCESS STORY

### Farm assistant who saved for his own land now earning top dollar



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

José Manuel Linares' cucumber field.



A sign at José Manuel Linares' shows that the assistance is "from the American people."



José Manuel Linares, right, and his son.

José Manuel Linares, from the municipality of El Porvenir in the department of Santa Ana, has always worked as a farmer and has a vision for how he is going to get ahead.

At the beginning of 2004, Linares was in charge of a field owned by Ricardo Martínez, who was a lead client of the USAID-IDEA project. Through this position, Linares became familiar with different technologies used for cultivating land. His monthly salary as an employee was \$120. An advantage to the work was that the farm was close to his house, so he did not have to spend money on transportation or food.

Linares saw first-hand the higher yields that came with these new technologies and he wanted to try them on his own land. Because he did not own land himself, Linares made an arrangement with his employer, who agreed to rent part of the land on which Linares worked. Linares planted cucumbers on 0.35 hectares, applying techniques recommended by USAID-IDEA. Because of a lack of investment capital he settled for a traditional furrow irrigation system. This situation lasted for two years, and he managed to increase his gross income to \$460 a month.

With his increased income, Linares managed to save and buy a 0.7-hectare lot. According to Linares it was "with the hope of boosting his income and improving his family's quality of life."

Linares and his eldest son started to work on his new land and they joined the USAID-ADP as a lead client after USAID-IDEA ended. The regional project technician, noting Linares' dedication and perseverance, enrolled him at the end of 2006.

When he started working with the program, Linares took the following measures:

- Obtained an area of land with an abundant water source for irrigation and installed drip irrigation on 0.7 hectares.
- Carried out good soil preparation practices including plowing, harrowing, and bed making.
- Established a plan for managing pesticides and soil nutrition based on the conditions of his farm.

Linares maximized his land through calendarized production of corn and cucumbers and increased his gross monthly income to an average of \$1,062. He also generated jobs for two people and used his profits to improve his home and buy a vehicle to transport and market his product.