



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

IMMEDIATE IMPACT AND RESULTS: PLANTAIN IN REITOCA



Plantain in Reitoca



**Evelio García Ramírez:
Plantain with raised beds and
drip irrigation**



**José Orlando Rodas:
Preparing his second plantain
planting through a calendarized
production program**

Reitoca, a small town located in the south of Francisco Morazán, is among the poorest municipalities in Honduras. Reitoca, however, boasts favorable growing conditions for plantain production, agricultural potential that was undiscovered until the arrival of the EDA program.

Although the region is traditionally agricultural, farming was limited to basic grain production used primarily for the subsistence of growers and their families. Furthermore, most growers were hesitant to experiment with new crops, because of lack of training and economic limitations.

When EDA arrived in the community and proposed plantain production as an alternative source of income at a low cost, many people were incredulous. However, 23 growers accepted the challenge and planted 11.83 hectares under EDA technical assistance in 2007. To date, 5.64 hectares of these plantings have been harvested generating sales of \$57,725. With just \$28,115 in total costs, net income was \$29,610, or \$5,250 per hectare.

Don Evelio García Ramírez is one of the growers who accepted the challenge to produce plantain in Reitoca, even though at first he thought it was impossible. After following EDA's technical assistance recommendations, he achieved his highest sales ever of \$6,158. \$2,253 in costs yielded him a net income of \$3,905 from just 0.5 hectares.

Similarly, José Orlando Rodas and Juan Francisco Gutiérrez took what for them was a gamble with plantain. Rodas, like many young people in the region, helped support his family by traveling to the United States to do temporary jobs – a situation that he wanted to change. Juan Francisco also desired change, not happy with planting corn and beans like other traditional growers in the region. But now both are pleased with the results of plantain production, earning net incomes of \$3,540 and \$2,987, respectively.

To successfully introduce this new crop, EDA had to consider the economic limitations of the growers and adapt crop management techniques accordingly. Not only did EDA arrange for the donation of a drip irrigation system, but it also focused on the transfer of low-cost technologies and techniques such as:

- Proper soil preparation
- Raised beds
- Increased planting density
- Timely cultural practices

The local municipality also helped selected growers with funds from the Poverty Reduction Strategy for land preparation, planting materials and fertilizers.

The successful adaptation of plantain in the region has had a positive impact in Southern Francisco Morazán. New plantings in 2008 already amount to 6.55 hectares. New plantain growers are also starting to plant in neighboring municipalities such as Curaren and La Venta.

"Plantain is a crop that can put you ahead." — Evelio García Ramírez

"I think that people did not believe in it before, but as they have seen the trucks full of plantains pass by, now everyone wants to plant." — José Orlando Rodas

"We must work together in plantain production, we must teach everyone ... I tell them how much I spent and how much I earned so that they see that it is worth the effort." — Juan Francisco Gutiérrez