



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

IMPACT AND RESULTS: VÁSQUEZ AGROINDUSTRIAL INCREASES EXPORT SALES TO THE USA AND CANADA

Vásquez Agroindustrial, located in the Comayagua Valley, started as a fresh vegetable exporter to the United States and Canada in October 2006 under the leadership of owners Juan Discua and his wife, Liliana Dubon. Since then, Vásquez Agroindustrial dedicated its efforts to exporting oriental vegetables including eggplants, bitter melon and bangaña, which are harvested on their own farm and from independent outgrowers. In September 2007, technicians from EDA visited this company to offer technical assistance and training to improve their production and postharvest processes.

With EDA technical assistance, Vásquez made basic yet important changes to expand the company's vegetable exports and enter new markets. The company started cucumber production as a high value crop and EDA set up new market linkages for exports. The company is providing technical assistance to independent outgrowers in the implementation of good agricultural practices to further EDA's outreach. The company designed a fresh vegetable plant that features packing lines and a cold storage room. Vásquez is implementing production and postharvest standards for GLOBALGAP certification in the plant and in the field and training plant personnel in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), vegetable grading, recordkeeping, international market requirements, contract negotiations, quality control, and GLOBALGAP standards.

Vásquez Agroindustrial Achievements:

- Designed plant layout following required quality standards
- Incorporated market-driven, calendarized production plan for vegetable crops adhering to GAPs
- Increased portfolio of independent outgrowers in Comayagua receiving technical assistance and delivering product twice a week
- Transferred drip irrigation, GAPs and other technologies to outgrower farms
- Increased oriental vegetable exports to USA and Canada, from 33 containers in 2007 to 54 containers during the first 6 months of 2008
- Created 14.4 new permanent jobs during 2008
- Forged new market linkages, signed new business contract with brokers and improved negotiations with input suppliers
- Increased sales by more than 70 percent, from \$350,000 in 2007 to \$600,000 as of June 2008
- Invested more than \$150,000 in packhouse infrastructure and equipment and on farm irrigation systems
- Trained personnel in infrastructure maintenance and GMPs

The quality of Vásquez Agroindustrial products and consistency of deliveries led to increased buyer demand. The company plans to increase vegetable exports from 100 to 200 containers in 2009.



In its second year in the demanding world of international trade, Vásquez Agroindustrial received the President's 2008 exporting award as the "Newcomer of the Year" for increasing exporting volume and sales.

**"We are growing slowly but surely; we count on EDA to continue supporting us to achieve GLOBALGAP farm and plant certifications; GLOBALGAP certification is our next goal to enter the European market."
— Liliana Dubon**