



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

IMMEDIATE IMPACT AND RESULTS: Integrated production yields high returns for papaya producer in Comayagua

Walter Martinez, a young grower in Comayagua, started with MCA-H/EDA assistance in June 2007. His father had limited success growing papaya with traditional practices and both welcomed a more technical approach.

Traditional Agriculture Management

Prior to MCA-H/EDA technical assistance, Martinez did not implement any good agricultural practices and made lots of mistakes that reduced yields and increased costs. He used a hoe to control weeds, damaging plant roots in the process and he used pesticides excessively, applying any product available without knowledge of effectiveness. His fertilizer applications were also excessive – up to 2,700 kilograms per cycle.

Implementing Good Agricultural Practices and Integrated Technologies

With MCA-H/EDA's technical guidance, Martinez incorporated important changes on his new 0.75-hectare papaya plantation. Walter prepared the soil properly with plowing and raised beds, selected quality plantlets and used starter solution. He also installed a drip irrigation system to manage water and apply biological controls and a balanced fertilization program (with NPK, magnesium, calcium and other nutrients) through the system. Martinez also improved pest and disease management by correctly applying phytosanitary products at recommended doses based on in-field pest and disease sampling. By the time of the first harvest, Martinez also reduced production costs by applying just 400 kilograms of fertilizer and reducing other agrochemical inputs.

Market and Net Income

Walter sold his papayas to a middleman in the local market for \$7,895, while incurring production costs of only \$2,632. The net income of \$5,263 was a 200 percent return on investment. This first and successful experience with technified production enabled him to pay off old debts and make new investments.

Investment on Appropriate Technology

With his earnings, Walter invested \$2,026 in a 13-HP water pump and a motorized backpack sprayer, essential for applications in tall crops such as papaya. With the drip irrigation system and fertilizer injection systems, the updated technology has helped Martinez increase farm productivity and reduced his unit cost of production.

Walter Martinez

"This being my first experience and doing it the best I could with the support from EDA's technician, it has been wonderful. I'll keep on putting into practice what I have learned. I'm proud of what we have accomplished," Martinez said.

Walter plans to continue implementing these basic production practices and expand his next papaya production cycle to 0.91 hectares.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.
Walter Martinez inspects his papayas.



Martinez' father monitors for pests and disease.

"I feel totally supported by EDA."

– Walter Martinez Sanchez, La Plazuela, Comayagua