



# Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

## IMPACT AND RESULTS: MCA-H/EDA encourages growth in horticulture production by attracting new farmers

MCA-H/EDA continues to promote growth in the agricultural sector by providing integrated technical assistance through 32 field agronomists, 10 field technicians and 8 specialists in farm certification, postharvest handling, marketing and business skills. The EDA technical team provides program farmers with customized, on-farm technical support in production systems, postharvest handling, product marketing and buyer contacts, agribusiness planning, record keeping and other essential technical areas.

During 2008, 493 clients entered the MCA-H/EDA Program with little or no experience in horticulture. With technical guidance provided by MCA-H/EDA, these new clients have planted more than 730 hectares of high-value crops including onion, cucumber, tomato, pepper, plantain, carrot, avocado and fresh herbs. To date, 40 percent of these new farmers have harvested their crops and from a total production area of 215 hectares they have generated approximately \$1.5 million in gross sales and \$0.7 million in net income – a 47 percent return on investment.

Through MCA-H/EDA support, new farmers have learned and implemented production technologies and best practices including proper land preparation, soil conservation, plantlet propagation, water management, fertilization programs, integrated pest management, adequate use of agrochemicals, and postharvest handling. They have also been supported with market/buyer linkages and incorporation into calendarized production programs. This has helped them make crop selection decisions based on market demand, land suitability, finance requirements and returns on investment.

Many new farmers across the country have not only improved their farm management and attained higher net incomes but have also generated new jobs in their communities – José Filiberto Flores Herrera is one of them. Flores was a traditional cattleman in Atlántida, who was presented with the idea of diversifying into plantain production. He reviewed the financial projections and market options for plantains and then decided to plant 0.24 hectares, counting on the technical assistance commitment from MCA-H/EDA and the crop's expected profitability.

Flores was a quick learner, closely following all recommendations for the required basic production practices including soil preparation, plant propagation, drip irrigation installation and management, fertilization programs, disease management and postharvest handling.

Flores was confident in the integrated technical assistance that he was receiving and he simultaneously planted 0.6 hectares of Tabasco peppers under contract with a local processor. Both crops were harvested with high quality and strong yields and generating net income of \$4,187 from 0.84 hectares of production area.

Details	Plantains (0.24 Ha.)	Tabasco peppers (0.6 Ha.)
Gross Sale	US\$ 3,631	US\$ 2,947
Cost of Production	US\$ 1,213	US\$ 1,178
Net Income	<b>US\$ 2,418</b>	<b>US\$ 1,769</b>

With his production experience, demonstrated profitability and market contacts, Flores now plans to set up a calendarized plantain production program in 2009, expanding the area to two hectares. Diversification into high value horticulture is not only an option for Flores but also for other farmers in Honduras.



*Photos by Fintrac Inc.*  
Filiberto Flores and his father harvest plantains.



Neighboring growers visit Flores' farm in Atlántida.

**“EDA is a great project for inexperienced people, it is a challenge for us to take this opportunity and improve our farms.”**  
— Jose Filiberto Flores Herrera, Atlántida