



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

MCA-H/EDA helps small farmers improve traditional practices

In Honduras a small farmer is typically characterized as one planting less than five hectares with one vegetable or grain staple crop and has low yields and income and has neither market information or market links and little to no access to new technologies.

For these reasons, the Farmer Training and Development Program (MCA-H/EDA) is focusing efforts to support small farmers, which based on baseline information, account for 92 percent (2,447) of total client base. Of these, 75 percent (1,985) have less than 2.0 hectares to cultivate. Through the MCA-H/EDA Program, farmers are receiving technical assistance and training in crop management, business skills, marketing and postharvest handling. They are also receiving basic equipment donations to implement basic technologies and improve farm productivity; these include drip irrigation systems and filters, seedling trays, plastic field crates for harvesting and backpack sprayers.

For many client farmers, this is the first time participating in an agricultural program with such integrated support. Regular technical assistance and training has helped them improve traditional practices that used to limit their productivity and profitability. Key results include:

Farm Diversification: 55 percent of assisted small farmers now have two or more crops; tomato, potato, carrots, plantain and sweet pepper being the most significant. Farmers have diversified by implementing EDA's recommended calendarized production strategy and by becoming part of planting programs for specific buyers. Some farmers have also transitioned to long-term, high-value crops such as plantain, avocado and oriental vegetables.

Improved Product Quality: Timely in-field technical assistance in production and postharvest management has been very important to harvest high quality products. Since the program began, program farmers have received 56,199 technical assistance visits and have participated in 4,246 training events regarding good agricultural practices, drip irrigation system installation and management, integrated pest management, transplanting and plant nutrition, and other technical areas.

Increased Market Linkages: Of the 1,407 small farmers with completed harvested crops, 800 have distributed production to more than one market, including supermarkets, distributors, packhouses and exporters. This is because of market links provided by EDA's marketing specialists.

Technology Transfer: Thanks to MCA-Honduras' Small Donations Program and farmers' own investment efforts, more small farmers have incorporated drip irrigation systems, fertigation programs and other technologies that help them produce crops year-round, improve productivity and increase profitability. Capital investment made to date by program farmers totals \$3.786 million, of which \$2.315 million is direct farmer investment and \$1.471 million is from donations from MCA-Honduras and other institutions.

Incomes: To date, small farmers under the MCA-H/EDA program with detailed cost information have harvested 1,092 hectares, generating a net income of \$5,090,891. This represents an average net income of \$4,661 per hectare, overcoming the traditional high risk and low profitability that usually characterizes small farmer production.

MCA-H/EDA Grower Production Areas	
Less than 2.0 hectares	1,985
From 2.1 to 5 hectares	462
More than 5 hectares	221
Total	2,668

Small Farmers with Crop Production	
One crop	1,293
Two or more crops	1,582
Total	2,875

Principle Crops	
Crop	# farmers
Tomato	660
Potato	378
Carrots	338
Plantain	325
Sweet pepper	307
Other crops (56 more)	2,961

Integrated On-farm Technical Assistance 2007-2008	
# of technical assistance visits	56,199
# of training events developed	4,246

Established Market Links	
Middlemen	1,245
Public market	1,073
Collection center (Wal-Mart)	304
Packhouses/Exporters/Processors	445
Supermarkets	220
Others	250

Investment in Technology	
Farmers investment	\$2,315,520
MCA-H / Others	\$1,470,895
Total	\$3,786,415

Economic Results	
Area harvested	1,092 Hectares
Production yield	36,338,208 Kg
Gross sales	\$10,840,682
Cost of production	\$5,749,791
Net income	\$5,090,891
% Return on investment	47%