



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

BACKGROUND

This monthly bulletin provides information on current activities of the Farmer Training and Development Program (MCA-H/EDA), a Program of the Millennium Challenge Account of Honduras (MCA-Honduras) with funds provided by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) of the United States of America.

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AT A GLANCE

- This is MCA-H/EDA's last monthly update. The Program began in August 2006 and will end in December 2010.
- By the end of November 2010, MCA-H/EDA had 7,264 registered producers receiving technical assistance and training (6,681 men and 583 women).
- 321 hectares were planted with new crops in November (mostly tomato, plantain, cucumber, onion and sweet pepper); an additional 65 hectares were reported from previous months. 20,578 hectares have been planted since the Program began.
- More than 385 market links were finalized between producers and buyers, which include local distributors, agro-processors, wholesale markets and agro-exporters (for a total of 17,914 links between producers and buyers).
- 113 trainings took place with 1,731 participants (1,536 men and 195 women) on production (72.0%), GlobalGAP (0.8%), postharvest (10.1%), processing (8.4%), marketing (2.0%), business skills/finance (4.9%), and the EDA Program (1.8%).
- A total of 2,584 technical assistance visits were made to farmers in the area of production and 95 in postharvest, finance, processing, marketing, and business skills.
- Three training workshops were held: for BANADESA technicians, on Hass avocado production, and the integrated management of viruses in horticultural crops.
- Developed one technical presentation on postharvest practices and 44 business skills bulletins on production costs.
- Through the Millennium Challenge Account-Honduras small agricultural donations program, 34 of the 38 donated greenhouses have been planted (with tomatoes, sweet peppers and plantlets), two have complete trellising systems, and two are at the end of the construction phase. With these 38 greenhouses, a total of 116 greenhouses have been installed against a target of 112. The other 78 greenhouses have been used to produce tomato, sweet pepper, strawberry, lettuce, roses and plantlets.
- In November, capital investment made on farms by producers was \$367,319 mostly on farm, irrigation, and processing plant equipment (\$12.22 million to date).

MCA-H/EDA's focus on direct technical assistance and training for producers participating in the Program follows a market-led production methodology. Most of the technical assistance is provided directly to individual farmers, who receive regular extension visits on their farms from the Program's agronomists. MCA-H/EDA has a highly qualified technical team that includes field agronomists and technicians specialized in marketing and logistics, postharvest management, farm certification programs, business administration, finances and business development services.



Farmers harvest lettuce in Azacualpa, Francisco Morazán.

CLIENTS – MCA-H / EDA

By the end of November 2010, MCA-H/EDA had 7,264 producers receiving technical assistance and training. Program technicians provide assistance in 209 municipalities in 6 departments.

Client	Total 11/10
Lead Producer	1,586
Beneficiary Producer	5,506
Graduate Producer*	172
Buyers	192
Business Services	126
Counterparts	86

* Producers that have graduated from MCA-H/EDA continue to be Program clients and receive technical assistance in marketing, postharvest and business skills and occasional assistance in production.

MARKETING

MCA-H/EDA specialists established more than 385 market links between Program producers and buyers from the local, export and processing markets in November, allowing the producers to engage in market-led production knowing volume, quantity and quality specifications. Two training events were held with 34 participants on market opportunities. The Program visited La Tiendona and Boquitas Diana in El Salvador to establish links for Program producers and Roatán, in search of market diversification alternatives. Meetings were held with six plantain and cassava processors to expand the processing volume and cover demand with crops from Program producers. Contacts were made with two supermarkets interested in selling the first harvests of Hass avocado produced under MCA-H's Small Donations of Fruit Trees Program. Met with two local investors interested in exporting fruit and vegetables produced by Program clients to the US. Continued providing price information to producers via text messages through the agreements signed with Feria del Agricultor and Fundación Banhcafé.

PRODUCTION

MCA-H/EDA agronomists continue strengthening group technical assistance where producers exchanged experiences and planned joint programs of calendarized plantings for market sustainability. 94 trainings took place with 1,261 participants on soil preparation, biological controls, drip irrigation, cultural practices, integrated pest management (IPM), weed control, equipment calibration, GLOBALGAP, and safe use and management of agrochemicals. The areas of technical assistance included basic practices, fertilization, irrigation, prevention and control of pests and diseases, identification of pests and host weeds, plantlet production, integrated crop management and incorporation of crop residue. Five **field visits** took place to farms with established crops including plantain, carrot and pepper. Participated at trainings on Hass avocado production in El Paraiso and a seminar on integrated management of viruses, in Comayagua, with participants from the University of Arizona, University of Virginia, EAP Zamorano, FHIA, and MCA-H/EDA.

POSTHARVEST/PROCESSING

MCA-H/EDA specialists held 9 training events for 174 participants on postharvest handling of crops including sweet potato, malanga, cassava and plantain, increasing incomes by improving postharvest handling and controlling losses. Met with Swiss Contact on constructing a packing plant in El Paraiso and with Hortifruti and FIDE on GAP certification for Program producers. 64 technical assistance visits took place, covering rambutan packing, harvesting Hawaiian plantains and papaya, paraffin-coated cassava, quality requirements for plantain exporters, chlorine calibration, and classification and packing of eggplant and lettuce. In November, the processing specialist held two training events for 145 participants on fruit and vegetable processing and the global food industry. 18 technical assistance visits took place, covering the design and installation of processing lines, revision of labels, new wrapping for processed peppers, automation of cassava processing lines, FTA rules for labels, assistance to investors interested in exporting coconut water to the US, and frozen potato fry tests.

BUSINESS SKILLS

In November, business skills specialists held five training events with 85 participants. Workshops covered business plans and the use of logbooks as a record keeping tool. Continued assisting financial institutions and input stores with follow-up to loans given to Program producers. Meetings were held with BANADESA and LAFISE on outstanding loans and future activities. Installed the "electronic agronomist" in computers at three agricultural schools.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Activities with the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock: Visited Meambar, Comayagua, as requested by the Minister of Agriculture, to analyze the potential of future projects. Provided SAG/SENASA statistical data on jalapeños, sweet peppers, and Tabasco peppers grown with Program assistance. Provided information to SAG/DGRD on the areas under irrigation in Cortés, Santa Bárbara and Yoro. Held a meeting with SAG/DICTA to establish links with BANADESA, plantain buyers and producers to continue technical assistance for this crop. Met with SAG, onion producers, importers and distributors to follow up on agreements to promote this crop in the country. Participated with the Minister of Agriculture at a meeting on agribusiness and exports

MCC/MCA-H: Representatives from the GAO, MCC-H and MCA-H visited producers in Guinope, Morocelí and Jacaleapa, in El Paraiso and Ojojona, Reitoca and Alubaren in Francisco Morazán.

Others: Signed a letter of understanding with SIMPAH to distribute product prices to producers; provided information to REDMICROH on Program producers, crops and planting areas.



A farmer harvests tomatoes from a greenhouse in Ocotepeque.



Tomato producers attend training in Orica.



Loofa hangs to dry in El Paraiso.



Representatives from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) visit MCA-H/EDA producers in Francisco Morazán.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the last monthly update of the MCA-H/EDA Program of the Millennium Challenge Account-Honduras. After 50 months of work in the field, it's time to thank the producers that have helped the Program reach its goals and achieved a positive impact on commercial horticulture in Honduras. The producers accepted the challenge and were the real reason for the Program's success.

On behalf of the producers that benefitted from the Program we would like to thank the people and government of the United States of America for the funds that financed this Program and the government of Honduras for their assistance with its implementation.

We would also like to thank our implementation partners: Fundación Hondureña de Investigación Agrícola and Escuela Agrícola Panamericana, Zamorano. Both institutions contributed agricultural specialists, as well as their knowledge and experience. They also provided the use of their laboratories, research plots and classrooms, and focused on solving problems in the field, offering world-class products and services that will continue to be available in a sustainable fashion to Program producers.

We are grateful to the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) and its different departments for assisting with the many activities that took place, and we would like to acknowledge their interest and commitment in providing follow-up and continuity to Program activities and results.

We would also like to acknowledge the input, equipment and service providers, and financial institutions, which co-sponsored events and training workshops. These companies and institutions understood that producers are their most important client, and that it is in their best interest to ensure that the producers are successful and have profitable and sustainable operations.

We would also like to thank the NGOs that worked side-by-side with the Program, giving their clients the opportunity to leave subsistence farming behind and join commercial agriculture. Now that these producers have graduated from the Program, resources can be used to help other producers that practice subsistence farming.

For a market-led program, real sustainability comes from the profitability of the production operations and the buyers, processors and exporters that "pull up" the growers production, improving their competitiveness. We thank them for sharing the commitment to providing consumers with products that meet food safety, quality and price requirements, generating profitability and jobs in the Honduran fields.

In addition to meeting its goals in terms of numbers, the Program has incorporated producers with planting areas that are less than 1 hectare, introducing them to commercial programs that used to include only medium and large producers. These producers have benefitted from the alliances MCA-H/EDA established with providers and NGOs, and has enabled access to additional technical assistance and resources outside of those offered by MCA-H.

Finally we would like to acknowledge the EDA technical and administrative team for its commitment and focus on achieving the Program's goals, for their long work days, their empathy toward producers with problems that are inherent to this business, and for constantly looking for practical and efficient solutions to these problems.

Equally as important is the professional development of the technicians and junior agronomists involved with the Program. These technicians have the experience and knowledge that guarantee the sustainability of technical assistance throughout the country.

As a popular saying goes, "We all go our separate ways, but fate guides our path and we come together." We are confident that we will meet again in the near future with the development of new businesses, programs and projects.



MCC CEO John Danilovitch talks with Ambassador Charles Ford at the MCA-H/EDA inauguration in September 2006.



Ambassador Hugo Llorens, Jonathan Brooks of MCC-Honduras and Martin Ochoa of MCA-Honduras visit Program producers in January 2009.



MCC Vice President, Patrick Fine, visits Program producers in June 2010.



MCC CEO Daniel Johannes with producer José Adán Ordoñez in Comayagua in September 2010.

PLANTINGS

In November 2006, producers began new plantings using technologies promoted by MCA-H/EDA technicians. During November 2010, 321 new hectares were planted, with 65 hectares being reported from previous months. Plantings of producers that leave the Program and that have not been harvested are not counted, which can cause a reduction in the area in comparison to the previous months. 20,578 hectares have been planted by producers since the Program began.

MCA-H/EDA ASSISTANCE ZONES

MCA-H/EDA provides technical assistance in 16 departments in Honduras and is working with 7,264 producers (1,586 lead, 5,506 beneficiaries and 172 graduates). The production zones where MCA-H/EDA technicians are assigned are areas where, for the most part, producers were not receiving technical assistance for agricultural activities.

Department	Registered Lead Clients	Registered Beneficiary Clients	Graduates
Atlántida	43	152	3
Choluteca	108	137	11
Colón	20	97	0
Comayagua	219	790	49
Copán	66	244	16
Cortés	33	230	14
El Paraíso	128	509	17
Francisco Morazán	361	1,134	41
Intibucá	149	538	5
La Paz	91	298	3
Lempira	16	139	4
Ocotepeque	83	385	3
Olancho	92	241	0
Santa Bárbara	73	264	2
Valle	21	70	0
Yoro	83	278	4
Total	1,586	5,506	172

FARM LABOR COSTS

Most MCA-H/EDA Program producers have small operations. 85.4 percent have reported farm labor costs of less than \$1,000 per year and only 1.6 percent has costs that are higher than \$10,000 per year given their production level.

TRAINING

MCA-H/EDA technicians held 113 events in November where they trained 1,731 participants: 1,536 men and 195 women.

Area	# Events	# Participants
Business Skills	5	85
GlobalGAP	2	15
Marketing	2	34
Postharvest	9	174
Processing	2	145
Production	92	1,246
Project	1	32
Total	113	1,731

Examples: Implementation of basic and cultural practices; IPM/identification and control of pests, diseases and weeds; IPM/use of biological control; IPM/sampling and critical levels; IPM/management of crop residue; soil preparation and management; preparation of plantlets in trays; management of pests; soil conservation and contour plowing; transplant and planting management; exchange of experiences and visits to producers managing different crops; installation, use and management of drip irrigation systems; nutrition and management of crop specific fertilization programs; irrigation water management; postharvest handling; classification and packing of horticultural crops; records and use of farm logbooks; analysis of production prices and volumes, among others.

Crop	Hectares	
	Area 11/10	Total Area
Chard	-	0.20
Garlic	0.10	2.79
Sesame	-	1.40
Celery	-	8.13
Rice	6.00	838.71
Peas	-	5.29
Banana	-	1.00
Squash	-	179.08
Eggplant	14.04	426.50
Broccoli	0.52	48.08
Coffee	-	120.12
Butternut Squash	-	67.44
Sweet Potato	5.00	218.39
Onion	28.10	837.57
Scallion	0.04	5.19
Sweet Pepper	18.49	736.15
Habanero Pepper	-	14.65
Jalapeño Pepper	12.00	437.33
Hot Peppers (Others)	-	12.70
Tabasco Pepper	-	54.09
Chive	-	13.36
Cauliflower	0.57	32.70
Bitter Melon	3.30	313.79
Spinach	-	0.20
Fresh Flowers	-	16.22
Strawberry	-	30.98
Bean	5.79	1,210.93
Fruit Trees – Avocado	-	159.29
Fruit Trees - Coconut	-	66.40
Fruit Trees - Peach	-	0.62
Fruit Trees - Guava	-	99.58
Fruit Trees – Persian Lemon	-	62.87
Fruit Trees - Mandarin	-	7.03
Fruit Trees - Mango	-	313.90
Fruit Trees - Mangostin	-	2.10
Fruit Trees - Nance	-	0.70
Fruit Trees - Rambutan	-	432.29
Grass	-	0.70
Green Beans	0.56	102.30
Fresh Herbs	0.03	22.24
Greenhouses - Various	2.97	48.22
Yam Bean	-	0.76
Baby Corn	-	7.87
Lettuce	3.09	151.56
Loroco	-	0.45
Corn	-	1,802.49
Corn (Mountain)	-	91.99
Corn - Baby	-	301.39
Corn (Seeds)	-	256.86
Sweet Corn	-	140.31
Malanga	-	13.51
Passion Fruit	2.05	150.71
Melon	-	148.68
Blackberry	-	2.30
Noni	-	0.54
Okra	-	255.37
Potato	8.15	1,031.49
Papaya	0.70	186.54
Poinsettias	-	0.70
Paste	0.35	45.60
Chayote	-	112.40
Cucumber	32.46	652.05
Pineapple	-	39.97
Baby Squash	-	4.63
Plantlets	-	13.80
Plantain	53.02	2,354.52
Radish	-	6.50
Beetroot	0.21	21.16
Cabbage	7.66	453.69
Watermelon	8.00	1,099.25
Snake Gourd	-	3.13
Sorghum	-	10.90
Tobacco	-	13.30
Tomato	97.31	3,156.15
Husk Tomato	-	1.22
Uchuva	-	1.42
Cassava	6.85	732.75
Carrot	3.41	250.15
Pumpkin	-	12.64
Zucchini	-	98.24
Total	320.77	20,578.22

MCA-H/EDA PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLAN

The MCA-H/EDA Program uses a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) to implement activities and follow-up on the development and results of the "low level" goals that are necessary to achieve the Program's "high level" goals. The PMP is a flexible tool that is revised every year and updated monthly as the work plan is developed. As MCA-H/EDA was reaching the end of its implementation, additional technical emphasis and reports were developed in these areas. Continued technical assistance visits and on-farm trainings were provided for groups of producers to strengthen the implementation of basic practices and assistance given to three organizations to provide market price information services. Some of the PMP components with 2010 goals and the status of these activities by November 2010 are outlined below.

MARKETING

Activity	Goal 12/10	Status
# of links between producers and buyers facilitated by MCA-H/EDA	12,000	17,914
# of buyers that are purchasing from MCA-H/EDA producers		
For the local market:		374
For export (fresh and processed):		93
# producers with links with buyers for export	-	1,550
# producers with links with buyers for the local market	-	6,836
# of alliances to provide market information services	4	4

BUSINESS SKILLS

Activity	Goal 12/10	Status
# participants in training and technical assistance	13,250	15,702
# of trainings on the use of logbooks	4,500	4,434
Organization of producers and assistance with input purchases and services	25	27
# of alliances with regional educational institutions to provide training to local producers on business skills	18	21

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Activity	Goal 12/10	Status
# of personnel from associations and other organizations trained in market evaluations	36	85
# of producers trained in market evaluations	-	154
# of SAG/DICTA and NGO field staff trained in Fintrac methodologies and new technology	400	711
# of diagnosis and information centers established with input stores and educational associates	12	66

PRODUCTION

Activity	Goal 12/10	Status
Farm extension Program (# visits)	126,500	158,945
# of participants in training events	100,000	114,311
# of participants trained in the safe use of pesticides	6,000	7,365
# of alliances designed and implemented to expand reach, impact and sustainability	80	121

POSTHARVEST/PROCESSING

Activity	Goal 12/10	Status
# of packing plants that are receiving technical assistance	150	197
# of participants trained in postharvest handling	9,500	11,394
# of participants trained in processing	750	963
# of horticultural processors assisted or expansion to create opportunities for 3,000 producers	31	57 processors; 2,806 producers
# of alliances established with processors and others to guarantee extension services to 3,000 producers after the project ends	53	82 alliances; 2,499 producers
# of producers with links to the private sector that provides extension services	-	914
# of producers with links to institutions that provide extension services	-	1,585

ACCESS TO FINANCING

Activity	Goal 12/10	Status
Program producers directly assisted in obtaining loans with financial institutions	500	577
Loan value (L. millions)	-	46.84
Producers trained in accessing and using loans	-	756



From left to right: Technicians train farmers to apply paraffin to cassava, Valle; training trainers, El Paraiso; and demonstrating onion transplant, Talanga.

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to the sustainability of commercial production operations, MCA-H/EDA is working to attain the continuity of selected technical services after the Program ends. MCA-H/EDA has established formal development alliances with the private and public sectors to increase the availability of joint extension services within the private sector and other agricultural businesses. Providers of farm equipment, irrigation systems, seeds, and plantlets have greatly benefitted during the Program's implementation. Their products and services have been actively promoted during field activities since their use is very important to both Program and the producer success. Expanding the quantity and quality of private extension services (fees included in the sale price of products) is beneficial to the providers as it guarantees sustainable growth in sales. During the final phase of MCA-H/EDA, activities taking place with these companies were expanded to incorporate new companies into the Program.

In addition to these two areas, other activities related to sustainability include training NGO, university, agricultural school, and public sector technicians, developing technical reference and training materials, equipment donations, mechanisms for alliances, and sharing Program methodology, results and successes. In April 2010 a document prepared by the Program on sustainability activities provided details on specific areas, which were included or expanded during the final phase of implementation. Selected areas are included in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Additional activities that took place during this month include:

- Joint activities with SAG's different departments: provided a directory that includes all the producers assisted by MCA-H/EDA throughout the country, and including the GPS location of each producer's farm, planting area with crop history, yields, production costs, buyers and projections for crops currently planted. To facilitate the transfer of the Program's technical information, The Minister of Agriculture established a commission that includes personnel from all departments, including personnel that will continue to provide selected technical assistance services.
- Installed Electronic Agronomist files at SENASA, INFOAGRO, PROGRANO and DICTA. This tool will help train SAG's technical personnel and can also be used as training material for the producers that are assisted by SAG. The Electronic Agronomist files were also installed at two banks and three agricultural schools.
- Meetings were held between plantain buyers and producers, financial institutions and SAG, to continue and expand production activities through loans and establish a three-way system with the buyers.
- A letter of understanding was signed with SIMPAH to provide continuity to the market price information system, buyer directories, and supply and demand statistics for Program producers at the national level.
- The MCA-H/EDA producer directory was distributed to financial institutions, including REDMICROH, Banco Lafise and BANADESA, which will help promote agricultural activities through financing for producers that have been trained in market-led production systems.
- Finished delivering the manuals and technical bulletins published by MCA-H/EDA. The Program has received requests from organizations and national and regional (Guatemala) producers interested in obtaining copies. This document represents a summary of the experiences and knowledge in commercial horticulture gained in Honduras during the implementation of this Program.
- The vehicles used by the Program are being donated to SAG, FHIA, EAP Zamorano, IHCAFE, Global Village and FHS. Computers and office equipment were donated to technical and agricultural schools and institutes with which the Program developed alliances.



Producers grow tomatoes in plastic tunnels, Francisco Morazán.



A women's group grows tropical flowers in Cortés.



Tomatoes are cooked for processing in Copán.



Processed plantains are packaged in Atlántida.