



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

IMPACT & RESULTS

Family business expands with plantain chip production

MCA-H/EDA focuses on grower operations, but the Program also provides assistance to micro, medium and large-scale processors to add value and increase production, income and employment.

Carlos Carranza Marroquín owns a retail store in Santa Rita, Copán, and his mother runs a small restaurant, selling typical Honduran food such as enchiladas and green plantain chips. His mother's plantain chips are famous – Guatemalans cross the border to eat them with hot salsa, onions and coriander, locals send them to friends and family in the United States, and traders buy them to sell in the city.

In 2008, Carranza's mother started to worry about how a plantain shortage would hurt her restaurant, so Carranza met with an MCA-H/EDA program agronomist and a processing specialist to see if he could help. He immediately started growing plantains on 0.53 hectares, following all MCA-H/EDA recommendations.

He then set out to modernize his family's plantain processing operations, but because his operations were so small, he had trouble sourcing processing materials and service providers. Most packaging suppliers require large orders, making startup costs expensive. But MCA-H/EDA worked with Carranza, putting him in contact with a local supplier with no minimum order. The program also helped him get sanitary licenses and design labels. He packages the chips in 25-gram bags and now has access to formal markets in San Pedro Sula.

Carranza purchased gas-powered frying equipment to replace his firewood stove, which required 600 pieces of firewood per day and produced only 33 pounds of plantain chips per hour. The new stove makes 64 pounds of chips per hour, decreasing their processing time from 11 hours a day to 7, and they are only operating at 33 percent capacity.

"The MCA-H/EDA Program has guided me along the right path, teaching me how to do things well from the beginning and providing me with technology and information that I would have never been able to obtain on my own," Carranza said.

Carranza has planted 2.3 hectares. He produces almost 2,000 pounds of plantain chips a month and sells 80 percent to his mother's restaurant. Carranza's monthly gross sales of plantain chips are \$2,100, with the restaurant's gross sales for the chips reaching almost \$5,000 a month. He is now working with the program to develop a flavored plantain chip.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Carlos Carranza Marroquín shows off his plantain chips.



Carranza and his mother used this traditional firewood stove, left, to make plantain chips. Today, Carranza uses gas fryers, right, to process 64 pounds of chips per hour, almost twice as much as before.

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-Carlos Carranza, Santa Rita, Copan