



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

IMPACT & RESULTS

Traditional farmers transition to modern businesses

Since starting with the MCA-H/EDA program in 2006, Luis Cerbando Ventura Moran's net income per hectare has increased by an astonishing 287 percent.

Before receiving Program support, Cerbando's farm in El Pito, Siguatepeque, had tomatoes on 0.20 hectares, which earned him just \$474 (equivalent to \$2,370 per hectare).

In Ventura's first production cycle with MCA-H/EDA's assistance, he started rotating his tomatoes with cucumbers and saw his net income jump to \$1,127 from 0.35 hectares (\$3,220 per hectare). In his second year he continued to diversify and follow the program's recommendations with calendarized plantings of green beans, yellow onions, sweet peppers and cabbage and his net income again jumped to \$13,165 from 2.3 hectares (\$5,800 per hectare). By his third year with the program, his net income had increased to \$15,127 from 1.65 hectares (\$9,168 per hectare).

The substantial changes on Ventura's farm did not go unnoticed and in 2009 he joined forces with four neighboring farmers to coordinate production activities. Now they all implement MCA-H/EDA practices, meeting weekly on alternating farms to receive technical assistance and training from MCA-H/EDA specialists. The activities and training cover drip irrigation, fertilization, pest and disease management, and harvest and postharvest handling. The growers also receive training in business skills to further improve their operations.

In 2009 the group's combined gross sales were \$49,324.

"The technical assistance we have received has been excellent and has really helped us. We have been able to harvest an abundance of quality produce," Ventura said.

The four growers have each increased their net income by between 36 and 1,364 percent. Before working with MCA-H/EDA their combined net income was \$3,774; in 2009 it was \$29,131 (\$7,283 per hectare). The growers are also creating local employment opportunities and paid \$7,829 in wages in 2009.

The group is expanding and strengthening relationships with local buyers, and are coordinating production programs to generate steady supplies. The growers have invested \$5,534 in irrigation equipment, storage facilities, and a small greenhouse for plantlet production.

The application of the production technologies, high yields, competitive costs, appropriate grading and handling systems, improved business planning, formal market links and farm investments, all indicate that the changes made by these growers are permanent and that their business will continue to be profitable.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.
MCA/H-EDA field agronomist Ruben Yanez shows growers how to prepare raised beds.



Yanez trains farmers how to transplant tomato seedlings.

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- Luis Cerbando Ventura Moran, El Pito, Siguatepeque