



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

Women farmers increase income through MCA-H/EDA program

MCA-H/EDA actively encourages women farmers to participate in horticulture production and provides customized technical assistance and training to teach women to increase volumes, yields and income and to expand their access to markets and service providers.

Female farmer participation in the program has increased from seven in 2006, to 46 in 2007, 207 in 2008 and to 440 as of September 2009, representing 7 percent of all program farmers (5,997).

Through August 2009, these women planted more than 580 hectares under the market-driven production programs promoted by MCA-H/EDA. The women are producing many crops traditionally reserved for men, including plantains, watermelons, tomatoes, yuca, sweet potatoes, peppers and potatoes, as well as beans and maize for rotation crops. The program is also proposing more “gender-friendly” crops such as cut flowers and aromatic herbs.

As participation by women increases, so do their gross sales, which reached \$1.6 million among program farmers through August 2009, and total net income (more than \$840,000). Local communities are also benefiting because of jobs created on their farms, which have paid more than \$213,000 in salaries. These women are also building on their success, investing more than \$100,000 in drip irrigation, agriculture equipment, and land.

Though MCA-H/EDA focuses on sales and area planted, the program also supports women in other areas of the value chain. In program training activities, of an overall 91,768 participants, 9,884 were women (11 percent) and women participation was even higher in training for postharvest handling (17 percent), business skills (13 percent), good agricultural practices (15 percent) and marketing (12 percent).



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Women from Guaimaca-Francisco Morazán participate in a hands-on onion training conducted by MCA-H/EDA.



A woman prepares lettuce seedlings in Siguatepeque, Comayagua.



Women herb producers from El Cantoral, Francisco Morazán.

“Thanks to EDA assistance, my family and I are strengthening our experiences and knowledge on vegetable production; the results are substantial so our future goal is to expand and diversify our farm”
 – Alba Luz Vasquez, Yamaranguila, Intibucá

Ana Cristina Vasquez Rodriguez from Yamaranguila, Intibucá, diversified her farm with market-driven production of high value products recommended by MCA-H/EDA including coriander, lettuce and potatoes. Her net sales per hectare increased from \$1,315 before technical assistance to \$6,142 in 2008 and to \$9,892 in 2009 (through August 2009 only). *“As a result of the better yields, product quality and markets, my conditions at home have improved,” Rodriguez said. “We now have more money to buy clothes and school supplies for our kids, and we can provide the health care required for one of our daughters who needs special health assistance.”*

Maria Mabel Reyes Orellana from Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Cortes, has improved her traditional cut flower farm through MCA-H/EDA. Orellana’s net sales per hectare increased by more than 340 percent, from \$550 in 2007 to \$2,423 in 2008. Orellana also diversified by adding 0.35 hectares of plantains. Like Orellana, 11 other flower growers in Yojoa are receiving support. *“Our farms, assisted by EDA, have become sources of local employment to other families,” Orellana said. “We now have new markets and more credibility as growers, which allows us to have access to formal credit opportunities thanks to EDA technical assistance.”*