



Entrenamiento y Desarrollo de Agricultores

IMPACT & RESULTS

Crop diversification key to small grower sustainability

Traditional farmers in Honduras often produce vegetables with limited or no technology, barely harvesting enough for home consumption and, if lucky, small external sales. With low yields, poor quality, and limited market access, many of these growers lose money. MCA-H/EDA client Gilberto Lorenzo demonstrates that this group is willing and capable of change. In 2007, Lorenzo grew potatoes on 0.7 hectares in El Pahislal, Intibucá and earned a net income of \$4,632. Since joining the program in June 2008, he has increased his annual net income nearly four-fold to \$17,287.

MCA-H/EDA introduced Lorenzo to modern production technologies and diversified farm operations to help him increase his income, reduce risk and open market channels. He diversified his potato operations over time, adding small-scale calendarized production of broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, cabbage and carrots. With his increased income he invested \$395 in expanding his irrigation system and has recently added beetroot, lettuce and strawberries.

“Economically we have improved and we are moving forward; if we had known all this before, we would be at a much higher level by now,” said Lorenzo. “With the technical assistance I am able to grow my operations,” he said. “We have to know the innovations and technologies to be competitive. When the program finishes we will be rich; rich in knowledge.”

As a lead farmer with MCA-H/EDA, Lorenzo shares the training he receives with friends and neighbors. He hopes that they too can improve production methods, increasing their volumes and expanding product range to ensure more profitable and sustainable marketing arrangements.

When Lorenzo started with the program, he helped five neighboring growers. Once others saw the results those five achieved, they joined in the trainings. Now there are 32 neighboring growers implementing MCA-H/EDA systems and coordinating their production. Lorenzo also participates as an instructor in program field days, which attract more than 145 growers from nearby communities.

“I have been the base so that other growers believe in the technology. And you [MCA-H/EDA] have been my base,” he said. “To convince growers is difficult, there are a lot of details, but you have to follow the recommendations,” Lorenzo explained.

One of Lorenzo’s neighboring farmers, Camilo Domínguez, has followed his recommendations with impressive results. Before receiving technical assistance Domínguez grew corn and potatoes and worked as a laborer on other farms to supplement his income, which averaged \$54 a month. Now he grows broccoli, cabbage, celery, lettuce, potatoes, cauliflower and green beans, and his income has increased by 1,680 percent. As of December 2009, his sales reached \$21,612, generating a monthly net income of \$915 after production costs.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Gilberto Lorenzo hosts a training event on his farm. Neighboring growers attended the training, which covered potato planting systems.

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-Gilberto Lorenzo, El Pahislal, Intibucá