



SUCCESS STORY

Farmer's success inspires neighbors to improve production

Before starting with the USAID/Nepal Flood Recovery Program's (USAID-NFRP) Livelihood and Income Generation (LIG) effort, Asha Ram Chaudhary was just another subsistence farmer in Matiarwa, Kailali. After ten months with the program, Chaudhary has become a successful farmer and has risen to become the president of the 46-member Matiarwa farmer group. When he started working with the program, Chaudhary was skeptical.

"I did not trust the vegetables would grow," Chaudhary said.

Still, he dedicated 0.35 hectares to use as a demo plot for the first crop cycle of 2009. He diligently followed the advice of the program's field technician, Durga Kharga Thapa, who showed him how to grow cucumbers, gourds, long beans and pumpkins. He also received support in marketing and generated NRs 65,000 in the first crop cycle, much more than he made before.

USAID-NFRP is now helping Chaudhary with his second crop cycle under the program's package of new methods and is teaching him how to intercrop chilies with legumes and grow cabbages, tomatoes and cauliflower. Chaudhary has hired four employees to help with the expanded production.

In preparation for the next harvest, Chaudhary initiated a local wholesale marketing system. He established a network of contacts and has become well known in the area as an informed businessman. He recently turned down pre-harvest offers because with the program's market information he knew he could do better at the market.

With the second crop cycle coming to a close, Chaudhary expects to earn NRs 100,000. As his operation continues to expand, he is also looking to help the men and women farmers of his group become well known as suppliers of quality produce.

USAID-NFRP has been approached by farmers from neighboring villages that have seen the success on Chaudhary's farm. Many of these farmers are now attending the Matiarwa farmer group's meetings and field demonstrations to learn the program's sustainable approach to high-value horticulture.

USAID-NFRP works with flood-affected communities throughout the Terai region to increase farmer productivity and income, rehabilitate and develop small-scale community infrastructure, improve awareness of sanitation, nutrition, gender and protection issues, and strengthen local organizations by expanding participation among youths and vulnerable populations. The program is made possible by the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Asha Ram Chaudhary (above, left) inspects his chili plot with USAID-NFRP field technician Durga Kharga Thapa.

At left, Chaudhary tends to his tomato crop.

Photos by Fintrac Inc./Carla Fernandez de Castro

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— Asha Ram Chaudhary, farmer and President of the Farmers Group in Matiarwa