



SUCCESS STORY

REAL RESULTS FOR REAL PEOPLE: CANTARRANAS



Chayote Production Field Day

Cantarranas in San Juan de Flores, Francisco Morazán, has traditionally been a sugar cane production zone with a limited number of tomato growers. USAID started assisting growers in this zone in August 2003, providing technical assistance and training to 13 farmers. As a result of the successes with diversification from sugar cane, as of September 2006, the USAID-RED Project is assisting 131 farmers. With Project assistance, farmers have moved from sugar cane, a high volume, low value crop with a single buyer, to a range of high value crops for the local, processing and export buyers. These include plantain, tomatoes, peppers, sweet potato, sweet corn, onion and chayote.

TOMATO: In 2004, tomato production yields averaged 1,000 boxes per hectare (50 pounds per box). With the updated integrated production systems growers in this region now average 2,647 boxes per hectare with gross sales of \$12,986 and net profits of \$6,948. Significant improvements in quality, consistency, sales and profits have led to expanded market opportunities resulting in an increase in the production area from 164 hectares in 2004 to 370 hectares in 2006. Sales are made to buyers from El Salvador and through local market distribution channels.



Sweet Potato Production

SWEET PEPPER: In 2004, the initial project Nathaly sweet pepper growers obtained average yields of 1,000 bags per hectare (35 pounds per bag). With the improvements in the production technologies and experience, this has increased to an average of 5,000 bags in 2006 production cycles. Area under production has also increased from 4.4 hectares in 2005 to 8.4 hectares in 2006. The average cost of Nathaly sweet pepper production per hectare is \$11,013, with gross sales of \$21,647 and net profits of \$10,634. Sales are made to buyers from El Salvador.



Sweet Potato Harvesting

JALAPEÑO PEPPER: In 2005, jalapeño pepper was successfully introduced for the first time to Cantarranas. Production yield reached 180,000 pounds per hectare which is 50 per cent higher than the national average yield of 120,000 pounds per hectare. Area under contract production for local processors for 2006 is 11 hectares which is projected to result in farm sales of more than \$238 thousand.

SWEET POTATO: The sweet potato crop was introduced in 2005 as part of the crop rotation program with tomatoes and sweet peppers. Contract production is being carried out with local exporters shipping to Canada and Holland. Production area has increased from 5.5 hectares in 2005 to 7 hectares in 2006. Growers have achieved 43,000 pounds of export quality potatoes per hectare, 34 per cent above the national average of 32,000 pounds per hectare. Two producers from Cantarranas received USAID-RED recognition diplomas for the highest sweet potato production yields of all the national growers in the 2005/2006 program.

PLANTAIN: Cantarranas has been USAID-RED's pioneering and demonstration zone for high density and technified plantain production. Excellent fruit quality, consistent volumes and harvests and the location near to Tegucigalpa, have resulted in increased demands from local buyers. As a result, areas have



RED

Programa de Diversificación
Económica Rural (USAID-RED)



Plantain Field Day

increased from 25 hectares in 2004 (the starting year) to 219 hectares in 2006. Yields average 80,000 lb per hectare compared to traditional yields of 35,000 per hectare. Projected sales incomes for plantain are estimated to exceed \$129 thousand in 2006, and to go above \$750 thousand in 2007. The Cantarranas growers have opened up their farms to USAID-RED growers from other zones who have learned from their systems and experiences.

CHAYOTE: A new chayote variety and upgraded production systems have been adopted by Cantarranas growers. While still in the preliminary stages, a total of 1.5 hectares have been planted in 2006 which will result in projected sales of \$6.8 thousand during this year. Chayote is being sold to exporters to Canada and through local market distribution channels where it is quickly gaining ground over the traditional varieties.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: With technical assistance provided by USAID-RED, growers in Cantarranas have installed more than 200 hectares of drip irrigation systems in 2006. Increases in productivity achieved by the Cantarranas growers are directly related to the adoption of the GAP systems including land preparation, raised beds, hybrids seeds, nursery seedling production, crop rotation, fertilization programs, pest and disease management, insect traps, biological controls, live barriers, post harvest management, pruning and crop tutoring, among others.

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS: Cantarranas growers have made significant investments in capital infrastructure since 2004. They have purchased more than \$200,000 of drip irrigation systems, pest and disease control application equipment, nursery infrastructure, and farm equipment.

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION: In 2005, Cantarranas growers generated more than 260 permanent jobs and paid more than \$247,000 to their labor force. As of September 2006, 216 full time jobs have been filled and more than \$205,000 have been paid to rural workers.

GROWER SALES: Growers' total sales in 2005 reached \$1.3 millions for tomato, Nathaly sweet pepper and plantain; \$1.1 million of these sales were made to El Salvador. During the first 9 months of 2006, sales reached \$2.9 million for tomato, Nathaly pepper, plantain, jalapeño pepper, chayote, sweet potatoes and sweet corn. This total includes sales made to El Salvador of \$2.8 million and \$59 thousand of sweet potato that was exported to Canada and Holland (6.5 containers). Cantarranas growers' total sales including exports to Canada are expected to exceed \$3 million by the end of 2006.

LOCAL ECONOMY IMPACT: with USAID-RED assistance in the introduction on new crop, technology and diversified farm and market systems, the local economy has changed drastically over the last five years. The number of agricultural input stores has increased from 0 to 3, major El Salvador buyers from 3 to 7, general food stores from 3 to 8, clothing stores from 0 to 3, household and electrical items from 0 to 1 and restaurants from 4 to 20. The effects of Project assistance has not only been seen at the farm level, but the impact and benefits have also reached other sectors of the local economy.



Sampling Plantain for Export Specifications



Onion Seedling Production