



Monthly Update – April 2010

Rural Economic Diversification Program

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Rural Economic Diversification Program (USAID-RED), which started August 2005, is a five-year initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Its main objective is to increase incomes and employment opportunities in the rural communities of Honduras. USAID-RED focuses on increasing the competitiveness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), expanding their local sales, exports and investments and promoting an increase in the production and investments of value-added products.

USAID-RED will end activities in September 2010. The USAID-RED monthly update is available online at www.usaid-red.org. If you would like to receive this or other publications automatically by e-mail, you can subscribe directly on our Web site.

This monthly update was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The content is the sole responsibility of Fintrac and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of USAID or of the United States government.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

This month USAID-RED technicians carried out 861 technical assistance visits in zones around the country.

Plantings: 116 hectares were planted for crops such as watermelons (25.2), plantains (15.5), pear-tomatoes (19.5), sweet potatoes (4), sweet peppers (6.4), and corn (20.3).

Irrigation: 23 new hectares of drip irrigation were installed in Cortés (6.6), Copán (1), Lempira (1), Ocotepeque (.8), Santa Bárbara (4.2), Francisco Morazán (3.5), Yoro (2), and Colón (4).

Trainings: 44 training events took place. 256 men and 20 women were trained.

Investment: In April USAID-RED clients invested \$327,000 to install drip irrigation systems, build infrastructure for production, and purchase plantain seeds, fumigation equipment, agricultural machinery, and land.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs): USAID-RED continued promoting GAPs through technical assistance visits focusing on pests, disease and weed control, soil

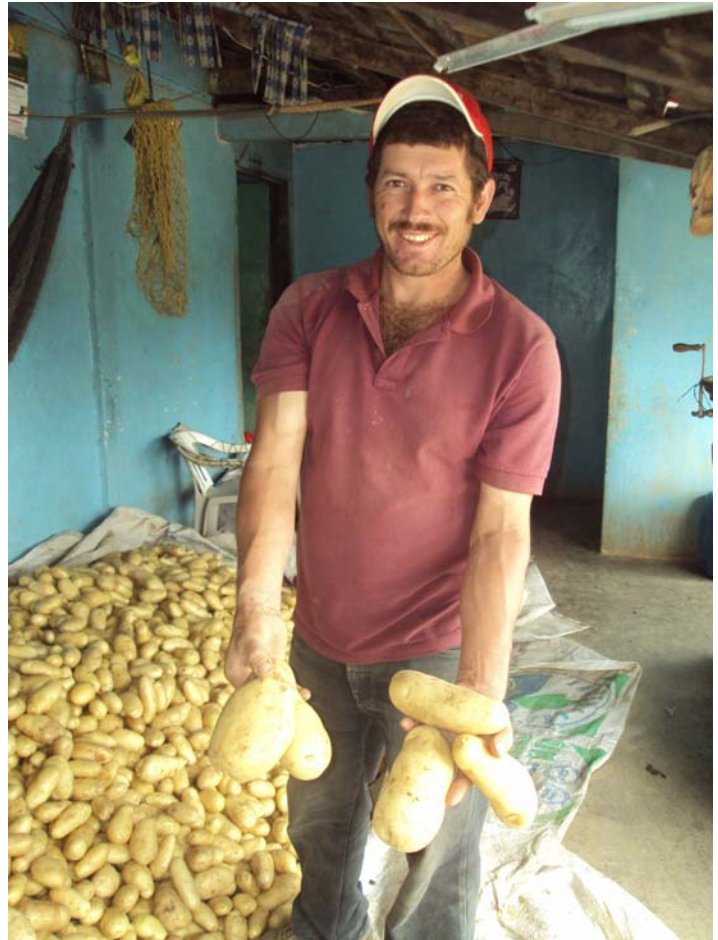


Photo by Fintrac Inc.

A farmer harvests potatoes in Copán.

Select Crop Sales for Assisted Producers April 2010

Product	Volume	Sales (US\$)
Melons	6,670 m ³	\$702,100
Tomatoes	3,425,600 lbs.	\$666,700
Plantains	1,242,600 lbs.	\$178,600
Jalapeño Peppers	898,000 lbs.	\$178,500
Sweet Peppers	558,600 lbs.	\$129,400
Onions	142,500 lbs.	\$48,000

preparation, and raised beds. The program also continued to help with installation and management of drip irrigation systems. The increase in precipitation at the end of the month led technicians to recommend potassium phosphonates and salicylic acid to increase plant defenses against rainy season diseases.

ADDED VALUE

Trainings: 108 people (64 men and 44 women) received training this month in good manufacturing practices (GMPs), postharvest handling and processing.

Investment: Clients invested \$62,000 this month in processing infrastructure, refrigeration equipment and a cooling tunnel.

Processed Products: USAID-RED continued to work on certification programs, especially provider control programs, traceability, pest control and chemicals. Pineapple vinegar tests were conducted with a processor of pepper sauce to help prepare the plant for a certification inspection in July. The program is helping another plant expand by installing equipment and define new process flows for paraffin-coated cassava and packing for fresh plantains. A fruit concentrate processing plant in San Pedro Sula also received program assistance to install bottling equipment.

Packing plants: Plantain peeling season started, and six 250,000-pound containers have been exported. Each container generates roughly 180 jobs, mostly for women, in Olanchito. USAID-RED offered trainings to improve the peeling process at plants and helped construct a new peeling plant in the zone of Sabá, Colón.

Supermarkets: The program trained personnel of a new supermarket chain in San Pedro Sula.

Others: USAID-RED met with agroexporters to discuss new bean, cassava, malanga and plantain processing operations in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.

PROGRAM ALLIANCES

213 trainings took place, with 2,300 participants (201 women and 2,099 men). Staff carried out 447 technical assistance visits in Intibucá, Lempira, Copán, Ocotepeque, Francisco Morazán, El Paraíso, La Paz, Cortés, and Choluteca. Symposiums on pests and diseases were held in Marcala, Valle de Angeles, Gracias, San Marcos de Ocotepeque and La Esperanza. Technicians from NGOs, agribusinesses and agriculture-related companies in the different zones attended.

FUNDER: 22 manzanas of donated drip irrigation systems were installed for 55 producers from the nine technical units in the alliance. Visits and trainings focused on installation, maintenance and operation of irrigation systems, fertigation, soil preparation, transplant, harvests, and adequate use of agrochemicals. 126 visits and 36 trainings took place. 200 men and 21 women participated.



Photos by Fintrac

A USAID-RED technician talks about plantain transplants in Cantarranas, Francisco Morazán.



Women peel plantains in Olanchito, Yoro.



Plantain growers listen during a USAID-attended training in Olanchito, Yoro.

WORLD VISION: 70 producers received donated drip irrigation systems on 14 manzanas in five of the alliance’s technical units. A field day in Consolaca, La Campa, Lempira on high-yield basic grains and tomatoes with row covers attracted technicians and producers from Copán, Ocotepeque, Intibucá and Lempira. A field day was also held at Concepción on basic grains. Exchange visits and formal trainings took place, focusing on installation and maintenance of drip irrigation systems, transplanting, use of row covers, tutoring, proper use of agrochemicals, and crop management. 174 visits and 75 trainings were carried out for 1,438 participants (1,315 men and 123 women).

OCDIH: 14 formal trainings and 28 technical assistance visits took place, covering installation and management of drip irrigation systems, and management of sweet corn, potatoes, watermelons, peppers, lettuce and tomatoes.

CARITAS: Donated drip irrigation systems were installed on 5 manzanas for 15 producers in three of the alliance’s technical units. New technical units in Orocuina, Santa María, Alubaren, and Texiguat were visited. Nursery assistance was also provided as well as testing on plastic and row covers and training on agrochemicals and tomato, cabbage, onion, corn and bean production. 22 visits and 15 trainings for 136 participants (126 men and 10 women) took place.

HERMANDAD DE HONDURAS: Visits and trainings took place for lettuce, cabbage, cucumbers, potatoes, beets and cassava. Trainings on installation and management of drip irrigation systems, management of family plots, correct use of agrochemicals and soil preparation also took place.

ODECO: Installed drip irrigation systems on 3.27 manzanas. 8 formal trainings (27 men and 19 women) and 17 visits were carried out on management of potatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, cabbage, corn and beans. Provided assistance with installation and management of drip irrigation systems, soil preparation and plantlet production.

FUNLESOL: Installed donated drip irrigation systems on 4 manzanas for 13 producers. 43 formal trainings and 30 visits were carried out for 158 people, focusing on installation, management of irrigation systems, soil preparation, management of tabasco peppers, onions and corn, and adequate use of agrochemicals.

CESAL: Installed 2 manzanas of donated drip irrigation systems for 12 producers. Visits and trainings covered installation, management and operation of drip irrigation systems, management of crops such as tabasco peppers, soil preparation, and pest and disease control.

PLAN DE HONDURAS: 4 visits and 8 trainings on corn management and installation and management of irrigation systems, and the use of traps and raised beds took place for 122 participants (106 men and 16 women).



Photos by Fintrac

Training is conducted with USAID-RED/Caritas clients.



Beans and corn are planted as intercrops on this World Vision farm in Gracias, Lempira.



Farmers install a drip irrigation system, in Lempira.

MARKETING

- In Olanchito two producers signed a contract to sell plantains to an exporter for a competitive fixed price set for the year.
- USAID-RED continued to provide technical assistance to microbusinesses and NGOs on information analysis.
- 5 trainings were carried out for NGOs and a plantain slices processor on business opportunities and customer service. This month 113 men and 21 women were trained.
- 31 links were established between processors, NGOs and supermarkets. The most notable were with a processor and supermarkets from the north coast, and plantain producers and processors and local markets. Links were also made for NGOs, local markets, jalapeño producers and a pepper processor in the central zone.
- The program worked with processors to create sales strategies, analyze new sales options and establish costs for new products.

AGROFORESTRY

- USAID-RED continued to assist clients in production and marketing of plantains, corn, cassava and tabasco peppers. The program is promoting calendarized plantings and coordinating with APRHOFI for marketing. Sales were \$14,770 this month for producers receiving assistance.
- 13 training events took place focusing on management of plots and drip irrigation; 64 people attended.
- 418 field visits took place to establish and manage different agroforestry systems and monitor harvests, postharvest handling, pests and diseases, and improve marketing.

GENERAL

- A USAID representative visited Olanchito, Yoro to see current, past and future clients. The representative visited a plantain processor that signed a contract with Chiquita.
- The program delivered 50 percent of the materials from the technology fund to NGOs, including equipment and accessories for drip irrigation for small and subsistence farmers (less than 4 tareas, or 0.25 manzana).
- A general meeting was held on April 16 to consolidate efforts and focus on the program's last semester.
- USAID-RED continued co-investing with project clients through commercial alliances established to purchase seeds, irrigation accessories and equipment for crop management. In April, USAID-RED invested more than L. 74,000, benefiting more than 12 clients directly, who have in turn invested more than L.194,000. NGOs in alliances with the program also benefited.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Farmers in Yamaranguila working with program partner World Vision are taught production methods for high density corn.



Farmers in La Entrada, Copán receive drip irrigation equipment from USAID and World Vision.



USAID personnel visit farmers in Olanchito, Yoro.



Beans are intercropped with avocado trees at a USAID-RED agroforestry client farm in La Esperanza, Intibucá.