



## BASIC CHANGES – RAPID RESULTS

### Producer breaks jalapeño production record with USAID-RED assistance

René Vidal is a producer from La Florida, a municipality in the department of Copán about 80 miles from San Pedro Sula. Before joining the USAID-funded Rural Economic Diversification (RED) program, Vidal planted tomatoes, peppers and tobacco using traditional practices but had little success in agriculture. In 2004, for example, his tomato and pepper harvests were so low he only broke even.

Vidal explained that destiny helped him decide to start planting jalapeños with USAID-RED. “Another producer abandoned the jalapeño program and I decided to take his place,” Vidal said. “Initially, I had not been on the list.”

Vidal heard about the project in 2005. For several months the zone’s technician tried to motivate him to incorporate more good agricultural practices and Vidal started to make progress.

Vidal decided to start planting jalapeños in October 2006. After following all the recommendations made by the USAID-RED technician, Vidal harvested 491,844 pounds of jalapeños on two hectares, which he sold at \$0.22 per pound. After subtracting production costs, his profit was \$63,406. Vidal became the region’s top producer of jalapeños by harvesting an average of 245,942 pounds per hectare.

There are several reasons for Vidal’s success:

- Vidal carefully followed the fertilization calendar proposed by the project.
- The crop was planted according to the instructions provided by the USAID-RED zone technician.
- The producer promptly made all the changes suggested by the zone technician throughout the cycle.
- There was a great deal of teamwork between the producer and the zone technician. The producer was always present during the technician’s visits, problems were detected in time, action was taken when necessary and a lot of preventative measures were carried out.

USAID-RED is a three-year program designed to significantly increase rural incomes and employment opportunities throughout Honduras. It is providing support to 742 lead clients and more than 10,000 beneficiaries. By July 2008, the program expects to generate \$30 million in new sales by lead clients alone.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Vidal, left, receives technical assistance in jalapeño production.



*Vidal explained that the project has been like attending school. “I didn’t know about weevils or mites. I didn’t know how to deal with pests, even though I started working in agriculture when I was a child. My recommendation to other producers is that they try to get involved with USAID-RED.”*

Left, a USAID-RED technician and Vidal revise his fertilization calendar.

Below, pests are identified in the field.

