



SUCCESS STORY BASIC CHANGES – QUICK RESULTS: EUREPGAP



Packing of European Cucumber

"We have to make changes to compete; if we want to stay in the market these changes are necessary. EurepGap certification is a hard process ... USAID-RED is a great help to achieve it."

Carlos Merlo, Manager
Agroduncris

While globalization and free trade have increased competitiveness, they have also resulted in expanded market opportunities. However, growers and exporters need to adapt to meet new and future market requirements. Production volumes and quality are no longer the only requirements – quality assurance, together with farm and product certifications, are also needed. Certification of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) under the Eurep protocol is one of the systems used to provide guaranteed control in production and packing activities.

Many of the USAID-RED grower/exporter clients are implementing EurepGAP, making major improvements in infrastructure, management controls and training. One example is Agroduncris, one of the major export companies based in La Paz and La Esperanza. Agroduncris targets the U.S. market's import window in winter with around 800 containers of cucumber, zucchini, watermelon and radicchio.

The implementation process started in 2004, but began in earnest in the last quarter of 2005 with the goal of achieving certification by February 2006. In 2005, more than 300 employees (permanent and temporary) have been trained in GAPs, hygiene and related topics. Most of the standard operating procedures have been established and put to work. This has already resulted in increased employee productivity and reduced operating costs. Agroduncris provides employment opportunities to more than 1,000 people, working directly in production and packing.

In order to comply with the market standards, investments in field and packing plant infrastructure — including construction of bathroom, warehouse, cleaning, and waste management facilities — have totaled \$97,000.

Other growers and export companies are following the Agroduncris' example. By providing technical assistance to implement quality control systems such as EurepGAP, the USAID-RED project is not only helping companies improve productivity and quality, but is also enhancing their capacity to stay in the market, compete and grow.



Cucumber Packing Facility



New Washing and Cooling Tanks



Hand Washing Facilities



New Conveyor Construction