

Centro de Desarrollo de Agronegocios



Summary of Activities

18 – July 2001

El Centro de Desarrollo de Agronegocios (CDA) is a USAID project that was initiated to help producers, processors, and exporters of non-traditional agricultural products. The primary goal of the project is to increase the production and sales of high value fruit and vegetable products to increase the revenues of this sector. The CDA activities began on the 14th of February, 2000. By the end of July, 2001, the project had 229 “leader partners” – companies, producers and groups dedicated to production, processing and export (in total there are more than 2,200 individual producers). An impact and improvement has been noted in the incomes of those clients as a result of better systems of production, increases in efficiency, reduction in costs of production and operation, and the appearance of new market channels and buyers.

Updates

- Jalapeño Chili – by the end of July, 3.99 million pounds have been sold with a total value of US\$677,535. Moreover, local sales have been made to Guatemala and El Salvador of 360,000 pounds with a value of \$41,128.
- Jalapeño Chili - 51 producers with 74 hectares have finished the harvests with a production average of 45,718 lbs / hectare and a range of harvest between 11,025 lbs / hectare, the lowest, to 102,515 lbs / hectare, the highest.



Jalapeño chili producer in Choluteca

- Jalapeño Chili – “winter” sowing was continued with 3 hectares for a total of 21 hectares now sowed.
- Yucca – 12 manzanas (1.73 acres) of cassava were sown in July (the total sown area is now 136 manzanas).
- The yucca harvest began in *La Entrada* with small volumes to begin paraffined yucca export and samples of frozen yucca and chips.



Day in the Field: yucca harvest

Market

- ◆ Hortifruti - Maxi Supermercados were contacted to coordinate the delivery of vegetables, this will commence in the first weeks of August.
- ◆ The first 211 boxes of wrapped yucca were harvested and exported to an importer in Miami, EUA who was pleased with the quality.
- ◆ Visit of a melon buyer to Choluteca to evaluate the possibilities of buying 200 thousand boxes of honeydew melon and 300 thousand of cantalope.

Market Information

- ◆ Steps were taken in the search for metal detectors to be used in processing lines for processed fruit.
- ◆ Contact was made with established connections in Fispal to obtain quotes for: a drier for fruits and vegetables, aseptic packaging and fillers, self-sealing plastic bottlers, basket washer and metal detector
- ◆ A Technical Bulletin of Processing was completed that will offer an example of the HACCP Plan.

Production

- ◆ The arrival of the new genetic cashew material from Brazil was organized and used in Choluteca in the the grafting of 308 cashew plants with the clone ccp 76.
- ◆ In Embrapa, Brazil, training was completed in the production and processing of cashews to five processors in the south.



Training of Honduran technicians in the grafting of cashew buds in Brazil

- ◆ The results of the training of processors who went to Brazil were evaluated, the training was considered a success
- ◆ Technical assistance services were continued in the production of jalapeño including virus control, disease control and fertilization programs.
- ◆ Technical assistance services in the production of cassava were continued including sowing systems, weed control, fertilization and irrigation.
- ◆ Visit of an expert cassava consultant from Costa Rica to revise production areas and to provide recommendations and training concerning the production, harvest, and handling of the yucca.



Training of cassava producers in the west.

- ◆ The Yucca harvest began in *La Entrada* with small volumes for fresh and frozen export.



Training of producers in the parafining of cassava for export

◆ In two vegetable farms in *La Esperanza* the sowing of king grass was begun to establish barriers against the wind.

◆ Five vegetable producers in *La Esperanza* received a complete demonstration of how one prepares and sows a seedbed in trays, preparation of the soil, fertilization, disinfection, sowing, covering, irrigation, etc.

◆ A visit of producers from Choluteca to various farms in *La Esperanza* was organized to observe the different operations involved in the sowing of vegetables placed at intervals. At each farm they explained the system of production where they could see that although the size of the operation varied from one to another, the system is the same.



Use of starter solution with producers of echeloned vegetables in San Marcos de Colon

◆ The services of technical assistance to the producers of vegetables and potatoes in *La Esperanza* were continued in areas including fertilization, improvement of nutrition and handling of water, installation of plastic tunnels and control of disease in vegetables.

◆ In Comayagua, technical assistance with producers of oriental vegetables was continued and included programs of fertilization, the rotation of crops, and the installation and handling of irrigation systems for dripping.

◆ In San Marcos de Colon, the nursery that was constructed with the help of the CDA is in operation.

◆ A day in the field in Las Mesas (South) with the new group of echeloned producers of that area. They were given a speech about the CDA, how we could help them, the requirements that we insist on to become partners, afterwards they were briefed about

the technical aspect and they were given a demonstration on the use of a marker, soils, use of starter solution, and yellow traps.

◆ A trip around *La Esperanza* was made with producers from Comayuga and students from Colegio Técnico Obdulio Lezama de La Cuesta to see the echeloned cultivation. The tour was considered very productive since only one of the producers expressed regret at the changes that this activity causes.

◆ A technician from the CDA made a visit to Salamá in Guatemala, where he was invited for a day in the field by the Empresa Seminis to see the different research jobs that they have at the greenhouse level as well as a selection in the field, crosses, retrocrosses, varieties, hybrids and lines, their characteristics and behavior of crops including tomatoes, chilis, watermelons, cucumbers, onions, sweet corn, etc.



Production of seeds for Seminis in Guatemala

Processing

◆ Various tests of frozen yucca were performed with different companies and they sent various samples to buyers in the US.

◆ Tests of processed yucca were made as chips and pre-cooked.

◆ A cost analysis of frozen yucca was performed. With the current prices of the international market the cost of the primary material must be no more than Lps 0.85/lb.



Processing of frozen cassava.

• In the west (San Marcos de Ocotepeque y La Unión Copan) processors were visited. Tests were made with new plastic containers that can substitute glass containers. The results using the new packaging are positive and the shelf life of these containers is currently being evaluated.



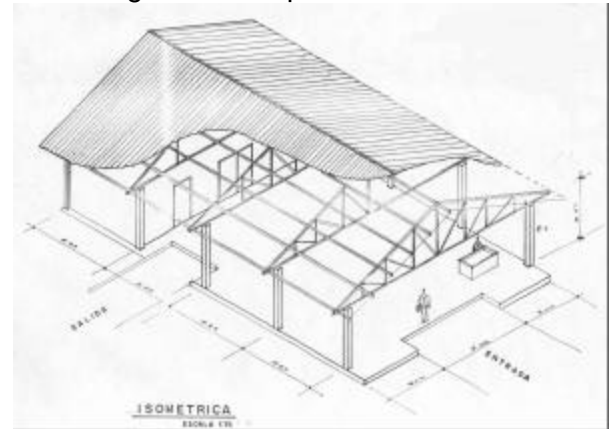
New containers of pickled vegetables

• A processor in San Marcos de Ocotepeque was visited and was amazed by the increase in size of the processing room.
 • The EAP Zamorano was visited and tests of frozen and dried mango were performed.
 • The format associated with the monitoring of critical control points were revised with a processor of puréd banana. A plan to recall the product is being worked on.
 • With a processor of plantaines, the analysis of risks has been completed for the HACCP plan.
 • The work order for the visit of short term consultant Tom Parks was finalized. He will work with the designs and operations of new

processing plants for frozen products and processed plantaines.

Postharvest

• The preparation for the design of two small packing houses was implemented.
 • The Design of the vegetable packing house in San Marcos de Colon was made. The design included plans and materials.



Design of Vegetable Packing House in San Marcos de Colón

Monitoring and Evaluation

• A trip to the west and south with the director of production for the buyer of jalapeño to revise plantings of chilli sown in winter and the plantings of the harvest. 21 producers were visited. A harvest estimation was made and corrections were made concerning the type of chilli that must be cut.
 • The final report of the results of the first phase (60 hectares) of jalapeño chilli was made.
 • Standards of monitoring and evaluation were prepared for the CDA's biannual report to AID.

General Activities

• Presentation for a group of donators concerning the results and impact of the CDA, in AID Tegucigalpa.
 • A presentation of the results of the jalapeño program with the jalapeño producers association in the south..
 • Meeting with AID about specialty coffees.
 • We participated in a visit to the coffee area of San Marcos de Ocotepeque with personel from AID. In this ara there exixts potential to

develop the exportation project of specialty coffees.



Visit to a coffee plant in La Labor, Ocotepeque

- Meeting with SAG (Tegucigalpa) to discuss how to obtain funds of Pronaders for the projects of packing lines, processors and irrigation systems.

- Meeting in Choluteca with the regional director and the Honduras director of Seminis (the largest seed producing company in the world). They were very interested to learn about the area of our vegetable producers, after meeting them and explaining the project, they showed great interest in helping our producers with seeds for experiments and tests with new materials.

- Meeting in Choluteca with Ken Schlater from the Cornell project – USDA that are drilling wells for small producers. In San Marcos de Colon the location where the storage center will be built was visited, both wells and producers from the area were also visited. Finally, the response was positive and we wait for the cooperation with the drilling of a well for CDA producers.

- Two producers and a technicians from the CDA attended the meloners conference in Guatemala from the 25 to 28 of July.

Selected Activities for August

- Tom Parks visits to work with the designs and operations of new processing plants for processed products and processed plantains.

- Preparation of pictures of packhouses of cucumber and watermelon.

- Expansion of harvest areas of yuca with we export of frozen and wrapped yuca.

- Training courses in the operation and maintenance of irrigation systems for dripping.

- Publication of various technical processing and production bulletins.

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