

Centro de Desarrollo de Agronegocios



Summary of Activities

19 – Agosto 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 235 “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 Chilli –by the end of August, 4.19 million pounds with a value of US\$ 712,341 have been sold. Local sales have also been made to Guatemala and El Salvador of 396,000 pounds with a value of US\$44,891.
- Jalapeño Chilli - 69 producers with 96.5 hectares have finished the harvests with a production average of 47,668 lbs / hectare and a range between 11,025 lbs / hectare to 102,515 lbs / hectare.



Packhouse for packed Yucca in La Entrada, Copan

- Winter Jalapeño Chilli – there are a total of 21 hectares already sown. The harvests have begun in La Entrada, Cucuyagua and

Choluteca with totals of 132,792 lbs as of the end of August.

- Jalapeño Chilli Sowings, 2001 – 2002, the sowings of 170 hectares for the next season were organized between the West, the South and Siguatepeque. It is hoped that the program is enlarged to include 80 new producers.
- Yuca –18 manzanas of yucca were sown in August (the total sown area is about 160 manzanas).



Frozen Yucca for Export

- The Yucca harvest was begun with 10 Mzs in La Entrada and will be used for local sales as well as fresh and frozen export.
- 150 boxes (3,000 lbs) of frozen yucca have been exported to Miami, 490 boxes (19,600

lbs) of fresh wrapped yucca have been exported to Miami, and 34,000 lbs of wrapped yucca were sent to the local market.

Market

- We worked on opening new markets for fresh and frozen yucca, contacting, asking questions, and sending samples to buyers and processors in San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, San Salvador, Miami, Houston, London and Rotterdam.

- The technology fund was used to send a sample with frozen yucca to the United States.



The operations with Hortifruti were begun, with samples of echeloned vegetables and yucca from CDA partners in La Esperanza and La Entrada

- Based on the high quality of the yucca and the demand of existing buyers, we now have insufficient product until the major harvests begin in November.

- After the negotiations with Hortifruti (supermarkets Pali and Maxi) the operations in Tegucigalpa began. The partners of the CDA in La Esperanza are now selling two shipments per week of 16,000 lbs with mixed vegetables, and plans to increase to three shipments per week in September. Hortifruti is also buying yucca from CDA partners and a program on echeloned watermelon will begin in September. In only the first three weeks the company has bought products from the CDA partners with a value of \$ 20,000.

- In Choluteca contacts were made with an intermediary in the market of Choluteca to negotiate the receipt of echeloned vegetables that do not qualify for supermarkets and with

the director of operations of the supermarket Mas x Menos that are interested in buying products of the producers in San Marcos de Colón.



In San Marcos de Colón the program of echeloned vegetables continues progressing with local sales in Choluteca and plans to begin business with Hortifruti

- A meeting with representatives of Chiquita with the object of implementing the export of cucurbitas to Europe.

Market Information

- Preparation of a weekly yucca bulletin was begun to pass along local price information, harvest volumes, imports and prices in Miami, together with the cost breakdowns to assure transparency in business.

- The yucca harvest projection was completed in Occidente and Lago de Yojoa and exportable offers were projected for fresh and frozen yucca for the next six months.

- Analysis with the processors was completed to define yucca prices for process based on the prices of the EUA market.

- Analysis of utility and box discharge of the yucca project were prepared. This will be used in the presentations to potential buyers and investors interested in the project.

- The analysis of the results of the jalapeño program was prepared to identify the producers who will stay in the program for 2001-2002.

- Six technical bulletins were prepared dealing with mango processing, cashew industrialization, an example of a HACCP plan, information required to label food export

products, available resources in the Internet for the food processors, and development of the cost structure for processed products.

Production

• Technical assistance was conducted with CDA partners in Choluteca and Valle and covered jalapeño chilli and rotation of crops, disease control, fertilization, application of molasses to control ground pH, virus control, and the management of irrigation systems for dripping.

• In Choluteca the cashew material brought from Brazil was used in July. After the grafting, it is estimated that of the 308 grafted plants only 8 were lost.



Eggplant in Comayagua

• Technical assistance given to CDA partners in Comayagua in tomato and cucumber production in areas including nursery management, use of molasses, control of bacteria, prevention of mildew attacks during the initial flowering period, and reduction in pesticide use, which was causing the death of flowers; in chinese okra with the application of foliators with microelements to reduce problems of fruit abortion before flowering and after recently flowered; in eggplant with changes in the beds to prevent diseases and modification in fertilization programs.

• In the Lago de Yojoa the quality of the yucca seed and the quantity of required buds was discussed; there was a demonstration to identify requirements for fertilization. It has been observed that the portions sown in beds are superior to the normal sowing.

• In Lago de Yojoa training was given on how to harvest pineapple so that it reproduces more quickly.



Practica de descogollar piña para aumentar la producción de hijos, llevado a cabo con productores de funder, Lago de Yojoa

• In San Marcos de Colón a well was drilled in the area of the storage center with the assistance of Cornell University / USDA . CDA is assisting with the design and construction of the packhouse.

• In San Marcos de Colón an irrigation system for dripping and a filter for gravel were installed. The system will work with water from an artificial lake that they have constructed. It is hoped that this system will serve as a model for other producers in the area.

• A demonstration of fluorescent light was performed for various vegetable producers from San Marcos de Colón; the importance of the use of this tool and of adherents was stressed. Since they had completed several demonstrations with exterminators from the area they were given use of ink and a lamp for one week.

• In San Rafael, Valle, various watermelon producers were assisted in sloping techniques with 25 Mz (17.5 Has) and they were shown how to apply fertilizer using an "injection" method, this saves the majority of the crops (they are under "stress" due to the drought).



Technical assistance is being given to producers of small and medium scale in the management of nurseries.



Technical assistance is continued for producers of yucca in Yojoa and el Occidente

• In La Entrada technical assistance was given to various producers of jalapeño chilli (summer) with demonstrations on how to prevent plagues and diseases and with examples of the controls necessary in the first harvest of crops with the summer sowing.

• There was an information session given to producers from La Azomada, Lempira. A demonstration of the sowing of this crop was given.

• In La Esperanza the sowing of carrots is beginning to expand and comply with the demands of Hortifruti.

• Technical assistance was given in La Esperanza in management of red onion seeds, problems in lettuce flowering, and management of temperature in the micro-tunels with lettuce (with this changes can be avoided during times of rain).

Commercial tests in La Esperanza of micro tunnels with strawberries, lettuce and carrots.



Processing

• The final format of the HACCP manuals was revised for a plantain processor.

• Yucca processing tests were coordinated with three various companies. These tests included processing for chips, frozen yucca, and pre-cooked yucca.



Processing of yucca for freezing

• Various problems in the processing of frozen yucca were solved.

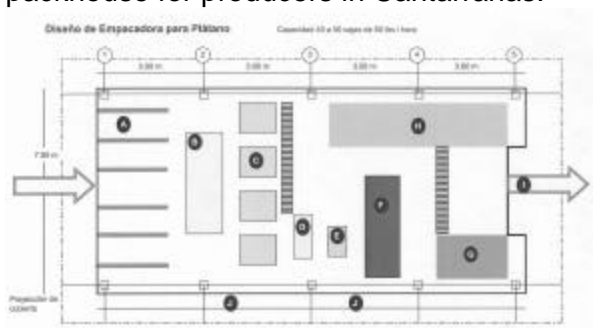
• A visit of a specialist in processed plants was organized to work with various companies. They gave directions on how to improve the system of plantain maturation and the use of refrigeration among others. They designed a new layout for an existing plant.

• The evaluation of the pureé packhouse was completed with a processor of puréed bananas (following the process recommended by the NFPA). It was found

that that the characteristics of the product packed with the new process are no different from the normal product.

Post-Harvest

- Improvements were made to the packhouse in La Entrada so that its productivity could be increased. The packhouse can now produce 200 boxes of wrapped yucca per day whereas initially it could only produce 100 boxes per day.
- Storage tests of yucca were conducted (with FHIA postharvest).
- Designs were made for a plantain packhouse for producers in Cantarranas.



Sketch of plantain packing plant.

- Three designs of cucumber packhouses capable of handling different capacities and volumes were prepared.
- Revision with FUNDER to construct the yucca packhouse for the producers in Lago de Yojoa.
- Revision of control formats designed for the implementation of the HACCP system in a plant packhouse for oriental vegetables.
- A test was completed with the forced maturation of jalapeño chilli using ethylene (with FHIA postharvest). It was demonstrated that that with fruit harvested with an advanced maturation grade it is possible to force and control maturation. With fruit of less maturity the treatment does not result in a uniform maturation. Chestnut Hill will conduct a processing test with red chilli which could be a new product for chilli normally rejected for over maturity.



A successful test was completed with the forced maturation of jalapeño chilli.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- An analysis was compiled and prepared of the cost dates of production of jalapeño for the producers of the second phase that are now finishing their production.
- A presentation was prepared of the results obtained to this date with the jalapeño chilli project, including a comparison with the results obtained in the first phase.
- The results obtained by the people that were chosen to continue the jalapeño project were calculated and the products and costs of this group were presented.

General Activities

- We participated in a meeting in Comayagua with the mango committee concerning the operations of the hot-water treatment plant.
- Meeting with representatives of GTZ and Swiss Contact to offer information about present necessities of the Honduran food processing sector.
- An international organization, Comité Internacional, was provided with the yucca manual, for the development of towns; they want to attempt sowing yucca in the area of Tocoa, Colon.
- A tour of various farms was given in La Esperanza to students of an agricultural school in Comayagua.



Tour of the farm of La Esperanza by students of Comayagua

- With producers of yucca from the lake and technicians from FUNDER a tour of La Esperanza was given to learn echeloning and agricultural training used in this area.
- We attended a day in the field observing cashews, this event was organized by DICTA and Ecoagro and they talked about the new techniques learned in Brazil and the spread of these new techniques. They also discussed the benefits of the small clone CCP 76 brought from Brazil and financed by the CDA.
- The association formed by the producers of jalapeño chilli in the South approved a

cuota of Lps 0.05 per pound sold to Chestnut Hill Farms to pay for the contract of a technician that will continue to help them in coordination with the CDA.

Select Activities for September

- Presentations to the producers of jalapeño chilli in Choluteca, Siguatepeque and Santa Rosa de Copan, including a revision of the results, volumes and profits from the first 120 hectares. We will coordinate the distribution of 170 hectares of jalapeño for the 2001–2002 season.
- Harvest of the sowing of winter jalapeño chilli (21 hectares).
- Increase in harvest volumes, sale and export of fresh, wrapped, and processed yucca.
- Increase in vegetable sales from La Esperanza and yucca sales from Occidente to Hortifrutí; we will also begin the sale of echeloned watermelons from Valle and Choluteca.
- Construction of the vegetable packhouse in San Marcos de Colón.
- Purchase of basic equipment for five agricultural schools.

For more information, please communicate with CDA offices in La Lima (tel: 668.2078, fax: 668.1190) or Sta Rosa de Copán (tel / fax: 662.2568). E-mail: cda@fintrac.com