

Fintrac CDA Technical Assistance Support Program

Rinagro

Processor/ Exporter of Purees



Company Background

When Fintrac/CDA staff first met with Rinagro's management in early February 2000, the company had serious financial problems. Raw material supply for banana during 1999 was extremely low, mainly because most banana plantations were seriously affected by Hurricane Mitch in late 1998. As a result of this situation, Rinagro was unable to fulfill contracts and lost important clients. Fintrac CDA staff met with the company's management and developed a workplan which aimed at recovering and establishing new clients, improving productivity and management information systems and implementing a HACCP and Good Manufacturing Program. This was designed to assure sustainability and promote long-term relationships with their existing and new clients. Rinagro's processing plant represented an advantage and an opportunity because of the highly sophisticated equipment capable of producing excellent quality juices and purees that can compete in the US and European markets.

Rinagro has increased sales from \$962,643 in 1999 to \$2.1 million in 2001. Sales volumes have increased by 155% from 2,172 MT to 5,539 MT in 2002. 2001 sales are Rinagro's record sales. Other new clients have been established with sales expected to increase by an additional 10% for 2002.

CDA Support Activities

CDA support started during February 2000 and has continued through 2002. During this period the project has assisted Rinagro in a wide variety of areas. The main areas of assistance have been in expanding the client base, new product development, equipment upgrading, trial shipments, web page design, visit to international fairs, full implementation of a HACCP and GMP program, design and implementation of a management information system, and increasing processing efficiencies and throughput by correcting and improving the process flow.

Results and Impact

- Creation of a HACCP team with clear objectives and targets and the implementation of HACCP and GMP programs.
- Continuous food safety audits by the company's HACCP team and Fintrac CDA have detected improvement opportunities. Actions taken by Rinagro's management have resulted in infrastructure and equipment investments of \$64,500. Examples are the installation of air curtains, expansion of the receiving area, construction of separate warehouses for chemical and non-chemical materials and anti dust roofing.
- Rinagro has obtained new clients in the US for 2002 with projected sales of 50 containers of banana puree. This client contacted Rinagro through a CDA-designed web page for the company.
- During the first months of 2002, two of Rinagro's clients (one from Germany, one from the US) have performed audits of the plant, and results of the audits have met with the clients' expectations.
- Costing/Management Information Systems in place to enable cost controls and expenditure reduction in major cost centers.