

Increasing Earnings of Small Rural Growers in Intibuca: CDA's Carrot Program

- In Intibuca, 20 growers have 11.2 hectares (16 Manzanas) of carrot production programmed for 2003 – 2 hectares (3 Mzs) have already been harvested and 3.5 hectares (5 Mzs) are in production. Projected 2003 grower carrot sales from this zone are \$100 thousand.
- Yields of harvested areas were 21,500 Kgs/hectare (33,000 lbs/Mzs) compared to the national average of 14,200 Kgs/hectare (22,000 lbs/Mzs).
- Per manzana gross sales income per for carrot are \$5,600 with production costs of \$2,000. This small carrot program will result in 2003 grower expenditures of \$32,000 on seed, inputs and labor, with projected net incomes of \$57,600.
- A total of 160 person days is required per crop cycle/Mz, equivalent to 10 permanent new jobs.

CDA provides technical assistance to the different players involved in the farm to market chain of cold climate vegetables. Opportunities for increased carrot sales were identified by the main vegetable distributors in La Esperanza. CDA carried out further analysis and found that carrots have one of the highest import volumes among the cold climate vegetables, with more than 2.7 million kilograms imported from neighboring countries in 2002.

Most of the micro and small growers in this region have experience in growing vegetables such as lettuce, broccoli, beet root, and cauliflower. Very few however were growing carrots. In late 2002, CDA began promoting the planting of carrots as part of its calendarized production programs, and at the same time assisted the distributors with the provision of new market contacts in Tegucigalpa. New and existing buyers were all willing to buy larger volumes of carrots as part of a programmed production program.

CDA's technical representative in Intibuca has been providing technical assistance in carrot production to participating lead clients through weekly visits. Assistance provided to growers covers all of the main aspects of the Project's "technical toolkit": land preparation, irrigation, sowing, calendarization of planting, crop rotation, pest and disease identification and control, fertilization programs, harvest systems, post harvest handling and marketing/sales.

After only nine months of implementation, results to date have been encouraging. One of the distributors working with 20 micro and small producers has increased its sales by 101%, from an average of 1,000 Kgs (2,317 Lbs) of carrots per month during 2002 to 2,113 Kgs (4,659 Lbs) per month during the first 8 months of 2003. Increased production allowed this distributor to increase carrot deliveries to existing buyers by 37%, and to start new business with a supermarket chain in Tegucigalpa. This distributor now sells \$800/month of carrots. Another medium sized distributor (who also sells to supermarkets and wholesalers in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa) has also benefited from the carrot production program, as CDA producers have harvested an additional 1,800 Kgs (4,000 Lbs) per month from what they were previously harvesting in 2002.

Growers in the program have now incorporated this crop into their regular calendarized planting for better crop rotation, and to reduce production and market risks associated with lack of product diversity.

Volumes will continue to increase in the upcoming months as all of the growers involved in the program have experienced increased sales and earnings with this crop, and neighboring farmers are starting to become interested in carrot production. The current program is supplying roughly 13 percent of previous 2002 import demand; by end-2004, the domestic carrot production program should supply 30% percent of previous import levels.



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