

Grower Successes

Traditionally, most small growers in Honduras use limited or very basic production technologies and there is a lack of coordination between growers and markets. This applies to higher-value vegetables and fruits, as well as to traditional crops such as corn and beans. As a result, growers lack competitiveness in terms of costs, volumes, quality and consistency of supply. The USAID-funded CDA project has focused on implementing marketing, production, postharvest and processing systems to reverse this situation. Production technologies that are standard in the large grower operations have now been introduced to smaller growers. The basics include drip irrigation, land preparation, crop rotation, integrated crop management, pest and disease monitoring and controls, and record keeping. With improved production systems, increased yields, reduced unit costs of production and year-round production, the growers achieve competitiveness. Subsequent support includes market orientation and linkages, allowing growers to access new markets both locally and for export, and to diversify their product range. Technical support provided by CDA covers the entire farm-to-market chain and incorporates areas of trade capacity building, competitiveness, access to finance and the environment – essentially to ensure that profitable and sustainable sales are made and trusting buyer/seller relationships are developed. Results have shown that the small and medium-sized growers can comply with contract production, meet volumes, quality, delivery and legal requirements, and be as competitive as the large growers. This has been shown with small grower contract production for jalapeño peppers, Tabasco peppers, onions, sweet peppers, potatoes, carrots, plantain, baby corn, yuca and other crops – for export, as well as to the local and processing markets. Grower sales have expanded, net incomes have increased and employment has been generated. This bulletin provides a summary of the results and impact for a few selected growers in the CDA program.

Tirso Alvarado

Tirso Alvarado is an oriental vegetable grower in Cacahuapa, Comayagua. Before starting with CDA, he used to produce corn and beans using traditional production practices. He now has a contract to produce Chinese eggplants for an exporter to the USA. With CDA technical assistance he has improved irrigation, fertilization and disease control practices. His annual sales from 2 hectares (5 acres) have increased from \$1,603 in 2000 to \$9,982 in 2002. Don Tirso is now diversifying and expanding his operations and has started sweet potato production under contract for export to Europe. His brothers and neighboring farms have also started using the same technologies, helping to further increase sales and earnings, and generating additional employment. Don Tirso has used his increased earnings to invest in expanding his farm operations.



Faustino Rodriguez

Faustino Rodriguez is a cold climate vegetable grower in La Esperanza, working with year-round production of broccoli and cauliflower. Before starting with CDA, he used to produce corn and potatoes. He now works in a coordinated grower group selling vegetables through a local distributor to supermarkets in the main cities of Honduras. With CDA technical assistance he has introduced drip irrigation, hybrid seeds and his own on-farm plantlet production. He now produces year-round. His annual sales from 1 hectare (2.5 acres) have increased from \$3,859 in 2001 to \$6,909 in 2002. Don Faustino's main source of labor has been his family members, but he now also contracts three persons to work on the farm. He has used his increased earnings to invest in expanding his farm operations.



Roberto Maldonado

Roberto Maldonado used to produce tobacco in Sula, Santa Barbara. Don Roberto now produces jalapeño pepper under contract with a local processor that exports to the USA for further processing into “jalapeño poppers”. With CDA production technology and the experience gained over four cycles of jalapeño production, he now averages yields of 85,000 lbs/hectare. In 2002, he had a gross income of \$30,500 with pepper and a net income of \$12,200 on 2 hectares (5 acres) of production. In 2000, his gross sales were only \$8,781. Permanent employment on his farm has increased from 4 to 9 persons, not counting temporary workers hired during jalapeño harvests. These laborers previously worked on coffee plantations before the sharp drop in coffee prices. He has used his increased earnings to invest in expanding his farm operations and to build a new house.



Isias Martinez

Isias Martinez from Lake Yojoa used grow sugar cane, corn and traditional yuca varieties before diversifying with CDA into the Valencia yuca variety production program. He used to plant once a year, but now has calendarized production and is selling to supermarkets on a year-round basis. He has also started to purchase from other growers and has recently started working with an exporter shipping yuca to Holland. With CDA technical assistance he has introduced drip irrigation, soil conservation practices and integrated pest management systems. Don Isias is now diversifying into sweet potato production for export and watermelon for the local market. His annual farm sales from 10.5 hectares (26 acres) have increased from \$16,026 in 2001 to \$18,939 in 2002, with net profits increasing from \$300/hectare with sugar cane to \$1,000/hectare with Valencia yuca. He has used his increased earnings to invest in expanding his irrigation systems and transport logistics.



Danilo Flores

Danilo Flores used to be a coffee grower in Siguatepeque with small areas also planted in corn and cabbage. He has now diversified his operations with CDA and grows Tabasco peppers, sweet peppers and jalapeño peppers using standard project technology. Both the Tabasco and jalapeño are semi-processed locally for export to companies in the USA. Danilo now employs more than 15 persons permanently for production activities and pepper harvesting, most of whom are ex-employees of coffee farms. The production systems he is using with peppers have ensured competitive ness and profitability. With CDA technical assistance he has introduced drip irrigation, integrated pest management systems, and good agricultural practices. His annual sales have increased from \$1,290 in 2001 to \$16,477 in 2002. In 2002, his net earnings from the peppers were \$8,000. In 2001, he lost \$3,000 on his coffee operations. He has used his increased earnings to invest in expanding his farm operations.

