

Solo papaya production and exports are one of Fintrac CDA's main new activities for 2002. With the fruit now being admissible into the US, a full commercial production program is on track. In March 2002 the first planting of 7 hectares was made, which was increased to 20 hectares by the end of May. Plans have been made to expand to 30 hectares in this first phase, which involves three growers in the Comayagua valley. The Ministry of Agriculture is participating in these activities with the placement and monitoring of fruit fly traps (part of the US export protocol requirements). At the same time, Fintrac CDA in association with one of the growers and CEDA, Comayagua (Ministry of Agriculture) have begun harvesting solo papaya from a trial lot which was set up in 2001 with Fintrac CDA assistance. This is being done to develop local marketing channels and processed products before the main commercial production comes on stream. Sales have been made throughout May 2002 to a supermarket in San Pedro Sula where the fruit has received excellent reports for quality, appearance and a flavor – all of which are far superior to the traditional local papaya varieties. In addition, trials have already begun on developing processed papaya products in the frozen, dehydrated and single strength juice presentations. Sales are already being made to a local juice manufacturer who sells retail in several industrial parks. The first harvests from the commercial production will be made December 2002, with exports to the USA commencing in March 2003. Plans are in place to expand the area to 100 hectares. Sales revenue from this area is expected to be above \$1.5 million and provide permanent employment to more than 100 persons.



Technical assistance in planting



Recently transplanted papaya



Production in CEDA, Comayagua



Washing and grading activities



Graded and packed for local supermarket sales



Processing trials for frozen papaya