

Fintrac CDA NON-TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE Utilizing Technology



CDA TARGETS

For 2002, the overall targets are US\$10 million in increased exports and doubling incomes of 2,000+ farmers and 1,000+ microenterprises. This is being achieved in a variety of ways including the introduction of new markets and new products, increasing sales, reducing costs, introducing new varieties, implementing new and improved technologies, and reducing losses. The use and introduction of low cost and relatively sophisticated technologies is an important part of these activities to improve product competitiveness.

IN-FIELD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Fintrac CDA field technicians utilize basic equipment to assist growers in improving production systems and problem solving. These include sap testers for determining plant nitrogen and potassium levels, pH meters and ultraviolet lamps for improving pesticide applications, soil samplers, magnifying glasses to aid pest and disease identification and chlorine meters for revision of irrigation and wash tank operations. In addition, each technician can immediately provide growers, exporters and processors with Fintrac CDA technical publications, planting schedules or fertilizer programs. They are equipped with a portable lap top computer and printer together with updated compact disks of all Fintrac CDA technical materials.

HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Fintrac CDA "high technology" covers a wide range of activities. Growers have been introduced and are using tensiometers for measuring soil moisture content to assist with irrigation management. Biological controls have been introduced on commercial scales, including *Telenomus* liberations. Global Positioning Systems are being used to map farms for area, topography and irrigation systems. Fintrac CDA developed computerized tools are used for fertilization programs and cost of production estimations and calculations. The Project has also assisted in upgrading processing facilities in El Zamorano and in the installation of two new fully equipped coffee cupping laboratories for small growers.

LOW TECHNOLOGY

Fintrac CDA "low technologies" are usually low cost, save money and can be used with immediate benefits. Most have been designed by Fintrac technicians. More than 50 clients have made fertilization tanks for application of liquid fertilizers, cebo and starter solutions (cost \$5). Low cost drip irrigation filters have been built and installed by 100 growers throughout the country – they cost \$300 as opposed to \$1,000 for commercial types. More than 500 hectares of low cost drip irrigation have been installed by Fintrac CDA producers using re-cycled materials.