



fintrac

*Agricultural solutions to end hunger and poverty*

## Production Practices and Technologies: Improving How Farmers Grow Food

Fintrac teaches farmers to produce crops smarter and better by implementing good agricultural practices (GAPs) and technologies that enhance productivity, providing immediate returns to household income and food security.

Fintrac's agronomic staff, well-versed in our proven methodologies, provide practical technical assistance to smallholder groups, working beside our clients and partners in the field. They train local service providers to deliver similar assistance through specialty "boot camps," technical apprenticeships, and cooperative alliances.

We promote crop diversification, always mindful to strike a balance between nutritious home consumption and income generation. Many of our client-beneficiaries are able to grow food and cash crops on less than 1,000 square meters of land, and we encourage even the smallest producers to treat their farms as businesses.

For Fintrac, increased client profitability is a primary internal measurement of success. Farmers adopting our integrated crop management approach typically double, triple, and quadruple their yields. Fintrac averages a 12 to 1 return on donor investment, achieving smallholder sales and incomes that eclipse normal expectations.

### **Transferring Good Agricultural Practices**

Fintrac's recommended GAPs – low-cost and relatively simple to implement – have a direct impact on productivity. Our GAPs are also environmentally friendly and may improve food safety, which is why buyers increasingly demand their use among farmers who participate in commercial supply programs.

Fintrac helps farmers use raised beds to minimize crop damage from rain and flooding and facilitate harvesting; natural mulches to preserve moisture, aerate the soil, and develop nutrients; and intercropping and rotation to replenish soil and break pest cycles. Other GAPs include minimum tillage, fertilization, improved seed and planting materials, recordkeeping, crop diversification, plant density, biological controls, and introduction of other integrated pest management (IPM) techniques.



*In Kenya*, Fintrac formed partnerships with NGOs and dozens of private companies – including seed suppliers, irrigation companies, exporters, supermarkets, and processors – to transfer GAPs to 58,000 farmers, more than doubling their yields of target crops.

*In Ethiopia*, Fintrac facilitated a public-private partnership for breeding disease-resistant haricot beans. The beans enabled farmers in Oromiya to increase their yields by more than 120 percent while receiving price premiums for the improved variety.

### **Adapting and Introducing Innovative Technologies**

Fintrac modifies and develops technologies to meet specific farmer needs. Some of these technologies, such as drip irrigation systems and greenhouses, have traditionally been beyond the reach of smaller farmers because of the required investment – so we make adjustments that provide similar results at much lower costs. The combination of appropriate technologies with GAPs helps to conserve resources and supports good crop health, disease resistance, and increased crop density while boosting yields and quality.

*In Honduras*, when the high upfront cost of commercial filters prevented small farmers from investing in drip irrigation systems, Fintrac worked with local metal workers to design low-cost alternatives using oil drums and gas canisters. The locally produced filters cost 60 to 80 percent less than imported filters and have become a mini-industry themselves. In fact, Fintrac has adapted the technology elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean.

*In El Salvador*, Fintrac designed low-cost greenhouses for small farms located on steep hills with poor soils and limited water availability. We then adapted the design as part of a hurricane recovery program in *Jamaica* that substantially reduced farmers' vulnerability to subsequent floods.

*In Kenya*, we are introducing greenhouse technologies to youth associations to build skills, generate employment, and create new livelihoods.



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