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High-Value Crops Create New Income Streams

With project support, small producer diversifies plantings and takes future into his own hands.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Ovidio Escalón stands proudly in his highly-productive farm. By introducing good agricultural practices and new crops, he is seeing income increases he never dreamed possible.

“Not even in my wildest dreams did I think of planting carrots, let alone selling them.”

– Ovidio Escalón
Smallholder farmer

Telling Our Story
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Surrounded by mountains in the remote village of El Prado, San Marcos de Ocotepeque, Ovidio Escalón toiled to eke out a living on with his small plot of corn and beans. Escalón, a father of 11 and a part-time musician, had resigned himself to subsistence farming until USAID-ACCESO opened his eyes to his farming potential.

Escalón began working with the project in early 2012. Despite a lack of experience and limited resources, Escalón has proven to be one of the most productive farmers in the area. Project technicians site his leadership and dedication as two major contributors to his early success.

Over the past six months, Escalón participated in a number of trainings on topics including raised bed preparation, drip irrigation, and proper fertilizer use. With support from project technicians, he planted carrots (a new, high-value crop for his farm) on 1 tarea of previously-uncultivated hectares (1/23 of a hectare). He invested L. 600 (\$31) for this expansion.

By employing the good agricultural practices he learned, Escalón yielded 1,200 kilograms of carrots after his first harvest. The calendarized planting approach he learned from USAID-ACCESO will help ensure his farm is productive year round.

“Not even in my wildest dreams had I thought of planting carrots, let alone selling them,” he said.

With help from the project’s marketing specialist, Escalón sold his carrots to a national supermarket distributor for a total of L. 7,000 (\$360), all of which is new income. He plans to use his expanded income to invest in future plantings, including purchasing quality fertilizer and other inputs.

The Escalón family is extremely grateful and pleased with the project’s ongoing support. They plan to follow all of the project technicians’ recommendations to further improve their quality of life.

USAID-ACCESO’s integrated approach addresses income, nutrition, and food security, helping rural families make comprehensive and sustainable changes and improvements to lift themselves out of poverty and malnutrition.

The project is working with other producers in the area of San Marcos de Ocotepeque to increase the volume of high-quality products and stimulate economic activity in their communities.