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Access to Export Market Doubles Allspice Earnings

Technical assistance and market linkages help allspice cooperative export six containers to the US.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Members of the allspice cooperative received training and technical assistance in production and marketing from USAID-ACCESO specialists. Thanks to improved production and a direct link to a lucrative export market, the 150 producers are earning double what they did before project intervention.

A group of 150 allspice producers is seeing dramatic increases in sales and incomes after their first shipments of allspice to the United States. The *Cooperativa Agrícola de Pimienta Gorda Llama Ltda. (COAPIGOR)*, based in Llama, Santa Bárbara, has exported six containers of high-quality allspice resulting in nearly \$200,000 in sales.

The cooperative, founded in April 2011, began working with USAID-ACCESO in June 2011. Project marketing specialists introduced the group to a US-based buyer and helped the producers begin negotiations last December.

Throughout the commercialization process, project specialists provided trainings in sampling and quality control for export products; contract compliance and negotiation; and packaging and shipping regulations. USAID-ACCESO mentored the producers through the first two shipments but, thanks to the trainings, the cooperative was able to handle the majority of the shipment process for the last three containers themselves.

COAPIGOR previously sold their entire harvest to local buyers or sent it, via middlemen, to Guatemala or El Salvador. Now they are exporting 70 percent of their total production directly to a US buyer, and are earning double the amount they previously earned from local markets. The local market rate ranged from \$104 to \$198 per 200 pound sack; export sales prices, at \$277 per sack, are 40 to 67 percent higher. Net income for the six containers totaled more than \$55,000.

USAID-ACCESO also trained the producers in good agricultural practices such as irrigation, fertilization, and pest control, and introduced them to technology that increased threshing and cleaning efficiency and cut costs. Thanks to these improved practices, COAPIGOR's production capacity has improved by 33 percent.

The producers are gaining national recognition: the Honduran government recently identified the cooperative as an official exporter of allspice, opening new avenues for additional contracts with commercial buyers around the globe.

Motivated by their success to date, the producers have big plans for the future. The cooperative hopes to export five more containers of allspice to high-paying markets this year, for an estimated additional \$166,000 in new sales and more than \$44,000 in net income. They plan on exporting at least 20 containers in 2013 and are working with USAID-ACCESO to develop a business plan and marketing strategy for allspice tea, a new product for Honduras.

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