



## SNAPSHOT

# Meeting Market Demand Through Calendarization

**USAID-ACCESO introduces calendarized planting programs in rural areas to generate income and market participation year round.**



*Photo by Fintrac Inc.*

Ruben Rodriguez shows off his healthy cucumber plants. By diversifying to this high-value crop, he is earning nearly 40 times what he did from traditional crops such as bean and maize.

**“I plant every month and now understand the market.”**

*Ruben Rodriguez, smallholder farmer*

Many rural Honduran farmers struggle to provide for their families through small plots of bean and maize. Because of low yields and market saturation, these farmers have a difficult time earning more than subsistence wages. Those farmers that do venture into high-value crops still lack business plans or relationships with buyers and typically end up selling their harvests to middlemen at unfairly low prices.

To promote market-driven production, USAID-ACCESO specialists are introducing calendarized planting programs to better meet demand year round. Working with small groups of farmers, production specialists introduce new high-value crops and devise planting schedules in which each farmer plants and harvests the crop at a different time, ensuring a constant supply to the market.

In September 2011, project specialists introduced improved agricultural practices and calendarized plantings to Ruben Rodriguez, a small-scale bean and maize farmer from La Guama, Santa Bárbara. Spurred by project support, Rodriguez planted 0.22 hectares of cucumber, which yielded 662 quintals that earned him approximately \$2,000 in sales. Compared to the \$52 he made from selling 40 quintals of beans, this is a nearly 4,000 percent increase in income.

“I am extremely grateful to USAID-ACCESO, they gave us the techniques we needed,” he said. Rodriguez now harvests cucumber four times a year and plants corn in the interim, ensuring a steady income, healthier plot, and improved food security all year.

With his additional income, Rodriguez is expanding his farm holdings, planting new crops such as green beans and peppers and purchasing livestock. After seeing their father’s success, two of Rodriguez’s older sons began implementing ACCESO-promoted practices on their coffee and cucumber plots.

Rodriguez and five other producers are the only producers in the area that provide a steady flow of cucumbers to the market. “I plant every month and now understand the market,” he said.

USAID-ACCESO helps implement good agricultural practices and organized planting programs to increase smallholder farmers’ opportunities for sustainable income generation, and helps them formalize their production strategies to establish concrete relationships with local, regional, and international buyers.

The project is assisting 32,800 household clients in production and postharvest practices, introducing high-value crops and market linkages, which has helped more than 96,400 people in some of Honduras’ most vulnerable communities to improve food security and their overall quality of life.