



## SNAPSHOT

### Potato Association Sells to Leading Supermarket

**USAID-ACCESO provides technical assistance to groups of farmers to increase income and market shares.**



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Pánfilo Meza, leader of the El Rodeo potato association, prepares to wash his harvested potatoes for sale to a national supermarket chain.

**“We used to work the traditional way, now our harvest is different: the potatoes are bigger and better quality.”**

*Pánfilo Meza, Potato Producer*

In the department of Intibucá, Honduras, potato production is one of the main sources of income for many families, but most are not producing up to their potential. USAID-ACCESO is working with potato farmers to enhance production through continuous on-farm training and technical assistance.

Working with small groups of farmers, project technicians introduce activities such as soil preparation, raised beds, drip irrigation systems, and calendarized planting programs in which each farmer plants and harvests 0.35 hectares every week to ensure a constant supply for the market.

Postharvest specialists also teach farmers best practices for efficient product handling, classification, washing, and packing to ensure the harvested crop meets quality standards for formal markets.

Since 2011, USAID-ACCESO has supported a potato production association in the community of El Rodeo (*Asociativa de Campesinos de Producción El Rodeo*). This group has 25 members and is led by Panfilo Meza.

Before working with the project, the farmers planted their potatoes using traditional methods that did not take into account plant spacing or proper fertilizer application, but since incorporating the good agricultural practices they learned from USAID-ACCESO, they have increased their average yields by 230 percent.

“With the technical assistance from USAID-ACCESO, our [harvest] is different: the potatoes are bigger and better quality. We know can sell to supermarkets and earn more money,” Meza said.

Access to markets is a huge obstacle for smallholder farmers; most of them sell to middlemen at consistently low prices. Before forming the association, the producers sold to individual brokers at around \$0.43 per kilogram; they are earning more than double at \$0.97 per kilogram by selling to national supermarket chains, including Hortifruti y La Colonia.

With the additional income, Meza said that farmers can now pay for their children’s education, transportation, and health care. They are also exploring opportunities to invest in new crops to diversify their production.

USAID-ACCESO supports farmers through technical assistance, specifically in the implementation of good agricultural practices and calendarized planting programs to help them establish concrete relationships with local, regional, and international buyers, ensuring a reliable source of income.