



## SNAPSHOT

# Drip Irrigation Transforms Coffee Production

**USAID-ACCESO provides technical assistance in the implementation of good practices for planting and harvesting coffee.**



*Photo by Fintrac Inc.*

German Rivera installed a drip irrigation system on his small coffee plot in Jilote, Santa Barbara. Thanks to this and other good agricultural practices, Rivera is earning the same amount of revenue as producers with plots 10 times bigger.

**“What I obtained before was very little and I invested always more; the technician showed me that first I had to plant in beds and install an irrigation system.”**

*German Rivera, Coffee Producer*

Coffee is one of Honduras' most important economic and social agricultural crops, accounting for more than 20 percent of jobs in rural areas, both through direct cultivation and indirect employment from processing and transportation. But the industry has faced many difficulties because of plantation mismanagement and an outbreak of the coffee leaf rust disease.

USAID-ACCESO production specialists are providing technical assistance to coffee farmers, particularly with use of basic production practices to increase yields and revenue. Some growers have now taken this further and have installed drip irrigation technology. Constant access to water allows continuous production, not only for coffee crops, but also for new high-value crops such as tomatoes.

For German Rivera, the installation of a drip irrigation system has drastically improved his coffee production. Drip irrigation saves water by controlling the amount of water applied directly to the plants, and uses only that needed by the plants. Rivera also received technical assistance and training from production specialists who taught him to plant his coffee at the right density and in raised beds to maximize the benefits of the irrigation and fertigation systems.

Before project intervention, Rivera only harvested tomato on 0.13 hectares of land and earned less than \$600. “I harvested very little before and I always invested more [with no results], but the technician showed me that first I had to plant in beds,” he said.

With support from USAID-ACCESO and the new drip irrigation and fertilization system, Rivera yielded 17 quintals worth \$1,200 from his small two-year old coffee plot – the same amount other farmer's yield from plots nearly 10 times in size.

Next year looks to be even more productive: “I will yield at least 22 quintals from the 0.13 hectares, which will help me develop the property and expand into new crops,” he said.

With the implementation of good agricultural practices such as fertilization, soil preparation, raised beds, and drip irrigation, farmers and their families earn more money and can access healthier food. Rivera can also prevent and overcome problems caused by pests, diseases, and even climate change, which have affected coffee growers across the region.

USAID-ACCESO specialists continue to work with small-scale coffee producers in rural communities, promoting basic coffee and cultural practices that prevent disease and ensure food security for more than 30,000 households in western Honduras.