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SNAPSHOT

High-Value Passion Fruit Pulp Opening New Markets

Postharvest processing techniques and new high-value crops are helping increase rural incomes by up to 400 percent.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Osman Madrid, a passion fruit producer from Suyapa, Santa Bárbara, is earning more than four times his previous income from maize and beans.

“Learning how to plant a new kind of crop has changed my life; now I know I can get more from a small area; it only takes dedication and time.”

Osman Madrid

Traditional Honduran staple crops of beans and maize rarely earn enough to provide a rural family with their annual food needs, let alone saving and investment opportunities. Low yields, variable quality, and low market value keep most farm families at subsistence levels.

USAID-ACCESO production specialists work with small-scale farmers to improve production on these traditional crops while also introducing new high-value crops such as passion fruit through calendarized, market-driven planting programs.

In Suyapa, Santa Bárbara, the project is working with 13 small-scale producers, providing technical assistance in production and processing, as well as helping them install a 9-hectare drip irrigation system.

Osman Madrid is one of this new crop of passion fruit farmers. Madrid was previously earning around \$300 a year from his small plots of beans and maize. This year, he set aside 0.20 hectares of his farm for passion fruit and implemented good agricultural practices he learned from project technicians, such as proper land preparation, raised beds, seed selection, plant spacing, fertilizer application, trellising, and pruning.

Processing and postharvest technicians taught Madrid and other producers how to properly extract and freeze the fruit’s pulp, which can be sold at higher prices than raw fruits for use in juices and other processed products. Madrid harvested 6,000 kilograms over a 15 week period. With proper postharvest handling and processing techniques, he processed 2,950 kilograms of pulp from his first harvest, which he sold for just over \$3,000. He also sold fresh fruit for another \$215 in sales, earning a total net profit of more than \$1500. .

“I never thought I could get help from an agronomist. Learning how to plant a new kind of crop has changed my life; now I know I can get more income from a smaller area,” said Madrid.

He plans to double his passion fruit production area with earnings from his next harvest.

In the six departments where USAID-ACCESO is working, 914 growers have planted a total of 146 hectares of passion fruit for sales of fresh fruit to the local markets, frozen pulp to both local processors for export to El Salvador and the UK. To date, growers have harvested 1.86 million kilograms of fruit with a sales income of \$440,000. The average plot size is 0.14 hectares with yields and net incomes averaging 15,350 kilograms and \$2,130 per hectare, respectively.