



**EXPORT CERTIFICATION EFFORTS
HONDURAS**

Assignment Number: ST-201

PREPARED BY:

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THROUGH

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Project No. 596-0165

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF:

**United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Guatemala City, Guatemala**

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PROEXAG II

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April 29, 1994

TRIP REPORT

William H. Barbee
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DATES AND DESTINATIONS:

Choluteca, Honduras March 23-26, 1994

PURPOSE OF TRIP:

Review the start up of the melon certification program and work with FPX to get more companies to join the program.

CONTACTS:

Omar Ponce-FPX Regional Manager
Carlos Funez-FPX Melon Program Coordinator
Roberto Saldivar-FPX Melon Certification Inspector
Gunter Stache-Owner of CUVESUR
Vernon Perez-Manager of CUVESUR
Miguel Molina-Owner of Montilibano melon company
Rolando Prieto-Manager of ESCOSUR
Andres Lardasaval-Manager of SURAGROH
Alfredo Montalban-Packing Plant Manager SURAGROH
Arnon Faroud-Field Manager HONDEX
Rif Nire-General Manager HONDEX
Augustin Ortez-Regional Sanidad Vegetal Official responsible for
melon certification

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

During this trip I was able to visit with all major players in this melon season, to see their packing plants and to discuss melon certification and benefits to them. The pilot melon certification program began March 21, 1994. I met with the managers of CUVESUR, Miguel Molina, ESCOSUR, SURAGROH AND HONDEX. The three plants of CUVESUR are screened in. Only the Los Colorado plant is still packing and is in the program. Miguel Molina will have two plants in the program Santa Rosa and Embarcadero. It

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was obvious that Miguel had had insect problems at the Embarcadero plant during the first pack as they had quickly screened in the plant for the second harvest. They were already finding very positive results from the screening. Management was very pleased. Miguel has now decided to completely rebuild this packing plant for next season to up grade his production and sanitary situation.

On Wednesday March 23, we visited the Los Colorado plant of CUVESUR. It is a nice small well closed in plant with conveyors and cold room. They used 70% shade screen. Apparently it gets warm inside. They are looking at more ventilators. We also visited the Las Basas plant of CUVESUR. It too is a nice small plant, not as sophisticated as the Los Colorado plant. It is about 80 % complete with screening.

On Thursday morning March 24 we went with Rolando Prieto to see the ESCOSUR plant. He used his available investment funds this year to build over 24 km of irrigation canals. Next year he plans to screen in his plant and build cold rooms. He agreed to join the melon certification program now without screening in the plant to see how the inspectors work. He has had serious problems with white fly and aphids this season. Average yield will be about 493 boxes/mz of cantaloupe.

We then went on to see Andres Lardasaval at his office in Choluteca. They will ship about 850,000 boxes this season, once again down from their projections. Headquarters frowned on investment in screens. He likes the idea of the program and would like to be in the pilot program even though plant isn't screened. He thinks that he can convince home office to screen plant in since this may help to get some sort of APHIS preclearance program.

Later we visited Alfredo Montalban at the Lavaderos plant. He is very interested in screening in the plant and working with the program.

We went by the HONDEX Los Llantos plant. They have installed a large hydrocooler with their own generator for electricity. Still looks like plant is in disorder. Fields look good, drip irrigation with one field with plastic.

The HONDEX El Mango plant hasn't changed at all. Still very rudimentary. Only packing tables with no conveyors. No cold rooms or hydrocooler.

In the afternoon we visited Gunter Stache. He is very enthusiastic about the certification program. He said that last year he needed 43 workers in Los Colorados to pack 3,000 boxes. This season with the plant screened he is using 35 workers for 6,000 boxes. He has better order, productivity, cleaner plant with no insects.

On Friday morning we visited Miguel Molina at his Embarcadero plant. He has hired a new quality control person Jorge Vallardo who use to be with, I believe, Chiquita. Miguel is trying to improve his quality. It took them only one week to enclose the plant. Management claims its a big improvement. We went on to the Santa Rosa Plant of Miguel Molina. It looks very good. Screening is complete. He has two hydrocoolers installed for two separate lines. Should get some good productivity out of the plant.

In the afternoon we visited Arnon Faroud of HONDEX to try to convince him to consider the program. Later his boss Rif Nire appeared. He is not interested in the program. He is concerned that inspectors at his plants could be potential spies and would learn about what they are packing. It is impossible to tell him anything different. This year they expect about 1,600 container loads. They have had some bad experiences in the past in Honduras working with groups or associations where they were hurt because of that association. He does not want to repeat that experience. They don't have the confidence that anything good or beneficial will come from the certification. However, he is interested in preclearance. I talked about the possibility that Sanidad Vegetal might make the program obligatory and caught his attention. He may change his mind once he sees how the program is working. However, the obligatory program may be to only way to get them in.

HONDEX is now entering into a deal with Gunter Stache to sell all of his fruit. Miguel Molina may also enter into a sales arrangement with HONDEX.

Later on Friday I went to see the CUVESUR plant El Palenque. It has been enlarged, screened in, has a hydrocooler and small cold room but no forced air. Its a nice plant.

In the evening Vernon Perez from CUVESUR came by the hotel to talk with Omar Ponce and I. He had been in the US to look at some arrival problems. We discussed what we had accomplished this week and the problems with HONDEX. He has a good relation with them and will talk to them about the program.

Overall the pilot program is off to a good start. For next season all plants except those of HONDEX should be screed in and in the program. It remains to be seen what it will take to get HONDEX in the program.

COSECHA DE MELONES HONDURAS 1983/84

	<u>Primer Cosecha</u>	<u>Segunda Cosecha</u>
CUVESUR		
La Granja	35 mz cant.	-0-
Los Colorados	80 mz cant.	85 mz cant.
El Palenque	150 mz cant.	-0-
Las Basas	<u>35</u> mz cant.	35 mz cant.
Total	300 mz cant.	120 mz cant.
 Miguel Molina		
Santa Rosa	450 mz cant.	325 mz cant.
Agua Fria (terceros)	250 mz cant.	-0-
Embarcadero	290 mz cant.	120 mz cant.
Montelibano	185 mz cant.	-0-
	100 mz sandia	-0-
El Palenque	155 mz H.D.	-0-
	<u>45</u> mz H.D. Dorado	<u>-0-</u>
Total	1,475 mz	445 mz
 ESCOSUR		
	500 mz cant.	300 mz cant.
 SURAGROH		
Lavaderos		
Los Patos		
Cenenterio		
Total	1,000 mz cant.	1,000 mz cant.
 ALGOSUR		
	180 mz cant.	85 mz cant.
 NOVA		
	150 mz cant.	158 mz cant.
 Oscar Molina		
	50 mz cant.	-0-
 Ruben Molina		
	128 mz cant.	75 mz cant.
 Andres Lardazaval		
	120 mz cant.	
 HONDEX		
	1,000 mz cant. y H.D.	<u>1,000</u> mz cant. y H.D.
Gran Total	4,903 mz	3,183 mz

Total para la temporada 8,086 mz sembradas