

New Opportunities for Family Business



Photo: USAID/Jan Howard

“With the improvements we made in the quality of our product, we were able to secure a loan to build a new processing plant that has enabled us to increase production and sales. It really is worth the trouble to do things well. I have a product that I know people want. It’s a product that I am proud to put my name on because the quality of my product will match any competition.”

- Ulises Gonzalez, co-owner and general manager of Lacteos Santa Martha.

With the technical and market assistance from USAID’s trade capacity building program, Lacteos Santa Martha improved its hygiene and processing methods, and quality control – which led to U.S. Food and Drug Administration certification. As a result, the family-run dairy located in the mountainous northern region of Nicaragua secured a buyer to export 4,000 lbs. of cheese and other dairy products weekly to the U.S. Building on this success, a second U.S. buyer agreed to export 20,000 lbs. of dry cheese a month.

Lacteos Santa Martha also received technical assistance to produce a wider range of products including white cheese, string cheese, dulce de leche (caramel pudding), and a manchego variety of cheese for export to specialty markets in Miami under the Fioresta label. Combined with packaging improvements, USAID assistance has helped the Gonzalez family increase production and sales, which translates into more sales and income for the dairy farmers who provide milk to the plant.

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First Person