



SUCCESS STORY

Artichokes Hit Export Markets

A plan to cultivate and can artichokes has hit the ground running



Peruvian farmer Esteban Torres tends to his high-value artichoke crop at his farm in the Mantaro Valley in central Peru.

USAID expands economic opportunities for farmers, linking them to big companies that process and export produce.

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Farming families in the Mantaro valley of Peru's central Junin region have been cultivating crops like potatoes and grains for centuries. So, when USAID suggested that some switch to a new crop, the farmers were curious to learn more. The idea was to grow artichokes that would be canned and sold for export. The artichokes would fetch a higher price than crops traditionally grown in the region. Moreover, USAID was assisting a Peruvian-Spanish company, AgroMantaro, establish a new facility to process and export locally produced artichokes.

The farmers were eager to start. USAID helped them prepare their fields and begin cultivating the high-quality artichokes that would bring the most revenue. While the farmers were preparing their fields, USAID was working to build up other parts of the production and export chain to ensure there was a market for the artichokes. For instance, after USAID advised AgroMantaro on its processing facility, the company purchased land and built a \$1 million processing plant. It was completed in April 2005. The plant can process up to 600 hectares worth of artichokes per year. During its first year, it created 83 jobs and processed 300 hectares worth of artichokes, exporting the canned vegetables to France, the United States, and Spain. AgroMantaro expects to grow rapidly, eventually creating 300 jobs and purchasing up to \$3 million of artichokes per year from the local economy.

About 220 farming families have switched to artichokes. Depending on how much land they are devoting to artichokes and how many artichokes AgroMantaro and the region's other major buyer, General Mills, are purchasing, families can make as much as \$10,000 each year from artichoke sales alone.

Other regions are looking at the Mantaro Valley as an example to replicate — in fact, the regions of Ayacucho and Huancavelica, south of Junin, and Huanuco, further north, have already started to replicate the model, ensuring that artichoke cultivators have a bright future in Peru.

Photo: USAID/Chemonics