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## SUCCESS STORY

# Broccoli Farmers Get a Fair Price

**New crops and farmer associations help small farmers reap rewards**



Photo: USAID

Ecuador's small farmers harvest broccoli to survive the country's agricultural trade problems.

***Since USAID helped cut out the vicious cycle of intermediaries and market distortions, José Miguel has been able to get a fair price for his crops.***

José Miguel Araque, a small farmer from Ecuador's central highlands, had tried to make a living from potatoes, strawberries, onions and other crops, but the results were always poor. He had trouble selling all his harvest and often had to lower his prices to levels imposed by intermediaries that controlled the market. Then, with help from USAID, he planted broccoli and harvested his first crop within two months.

Due to high demand and easy processing, broccoli is one of the products that has helped Ecuador's small farmers survive the depression that has affected the country's agricultural trade for more than two decades. Ecuador has exported frozen broccoli florets to the United States and Europe since the early 1990s, but the industry was predominantly controlled by large producers.

USAID is working to get small farmers involved in international markets by helping them maximize production with crops like broccoli and form local cooperatives that give them more leverage. Converting small farms into well-functioning businesses will make the area more dynamic and productive and create better living standards for the residents.

In Imbabura Province, USAID is assisting 130 small farmers in planting broccoli and, to avoid the market distortions of intermediaries, contracted one large buyer to inspect, process and freeze the broccoli for all the small producers in the area. Each week, these small farmers now ship the buyer more than 660,000 pounds (300,000 kilograms) of frozen broccoli, which is then processed and exported to countries like the United States and Sweden. USAID is also providing farmers with the training needed to establish a formal growers' association.

Due to the success of this effort, USAID is now establishing similar grower-buyer relationships for artichokes, avocados, herbs and potatoes in other communities around the country.

Since USAID helped cut out the vicious cycle of intermediaries and distortions, José Miguel has been able to get a fair price for his crops, giving him, his wife and his children the opportunity for a better life.

### Telling Our Story

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