

# JAMAICA FARMERS ACCESS TO REGIONAL MARKETS (JA FARMS)

## THE CHALLENGE

Jamaica's economy has experienced limited growth since 1995, contributing to civil unrest and increasing crime rates. Rural communities that rely on agriculture have been particularly hard hit, exacerbated by the ongoing need to compete for local markets with foreign producers. Agriculture contributes 7% to GDP, but constitutes a disproportionate 25% of national employment. Agriculture also accounts for 60% of economic activity and output in the rural areas, and 12% of export earnings, mainly from commodities produced on large plantations. Production rates for small farmers are falling, resulting in low, unstable income. Challenges associated with the sector's growth and competitiveness include access to markets, production inefficiencies, insufficient use of technology, outdated farming practices and fewer farmers.

## THE APPROACH

The JA FARMS project focuses on introducing new technologies in affordable, hurricane resistant high tunnel greenhouses and building relations between sellers and purchasers. It first identifies ready markets then works back to engage producers to supply these markets as a business in a supply chain. The alliance helps growers improve product quality and quantity per unit cost, reduces risk and creates stability in a high risk industry. This ground breaking alliance brings together progressive Jamaican agribusinesses with USAID and the CDC in an ambitious 18 month pilot, initiated in July 2006. The initiative has also established important links with financial services, training and community-based organizations that support rural development.

## PARTNERS

Alcoa, CDC, Ebony Park, Maryland Hawk, Rock Mountain Herbs, Santoy Cooperative, UNDP, WalkersWood



## RESULTS

- Created new markets, improved production technology, improved shelf life and a road map for greater revenue
- 4 tunnel houses built, 2 in production, 3 under refurbishment; 18 new rural jobs created based on 18 contracts
- Rock Mountain Herb's revenue increased by 50% over the last year, with the average income for 12 contract growers increasing 550% during this same time period.
- Construction capacity embedded in local business to ensure long term sustainability, new revenue stream for the cooperative, and new jobs

