



# Millennium Challenge Compact Funds Helps Increase Honduran Farmers' Productivity and Incomes

## Technical assistance to onion growers in Guinope increase production yields

The U.S. government's \$215 million MCC Compact with Honduras helps reduce poverty through increasing the productivity and business skills of farmers that operate small and medium size farms. The Honduran agricultural sector enjoys a comparative economic advantage in the production of horticultural products given its year-long growing season and proximity to the U.S. market. Despite this advantage, Honduran farmers today primarily produce basic grains. The \$30.4 million dollars allocated from the MCC Compact to the Farmer Training and Development (EDA) program, aims to provide technical assistance in the production and marketing of high value horticultural crops.

In Guinope, a municipality in the department of El Paraíso, Honduras, 300 small farmers were using traditional production practices to produce onions on 80-100 hectares of land. Average yield was only 40,000 pounds per hectare, and weather, pests and diseases often resulted in lower yields or entire crop failures.

Previous technical assistance to Guinope's onion growers was limited and mostly provided by chemical suppliers. Now, direct technical assistance covering the entire production system is being offered to 29 growers by expert agronomists who have already facilitated major changes and improvements such as higher density plantings. When Field Agronomist Mario Cho first visited the zone he immediately earned growers' trust by providing recommendations that saved their plantlets from downy mildew and Alternaria (a plant pathogen) attacks.



*Farmers in the Guinope region of Honduras are able to harvest higher yields of onions with technical assistance from MCC's Compact with Honduras.*

These practices have improved all stages of agricultural production. In the planting process, this assistance has provided improved soil management techniques, improved plantlet production practices, higher density planting and the use of "starter solution" and biological controls during transplant. EDA has also helped farmers install new irrigation systems and improve existing ones.

Since EDA began, farmers have reaped the benefits of higher yields, lower unit costs, and increased incomes. As Jorge Anibal Flores, an Onion Grower in Manzaragua noted, "The changes we made over a short period of time have been major and other growers in the zone have also seen the advantages of the new systems."

Cooperating closely with organizations and working together with local farmers, MCC is helping Hondurans reduce poverty through long-term economic growth.