



Nicaraguan Cassava Producers Export to Various Countries with the Assistance of MCC

In León, a region in Nicaragua, there are 3,000 cassava producers who have harvested approximately 7.5 million pounds of cassava, a root crop, sold to local and international markets.

Through the Rural Business Development Project, the MCA-Nicaragua Foundation has helped link Nicaraguan producers to buyers in El Salvador. As a result of this exchange in late January 2007, Nicaraguan cooperatives in León have taken the first step to becoming international export companies.

DIANA Food Products, an agro-industrial processing company from El Salvador, was introduced by MCA-Nicaragua to a small cooperative of 66 cassava producers. As a result of this contact, DIANA Food Products agreed to purchase 44,000 pounds of cassava as a trial order. From this initial agreement, the Salvadoran company has requested weekly deliveries until the end of the harvest season in June. The key to making this venture profitable for small producers is the support



Antonio Caballero is harvesting his two acres of cassava to export to El Salvador at almost three times the local sales price.

MCA-Nicaragua provides to assist them in meeting international market standards. For these small producers this order represents one half of their total crop. Cassava that is not fit for export is sold to local feed producers and local starch producing industries.

“We were selling cassava at \$1.85 per hundred pounds but will sell to this Salvadoran company at almost \$5,” said Antonio Caballero, a producer in the cooperative Las Brisas of León. This is a three hundred percent increase over prices received last year from selling cassava to the local market. Mercedes López Fuentes, who works at a local cassava processing company, believes that as cassava exports increase so will the number of employment opportunities.

Following the success of this initiative, cassava producers from the surrounding communities have begun to collaborate with MCA-Nicaragua to export three containers, holding about 40,000 pounds of cassava per container, to the United States and France.



“This is the first business deal we’ve established. It’s the beginning of a new commercial relationship from which cassava producers will be able to increase their income.”

—Octavio Villalobos