



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/honduras-eggplant-exports-raise-incomes-producers-create-new-employment-opportunities-rural>

# In Honduras, Eggplant Exports Raise Incomes of Producers, Create New Employment Opportunities in Rural Village

Producers in La Jigua, Copán, are reaping the benefits of a lucrative new crop. A small group of growers is now exporting eggplant to the United States, earning significantly higher incomes than they ever imagined and creating more than 100 new jobs in rural communities.

In this western region of Honduras, Feed the Future production and marketing specialists began assisting a group of seven farmers in February 2012, helping them identify eggplant as a new, high-value crop. With the project's help, the farmers obtained seeds and inputs, targeted a market, and planted their crop using good agricultural and post-harvest practices they learned from project technicians.

Thanks to this assistance, the farmers group secured a contract with a Honduran exporter, who shipped the first container of eggplant from Copán. The group subsequently added three more members to its ranks and has exported 15 containers to the United States since April 2012, reaping \$150,000 in revenue. The farmers are planning to export several more containers before the end of the calendar year.

Benjamin Perdomo is a small-scale farmer who joined up with the eggplant producers after seeing the success of his neighbors. "I had never even heard of eggplant before," he says. "Now I am exporting my product to the United States; it's unbelievable."

Perdomo was growing beans and corn on a small scale for sale to local markets or middlemen. Without a reliable market, he was struggling to make any income for his family. Now he is receiving technical advice to improve the production of his staple crops, as well as instruction on eggplant production. He is selling an average of 7,200 pounds of eggplant a month at a fixed and fair price.

The farmers group in La Jigua is now employing nearly 100 people in the fields to assist with planting and harvesting. These new jobs provide a steady income to more than 45 extremely poor families.

To meet the demands of the export market, the exporting company contracting with the farmers has opened a packing plant in the community, which currently employs 31 local residents trained by the project in product grading and packing. The exporter pays full-time salaries for these positions, all of which are entirely new jobs.

The small group of eggplant producers is thus helping stimulate economic activity in the community of La Jigua, with the potential to involve more small-scale producers and day laborers as production continues to increase.

"We work with all types of producers," says Carlos Madrid, a large-scale eggplant producer. "We don't care if they are small [scale farmers] or poor. If the project is assisting them, we know the high quality we need is guaranteed."