



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Graduating Students Ready for Real-World Agricultural Challenges



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Students at Pompilio Ortega in Honduras learn proper harvesting techniques for eggplant. Thanks to support from Feed the Future, students and instructors have received training in best practices and new technologies, making them more competitive.

Agricultural school Pompilio Ortega in rural Santa Barbara, Honduras, opened its doors to students in 1990. Since then, more than 2,500 students have received technical agricultural degrees from the vocational school.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) began working with the school in 2002. This collaboration has now spanned more than a decade and continues today under a Feed the Future project in which project staff provides training in good agricultural practices and the latest technologies to students and instructors during regular visits to the school and on field days.

“The difference between our school and others is our relationship with USAID,” said Carlos Rivera Chavarria, director of horticulture at Pompilio Ortega. “They’ve helped us improve the quality of our teaching and provided direct technical assistance to our students.”

The school believes in the “learning by doing” method and, as such, the United States Agency for International Development, through Feed the Future, helped install a drip irrigation system so students can get hands-on practice in irrigation system management and maintenance, soil preparation, fertilization and pest management.

As part of their “real-world” curriculum, students manage 15 hectares of corn, yucca, papaya and eggplant. They learn best practices in harvesting and postharvest techniques, study how to sort and grade harvested crops, and work with local and international markets to sell their products. They are currently producing one hectare of oriental eggplant under contract with a local company that consolidates the produce with other oriental vegetables for export to the United States.

“Before, our students didn’t know about irrigation. Now, they are able to install and operate a basic system,” said instructor Luis Alfredo Gonzales. “We know our students leave prepared, and many go on to have very successful businesses.”

Thanks to the skills and technologies they gained at Pompilio Ortega, students graduate with a variety of employment opportunities awaiting them—many choose to apply their agricultural expertise to their own commercial farming ventures while others enter the private sector as extension or service providers. In this way, Feed the Future is not just building the capacity of growers but also of actors along all points of the agricultural value chain.