



PARTNERS of the AMERICAS



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Farmer to Farmer Program Haiti Vegetable Project

Overview

Partners of the Americas' *Farmer to Farmer* Program, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), provides technical assistance to local agricultural producers, producer organizations and agribusinesses in Haiti, Guyana and Jamaica. Through the program, US agricultural volunteers spend two to three weeks working with their counterparts in the Caribbean on a specific technical assignment to address local needs. Partners has had a successful program in Haiti for over eight years working on a variety of agriculture projects including vegetable production, beekeeping, rabbit production and food processing.


Description of the Project

The vegetable production and cooperative development project aims to increase the production and organizational capacity of Makouti Agro Enterprise (Makouti), a cooperative in the Cap-Haitien area. In addition to vegetables, members produce a variety of other products including meat, honey, and processed foods. Makouti's customers include hotels, restaurants and schools in the area. To improve the cooperative's management capacity and the quality of its services, the project provides technical assistance in the areas of financial management, business strategy development, marketing, and packaging and labeling. The project also seeks to increase the quality and quantity of vegetables produced through technical assistance to members in the areas of vegetable production and pest/disease control. Makouti members are also involved in the beekeeping, rabbit production and food processing projects.

Progress to Date/Project Impact

Shortly after its founding in 2004, Makouti began working with the *Farmer to Farmer* Program. Since then, the cooperative's membership has increased from 50 to 170 members and many members are now earning two to three times their previous

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income. Applying the financial management skills imparted by volunteers, Makouti mobilized over \$30,000 in funding. News of the cooperative's success spread and new cooperatives are forming on the same model. Makouti members share their knowledge with other communities through regular appearances on the radio, informational exhibits at fairs, and on-farm visits.

Volunteer John Malcheski, a farmer and cooperative expert from Wisconsin, serves as a mentor for the cooperative's leadership. Mr. Malcheski has traveled to Haiti numerous times to work with Makouti and remains in contact with the cooperative's leadership from his home in the United States. Mr. Malcheski has also trained Makouti's staff in financial management and record keeping which enabled the cooperative to successfully apply for loans and grants. Working with Mr. Malcheski, members developed strategies to overcome challenges such as increasing fuel prices and post harvest losses.

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Farmer to Farmer volunteers have also worked with the farmers to improve the cooperative's business and marketing plan to attract new customers to the cooperative's products and new members to the cooperative's services. *Farmer to Farmer* volunteers have provided instruction on general marketing concepts and strategies, enhancing the appearance of the packaging of products, developing a logo and brand recognition for Makouti, and developing an extensive business plan.

Next Steps

The *Farmer to Farmer* Program's initial technical assistance focused on strengthening Makouti's organizational capacity. While this will remain an important component of the project, *Farmer to Farmer* will continue to emphasize improved vegetable production, pest/disease control, post harvest handling, processing and marketing. The *Farmer to Farmer* Field Officer meets regularly with Makouti members to assess their needs and discuss technical assistance priorities.

Contact Information

For more information on Partners of the Americas and the *Farmer to Farmer* Program, please visit www.partners.net. For specific questions, please contact Peggy Carlson, Director of the *Farmer to Farmer* Program, at pcarlson@partners.net or 202-637-6230. In Haiti, please contact Benito Migny Jasmin, *Farmer to Farmer* Field Officer, at benito_jasmin@yahoo.com or 509-463-1529.