

Farmers Gain from Quality Bean Seed of Improved Varieties

In Honduras, the Bean Technology Dissemination (BTD) project has been working with a network of farmer research teams, called CIALs, the three years. These organizations have been effective in successfully multiplying seed at the community level and giving 20 pound bags of seed for free to their members. Once farmers are convinced of the quality of the seed provided, members receive future seed on credit or against cash payments to support the costs associated with production, conditioning, and distribution of their preferred varieties.



Gabriela Vargas from Zamorano discusses the impact of community-based production of quality-declared seed of improved varieties to CIAL representatives in Yoro, Honduras.

Making small but significant amounts of improved seed varieties available to farmers for the first time has been the BTD's central goal from 2011 to 2014. Through this practice, farmers can plant a small stretch of land with the sample of improved seed varieties to compare against seed from other sources—often, unfortunately, from disease-infested fields or produced under inadequate seed production protocols. In most cases, small farmers plant grain purchased in community markets, a practice that has led to poor yields and the spread of seed-transmissible diseases.

This year, several CIALs located in the department of Yoro and others near Yojoa Lake, successfully generated profit from selling surplus seed their members could not plant. Their client base ranges from NGOs looking for improved bean seed to private organizations dedicated to selling bean seed in other regions in the country. Profits are either distributed among members or reinvested in accessing better production technology for bean seed and other products important to their agriculture system.

As recognition of the importance of planting quality-declared seed grows, it is satisfying to the BTD project to see farmers achieving their yield goals and generating profit to support seed production in years ahead.

