Introducing Productive Bush Bean Varieties in Remote Guatemala

Men and women farmers in San Jose Chacaya, department of Solola, expressed their satisfaction with the variety ICTA Hunapu, a variety developed for the highlands at altitudes above 2000 meters. Before they had access to this variety, their yields ranged from 600 to 625 lbs per hectare. The yields achieved with ICTA Hunapu planted in combination with maize have doubled and, for some farmers, tripled. San Jose Chacaya is located in a rugged area of the Guatemalan highlands where beans are planted at average altitudes of 2200 meters. In the past, the community had planted only landraces of climbing bean varieties yielding approximately 25 lbs per cuerda. When ICTA distributed the seed to 702 farmers they also provided in situ training on how to grow bush-type ICTA Hunapu in combination with maize. To the farmers’ satisfaction, they are convinced about the importance of planting high quality seed that developed for their agro ecological conditions. The community is eager to work closely with ICTA to grow ICTA Hunapu seed in the community in 2014 and make it available to other farmers who witnessed its yielding potential.

Despite the expenses involved in bringing seed to remote communities, the Guatemalan Institute of Agriculture Research (ICTA) has collaborated closely with the Legume Innovation Lab in the Bean Technology Dissemination (BTD) project so that little additional expenses are necessary to reach target end beneficiaries.