

## MARIANO CANU

Mariano Canú was born on April 17, 1952 in Patzicía, Chimaltenango. He began working at the age of 7 when his father died. As he was the oldest son in a family of 6 children, he had to help his mother raise his three sisters and two brothers. He began working as a laborer earning a salary of Q0.50 per month.

In 1962 his mother remarried and they moved to live on a farm Chirijuyú, Tecpán. On this farm he learned different skills in the field. Mr. Canú learned to read and write when he was an adult, at the night school that came to Chirijuyú.

In 1963, Mr. Canú decided to rent a piece of farm land to start his first agricultural experience, planting corn, wheat, and barley. In 1972, at the age of 20, Mr. Canú started his first production of broccoli and snow peas when he realized that this was more profitable than corn and wheat. Mr. Canú then worked for AGROEX, a broccoli exporter, as technician to support other producers in the Tecpán area. He received training from the General Directorate of Agriculture Services in organic agriculture in 1986.

In 1993, Mr. Canú with two other producers from Chirijuyú formed the producer association “Comercializadora Labradores Mayas” for the cultivation and commercialization of lettuce, which resulted in them attaining a monthly income of US\$500.00 each.

Mr. Canú has three sons and three daughters. Two of his sons and one of his daughters work with him in Labradores Mayas. One of his sons, José Luis Canú, works as the Commercialization Coordinator; another son is in charge of reception of produce in the packing plant; and a daughter is in charge of the production records of the members of the association.

Mr. Canú was elected auxiliary mayor of the community of Chirijuyú from 2002 to 2003. Currently, he is the President of Labradores Mayas.

Mr. Canú has a saying: “Do not plant anything that is not sold in advance”. He encourages all small producers to take advantage of the opportunities that God presents to them for growing in life and becoming small business owners.

## **JOSE LUIS CANU**

José Luis Canú was born in 1977 in the community of Chirijuyú, Tecpán and is the son of Mr. Mariano Canú, President of Labradores Mayas. José Luis is married and has two daughters. He graduated from elementary school in 1993 and begun cultivating snow peas on a piece of land that his father gave to him. In 1994, he decided to go to Chiantla, Huehuetenango to work for ALTERTECH, a company that produces organic products. While Jose Luis was working in Chiantla, he enrolled in a program to obtain a diploma in Agro-Ecology from 1994 to 1996 at the Fe y Alegría school. José Luis also took a course recognized at the international level to become an inspector for the production of organic products. After he graduated in Agro-Ecology, ALTERTECH transferred him to La Unión, Zacapa and then to Tacaná, San Marcos.

In 1996 José Luis was called by his father and other members of the community to work in Labradores Mayas to provide assistance to the producers in the field, so that he could put into practice in his own community what he had learned as an Agro-Ecologist. He was appointed as an Assistant to the Commercialization Department in Labradores Mayas. In 2003, he was promoted to be the Coordinator of Commercialization.

Currently, José Luis owns an acre of land where he grows celery. His monthly income approximately US\$2,600 plus a percentage of the sales he achieves as Coordinator of Commercialization of Labradores Mayas.