



## FIRST PERSON

# Farmer Workshops Improve Lives

**New techniques help farmers improve yields, health and nutrition**



Photo: Kenold Liberus

***“My participation in USAID’s program has changed my life, and if every farmer accepted to work together with USAID/Save the Children we could change the face of Larique,” said Pierre.***

Forty-year-old Pierre Alexis Cantave has never allowed life’s lemons to turn him sour. All five of his children go to school because, he likes to say, “one of the most important objectives of my life is to get all my children educated.” And despite losing an arm in a childhood accident, Pierre aggressively farms two hectares of land for maize, beans, cassava, peanuts and sweet potatoes. And as with Haiti’s thousands of small farmers, he wrestles to gain productive yields from the exhausted Central Plateau, where poverty and malnutrition are rampant. He wanted to further increase his yield so he could better provide for his family, so when he found out about USAID workshops on improving farming techniques, Pierre eagerly signed up.

Focused on a holistic approach to health, the workshops show farmers how to improve productivity and teach other family members important lessons about nutrition and hygiene. By using improved crop varieties and practices, Pierre now produces enough crops to feed his family all year and sell his surplus to the market, which has generated \$360 in revenue. Pierre is also the leader of the local farmers’ group in his village, Larique, and always willing to try new techniques and set up demonstration plots on his farm. Based on what they learned from these plots, 25 members of the farmers’ group improved their techniques, and produced and planted 1,250 fruit and forest trees from their nursery.

The rest of Pierre’s family has benefited from USAID efforts as well. His wife participates in food processing initiatives, and she and the children take part in programs to improve health, nutrition and hygiene. The Cantaves say they now feel they can take care of themselves, despite the odds of their living environment.

Said Pierre, “My participation in USAID’s program has changed my life, and if every farmer accepted to work together with USAID/Save the Children we could change the face of Larique.”