



BELIZE AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Enterprise

Annual General Meeting

April 21-22, 2022

Administration

- **Staff**
 - 110 - 9 GOB transferred staff and 101 BAHA employed staff
 - 4 main administrative offices (OW, CIL, BMP and BC)
- **Budget \$5.2 m**
 - \$1.6 m GOB subvention (Subvention cut of 40% in 2020 = \$960,000)
 - \$3.5 m generated by BAHA- cost recovery
- **Austerity measures due to covid-19**
 - Reducing overhead expenses (fuel, phone, electricity), forego increments for 2020, Senior posts not filled

Highlights

1. BAHA-PSU Collective Bargaining Agreement

1. The final draft CBA is ready to be shared with the BAHA staff and the BAHA Board of Directors; Signing of CBA expected in June 2022

2. BAHA Employee Provident Fund

- 2019 Consultant conducted feasibility study
- Implementation on hold due to the pandemic
- Proposal will be presented to new BOD

3. Training

| BSc. In Applied Agriculture (completed) | MSc. Entomology (ongoing) | BSc. In Applied Agriculture (To be completed 2022) | Medical Laboratory Science | Associates in Business Science |
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Summary of SPS Activities

- 51 import risk assessments (46 by food safety;
- 4 by Animal Health and 1 in Plant Health)
- SPS trade-related issues:
 - 1. Cocoa beans to the EU;
 - 2. Citrus pellets into Taiwan;
 - 3. Poultry into Grenada (still unresolved)
- **Projects:**
 - STDF Voluntary Third-Party Assurance;
 - 11th EDF SPS Project (AHFS Policy and Action Plan; Training of SPS Managers; Poultry Health Regulations and Recommendation on Aquatic Animal Health);
 - BAHA online system for imports and exports; Risk Categorization of products regulated by BAHA

ANIMAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- **Poultry Industry**
 - Belize is free of AI
 - Outbreak of Newcastle Disease in Toledo (ongoing measures to control)
- **Shrimp Industry**
 - Belize authorized in 2021 to export shrimps Mexico after their authorization had expired
 - Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS) is now endemic in Belize.
- **Beef Industry**
 - 2021-2,263 heads of cattle exported to Mexico
 - 72 breeding cattle imported from Mexico
- **Sheep industry**
 - BAHA provides support to the GOB/ICDF sheep project in Central Farm
 - Iaseous Lymphadenitis highly suspected based on clinical signs since 2019.

▪ **PORK INDUSTRY**

- Belize free of: Classical Swine Fever and African Swine Fever
- BAHA preparing CSF dossier for submission to the OIE in support of scientifically demonstrating that Belize is free of CSF.
- The threat of ASF is imminent- presence in Asia, Europe and the Americas (Dominican Republic).

Diseases

- **Rabies-** 2018-40, 2019-11, 2020-8, 2022-3
- **BSE**
 - BAHA and BLPA working to move up in category as it relates to the BSE Risk Status as stipulated by the OIE.
 - Belize has accumulated 15,503.8 points of 22,100 points among other criteria to be recognized as having a Controlled BSE Risk Status.
- **Blackleg**
 - 8 cases
 - Endemic to Belize and vaccination works well in preventing
- **Foot and Mouth Disease**
 - Belize free of Foot and Mouth Disease
 - In November of 2021, BAHA submitted documentation to the OIE in support of demonstrating that Belize continues to maintain its free status. The documentation was approved by the OIE.

- **Veterinary lab**

- The PCR lab accredited for 9 OIE aquatic animal diseases
- PCR Laboratory conducted 2,950 COVID-19 testing

- **Veterinary Drugs Unit**

- Regulates the importation, storage, distribution and use of Veterinary Drugs, Biologics and Feed.
- 34 veterinary drug products were either registered or re-registered in 2021



FOOD SAFETY DEPARTMENT

- **Monitoring programs**

- Monitoring of levels of arsenic in local rice (OIRSA initiative)
- Chemical residues monitoring program for aquaculture
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- 5 year Integrated National Antimicrobial Surveillance Plan for Belize (Belize-NARMS)
- Monitoring of food product and water quality at BAHA registered establishments

Inspections & Audits

- Maintained bovine TB surveillance in cattle at BAHA inspected slaughter houses
- Maintained inspections of fish and fishery products processing facilities and agro-processing plants at BAHA registered establishments
- Fully transitioned to remote audits for annual audits of Belize flagged High Seas Fishing Vessels exporting to EU and African markets due to Covid-19 related travel restrictions (14 vessels)
- Improved food safety audit capacity of Food Safety inspectors through several online trainings including internal audit, remote audit and HACCP audit training through OIRSA

Laboratory capacity

- Received sample preparation equipment for heavy metal testing
- LC-MS/MS equipment received under IAEA TCP for pesticide residue monitoring
- Chemical Analysis lab testing for Δ^9 -THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol)
- Food Microbiology Laboratory had its 4th accreditation assessment to the ISO 17025 standard for the competency of laboratories (accreditation costs were sponsored by OIRSA)

Programmed activities

- Monitoring of Aflatoxin B₁ levels in local corn (OIRSA initiative)
- Re-activation of Integrated AMR surveillance subcommittee and *ad hoc* National Codex Committee
- Conduct Pesticide residues monitoring activities of national TC project with IAEA
- Explore use of FAO/WHO assessment tool for National Food Control System
- Expansion of accreditation scope of food microbiology laboratory
- Expansion of testing scope of Chemical Analysis lab to include Heavy metal testing
- Development of framework for risk-based inspection under voluntary STDF Third Party Assurance project

Plant Health Department

- 16 staff
- New organogram for PH
 - 2 unit coordinators established
- Training for G. Mai as entomologist
- Market access
 - Inspection of grains for export to Guatemala and Caribbean
 - Admissibility of green un-husked coconuts for consumption- USA
 - Workplan for admissibility of Fresh Citrus to the Dominican Republic
 - Citrus into El Salvador
 - Systems Approach for pitaya into the US
 - Assisting APHIS in PRA for fresh soursop into the US
 - Banana to Guatemala
 - PRA for fresh avocado finalized (MAFSE will decide when to approve importation or not)
 - Sorrel flowers from Nigeria (request for PRA)

- **Legislation**

- Draft regulation for FoC TR₄
- National Regulated Pest List- ongoing
- Caricom Draft biosafety bill
- Caricom Plant Health Bill
- Industrial Hemp

- Medfly cooperative agreement- US \$140,00

- Belize continues to maintain its medfly free status

- **Surveillance**

- *Tuta absoluta*; Giant African Snail; *Trogoderma granarium*; Red Palm Weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*); *Paratrioza coccerelli*
- *Megacopta cribraria*; *Megalurothrips usitatus* (ABT-reported since 2020)

- Online surveillance system-

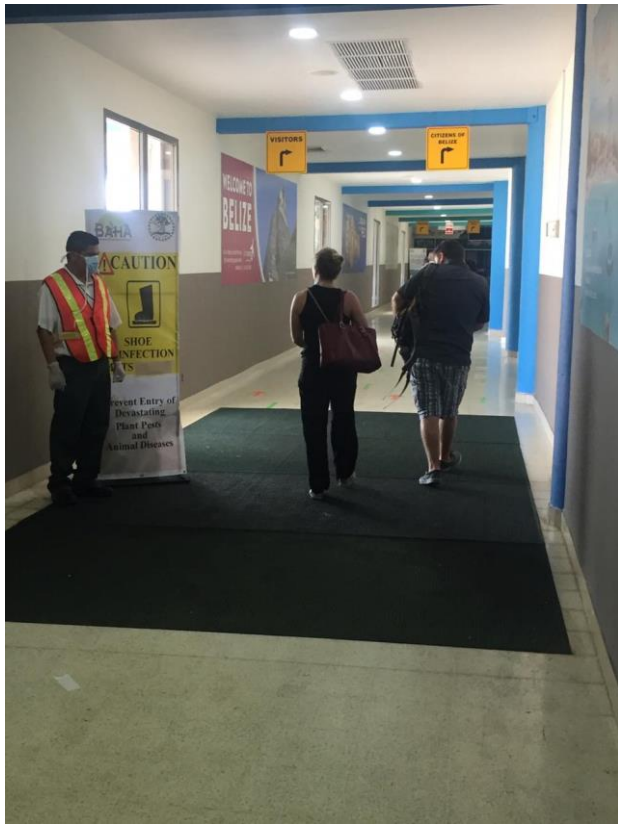
- E-phyto- working with APHIS to develop Gen system for Belize

Quarantine & Inspection Services



Accomplishments 2021

**Treatment Mat
to disinfect Shoes**



X ray machines at PGIA



Canine Unit



Capacity Building

- **AMEXCID Virtual Training (45 Trained) in “Administration and Inspection of Imports and Exports at Points of Entry of Mexico”**
- **UWI Plant Quarantine Course - 2 Senior Quarantine Inspectors Trained from 13th September 2021 to March 2022**

Follow up items

- Sign off on the CBA
- Empanel the full BOD
- Continue the work on the provident/pension fund for staff
- Fill the outstanding upper management level and junior posts
- Repeat request for reinstatement of the 40% subvention cut

THANK YOU!