



Belize

2019 Annual Report

Significant Achievements

- The “Productivity Enhancement of Banana Farms through Integrated Soil Fertility Management in the Banana Belt Area of Belize” project—funded by the European Union (in the amount of €2,023,197)—fostered social and economic development, while contributing to poverty reduction among workers, their families and communities in the banana belt area of Belize. There has been obvious improvement in the efficiency of banana production, as well as soil fertility, given the increased knowledge of farmers at the Banana Growers Association (BGA) about Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM). The capacity of the University of Belize’s micro-propagation laboratory has also been enhanced.
- Chefs from across the country took part in twenty hours of intensive training in professional standards for food handling, and also learned about the importance of food safety in the domestic service and tourism industries. IICA, in collaboration with the Belize Culinary Association and Chefs Helping Chefs, organized the training, certifying 32 persons in Food Protection Management and 48 others as Sure Global Food Handlers.
- IICA signed a US\$33,000 grant agreement with the Australian High Commission’s Direct Aid Program to implement the “Enhancing Rural Livelihoods and Strengthening Community Food Security by Upgrading the Health of Backyard Chickens” project. The initiative is being implemented in three target villages in southern Belize, in collaboration with local Ministry of Agriculture stations and the private sector Belize Poultry Association (BPA). One hundred copies of the “Biosecurity Field Manual: A Practical Guide to Control Diseases in Village Chickens in Belize”—a farmer’s guide, written and printed under the project—and five poster designs (depicting various aspects of poultry biosecurity), were distributed to participants.
- Following up on a request from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration, IICA provided support for the identification of potential biofortified crops for introduction into Belize. The national demand is in line with the HarvestPlus CARICOM program, which will be implemented in the region in two phases, in order to make project actions sustainable and to achieve the desired goals of tackling hidden hunger and mitigating high levels of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in CARICOM. IICA has been involved in a multi-partner initiative (IICA/MoA-Belize/CARDI/CIAT/HarvestPlus) to discuss and implement concrete actions for the introduction and adoption of biofortified crops in Belize. The project was presented and approved at the 81st meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on Agriculture.
- IICA, Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) and Ohio State University sponsored a training session on AMR surveillance in the agriculture sector, and have been providing support to an online committee in the preparation



of a national AMR surveillance plan. The Pesticides Control Board (PCB) requested IICA's assistance in developing guidelines for efficacy trial reporting. A committee comprising representatives from PCB, IICA, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Belize Agriculture Health Authority (BAHA), is rewriting the guidelines for applicants, which will outline how such trials should be conducted and what information should be included in the reports, without being too prescriptive. IICA also assisted the Belize Marketing and Development Corporation and the Ministry of Agriculture to incorporate an implementation plan into their national beekeeping strategy, outlining the list of activities, responsibilities and the timeline required to achieve each strategic outcome.

- A draft concept note was written for a Green Climate Fund project (USD 9M), to enhance livelihoods in forest buffer communities, while reducing the impact on the surrounding environment. The overall aim is to reduce the negative impact of agricultural practices on forests and to improve community resilience to climate change. This project is being developed

and supported through the GCF-accredited entity—the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre—and will be implemented by four of Belize's leading conservation NGOs, who expressed their support for and desire to participate in the project.

- The Ministry of Agriculture requested IICA's assistance in building local capacity and awareness about the opportunities offered by the bioeconomy, and its potential to contribute to development and social welfare. Four activities were undertaken by the Institute and the Belize Government: a) a seminar/workshop presenting the IICA Bioeconomy and Production Development program to various stakeholders in Belize, b) a conference - Opportunities for Innovative Transformation of Agricultural Waste c) a bioeconomy workshop in Stann Creek and Orange Walks Districts, to facilitate and promote interactive dialogue between various stakeholders linked to the implementation of the bioeconomy model, and d) a participatory workshop with stakeholders in Belmopan, in order to brainstorm and initiate the process to build this roadmap.