

Significant achievements 2018



Belize

- The European Union (EU) funded project for productivity enhancement of banana farms through integrated soil fertility management in the banana belt area of Belize was implemented by IICA, along with the EU, the Banana Growers Association and the University of Belize. Thirty-four persons received training in integrated soil fertility management, while a total of 1,036 acres of drainage, including primary, secondary, tertiary and surface drains was established or refurbished on 19 participating farms (1,186 meters of primary drains, 12,030 meters of secondary drains, 142,770 meters of tertiary drains and 153,564 meters of surface drains). A total of 40 acres remains to reach the target of 1,076 acres for the industry. The participating banana farms have also benefitted from a total of 558 acres of de-compaction works, of which 98 acres was done manually, 324 acres with the use of private machines, and 137 acres using the ripping method.
- IICA supported the Ministry of Agriculture and the Belize Marketing and Development Corporation in devising and producing the National Beekeeping Strategy for 2019 to 2024. The strategy's main goal is to "create an enabling environment to transform beekeeping into a viable, eco-friendly and profitable industry that positively impacts the livelihoods of rural farming communities". The plan identifies issues along the beekeeping value chain that need to be addressed under four main components: (i) policy; (ii) input and finance; (iii) production and management; and (iv) market, and thereby provides a framework for the development and implementation of actionable projects to address those issues. IICA also funded the recruitment of a consultant to recommend a draft legislative framework that would support the development of the beekeeping industry. Both the legislation and symposium were presented to industry stakeholders at the National Beekeeping Symposium, which was held in Orange Walk town in December, and was sponsored by IICA. Eighty-five public and private stakeholders in the beekeeping industry attended the symposium.
- The Institute supported the Belize national agriculture census in the implementation of a pilot to populate the Farmer and Farm Registry which contains farmer information and geo-referenced coordinates of their farm(s). The current system for collecting agricultural data, which is then used



to inform the country's National System of Accounts, is based on expert opinion with an emphasis on large farming operations. Conspicuously absent from this accounting are the medium and small enterprises, as well as the informal sector.

- The Institute strengthened the national agricultural extension service in the use of different extension group methods by providing theoretical and practical training to 32 extension officers. The methodology employed was a participatory and adult learning training approach to ensure active participation of trainees and a variety of interactive training methods, including brainstorming, group exercise, role-playing and case studies. In addition,

IICA in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Belize Poultry Association and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority, undertook a capacity building initiative to sensitize extension officers and high school students to pests and diseases that affect poultry, and the biosecurity measures that need to be implemented to reduce the incidence of disease in a backyard setting. Two training activities were held – one in the north and one in the south of Belize – with a total of 63 persons participating. Additionally, five educational institutions were provided with construction materials to build bio secure poultry coops.

- IICA funded a two-day training program on devising an “antimicrobial resistance surveillance plan” for Belize. The training was facilitated by experts from the Institute and the Ohio State University, and was attended by nineteen persons representing the Belize Agricultural Health Authority, the Ministry of Health and Poultry Producers. In 2019, IICA will be tasked with working with local stakeholders and the training facilitators to finalize the plan.
- Hotel businesses required assistance in identifying opportunities to strengthen the linkages between the

agriculture sector and the tourism industry. IICA provided training at the hotel level in areas such as agro tourism linkages, as well as agricultural health and food safety for hotel operators, tour operators and other stakeholders.

- IICA sensitized Belizean stakeholders to the importance of bioeconomy and production development, and showed the vast potential for taking advantage of existing complementarities. These include prior and current collaboration between main participating stakeholders and agriculture-based organizations, commitment to the sustainable development of the agriculture sector, as well as education/extension, research & development, same/similar clients, and target groups/entities.
- IICA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC), signaling a new level of collaboration between the two agencies, one specialized in the science of climate change and the other in agriculture. The CCCCC is the regional body responsible for spearheading the Caribbean’s response to climate change.

