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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Agriculture and JICA Host Training for Pitahaya Farmers in the Cayo District

Belmopan, October 16, 2023.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise, in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), hosted a two-day pitahaya cultivation and marketing training for 33 farmers in the Cayo District from October 12 to 13.

The training program encompassed a wide range of essential topics, including pitahaya varieties, propagation techniques, field preparation, fertilization best practices, weed control, pest and disease management, pruning methods, insights into effective farmers' organization, and strategies for successful marketing.

The event is a vital component of the "Advisory Services on with/Post COVID-19 Agricultural Value Chain Improvement in Belize." The project is a technical cooperation initiative jointly initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and JICA in February 2023.

The comprehensive training program was conducted by a team of experts, which included Mr. Barry Palacio, Fruit Trees Coordinator; Mr. Israel Pech from the Ministry of Agriculture; Mr. Hugo Miranda from the Cooperative Department; and Ms. Jasany Westby from the Belize Marketing & Development Corporation.

With the new knowledge and techniques acquired, the participants are well-equipped to enhance the quality of their pitahaya production, increase sales, and contribute to the growth of the pitahaya industry in Belize.

The participants were awarded certificates in recognition of their commitment and successful completion of the training. The certificates were presented

by the lecturers and Mr. Kenichi Machida, the project team leader assigned by JICA. Dr. Victoriano Pascual, Chief Agriculture Officer, was also in attendance.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise is committed to promoting sustainable agriculture and ensuring food security in Belize. It works diligently to enhance the productivity and profitability of the agricultural sector while supporting the welfare of farmers and agribusinesses.

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