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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Agriculture and JICA Conduct Cultivation Training for Potato Farmers

Belmopan, October 19, 2023.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise, in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), conducted cultivation training for potato farmers in the Orange Walk and Cayo districts on October 17 and 18, respectively.

The training sessions were a part of the advisory services of a JICA project called “COVID-19 Agricultural Value Chain Improvement in Belize” (the JICA project), which commenced in February 2023.

Eighteen potato farmers from the Orange Walk District and 14 from the Cayo District participated in the training. The sessions were focused on soil sampling and analysis, land preparation, potato seed cutting, and fertilization. The lectures and demonstrations were conducted by Mr. William Can, Acting District Agricultural Coordinator for the Cayo District; Mr. Gumercindo Mai, Plant Health Officer for the Belize Agricultural Health Authority; and Mr. Oscar Salazar from the ministry’s research unit at Central Farm.

Opening the sessions were Mr. Sergio Hernandez, District Agriculture Coordinator for Orange Walk District, Mr. Can for the Cayo District, and Mr. Yoshikazu Tachihara, Resident Representative for JICA Belize. Mr. Tatsuya Morita, a JICA expert dispatched to the CARICOM Secretariat, observed the activity in the Cayo District.

The ministry will establish demonstration plots in the Cayo and Orange Walk districts to apply the cultivation methods taught in the training so that they can compare the differences in both plots. The participants are expected to improve the yield and quality of their potatoes.

The next training session for potato farmers is scheduled for February 2024, which will focus on improving post-harvest management and marketing.

Ends

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