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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Agriculture Holds Discussions with Cane Farmers' Associations

Belmopan. September 2, 2021. 5:30 p.m.

A meeting was held today between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, leaders of the sugar cane producing associations, and other stakeholders at the headquarters of the Sugar Industry Research and Development Institute in Buena Vista, Corozal District. The discussions focused on the commercial agreement between farmers and Belize Sugar Industries Limited/American Sugar Refining Group (ASR/BSI), and the Sugar Industry Act review process that all parties are engaged in.

Leaders from three sugar cane farmers' associations were present at the meeting, which sought to first seek common ground between the associations on both issues and to present a united front as producers in light of the upcoming situations facing the industry. All present agreed to work together for the greater benefit of the industry.

The meeting follows a series of engagements by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise relating to the sugar industry. Earlier this week, there were meetings with ASR/BSI and Santander hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss future plans by both sugar millers for the industry. In particular, marketing issues were looked at by the different parties with a view to getting clarity on the future of the industry.

Present at the meeting were Hon. Jose Abelardo Mai, Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise and area representative for Orange Walk South; Hon. Ramiro Ramirez, Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government and representative for Corozal Southwest; and Hon. Elvia Vega, Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and area representative for Corozal Bay. The Belize Sugar Cane Farmers' Association, the Progressive Sugar Cane Farmers' Association and Northern Sugar Cane Farmers' Association were also represented.

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