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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and New Growth Industries Hosts FAO Training on Coconut Pest and Disease Management

Belmopan, August 28, 2026.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and New Growth Industries (MAFSNGI), successfully concluded an intensive five-day Training of Trainers Workshop on Coconut Pest and Disease Management. The initiative forms part of the FAO technical cooperation program to "Support the Revision of the National Rural Development Strategy, with Focus on the Coconut Sector."

The workshop aligns with the global "One Country One Priority Product" (OCOP) initiative, which actively promotes green enterprising and sustainable development within Belize's expanding coconut industry. The comprehensive capacity-building program directly targeted the Ministry of Agriculture's fruit tree program team alongside district extension officers and CARDI officers responsible for coconut production.

Over the first four days, participants engaged in rigorous technical sessions covering integrated pest management strategies for destructive threats like the coconut weevil, red mites, and the devastating red ring disease. The classroom curriculum focused heavily on biological descriptions, host identification, and modern management methods to ensure officers can provide rapid, accurate field diagnoses.

The workshop culminated in a hands-on field and laboratory practice day designed to bridge theory with real-world application. Field officers actively identified mite infestations and visual signs of fungal diseases in local plantations, while also mastering the complex laboratory extraction and identification techniques required to confirm red ring disease in infected tissue. During phase 2 of the training, the cohort of trainers will disseminate these green farming practices nationwide, safeguarding smallholder livelihoods and boosting the climate resilience of Belize's coconut value

chain. Training sessions will take place in each district during September and October 2026.

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