



PR#222-26

PRESS RELEASE

97th Extraordinary CIRSA Meeting

Belmopan, August 28, 2026.

The 97th Extraordinary meeting of the International Regional Committee for Agricultural Health (CIRSA) took place today, 28th August, in Guatemala City.

The member countries of the International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA), of which Belize is a member, agreed to strengthen regional surveillance and coordination to prevent and address diseases and pests that threaten agricultural production and trade during the 97th Extraordinary Meeting of CIRSA, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala, María Fernanda Rivera.

Among the main health risks analysed were African Swine Fever, Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4, and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, diseases and pests that can spread between countries and affect both production and trade. In response, the authorities proposed maintaining constant surveillance and strengthening the application of standardized protocols, especially at borders, ports, and airports.

Added to these challenges are extreme weather events, since variations in rainfall patterns and increased temperatures can create favourable conditions for the emergence and spread of pests and diseases. The authorities agreed that maintaining a coordinated response is fundamental to protecting producers and the populations that depend on healthy, productive, and resilient agriculture.

During the meeting, the institutional strengthening of OIRSA was also analysed, with progress toward the approval of the 2026-2036 Strategic Plan, a new Investment Policy, and the updating of the organization's regulations, as tools to improve member countries' capacity to respond to health threats.

The meeting was attended by Ministers of Agriculture from Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, as well as other regional representatives. Belize was represented by Hon. Luis Alex Balona, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture.

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