



PR#229-26

PRESS RELEASE

GOB Approves \$5.2 Million Emergency Mealybug Control Programme

Belmopan, September 7, 2026.

The Government of Belize has approved an emergency programme to provide urgently needed support to address the growing mealybug infestation affecting sugarcane production and the livelihoods of cane farmers in northern Belize. The intervention will focus on reducing pest populations, protecting sugarcane productivity, and supporting the recovery and long-term sustainability of the industry.

Of the total programme cost of \$5.2 million, the Government of Belize will provide \$2.56 million, representing 50 percent of the total cost. The remaining \$2.56 million will be financed by participating sugarcane farmers and recovered through agreed deductions from cane deliveries over four crop cycles.

This shared-financing arrangement reflects a collective response by the Government, cane farmers, and industry stakeholders to address the current emergency. It ensures that the programme is adequately financed while allowing farmers to contribute their share in a structured and manageable manner over time.

The emergency programme, coordinated by the Sugar Industry Research and Development Institute (SIRDI) in collaboration with the four cane producer associations and Belize Sugar Industries/ASR Group, will cover approximately 50,000 acres of sugarcane, including fields currently under cultivation, as well as

those scheduled for harvesting and replanting. Targeted fields will receive a minimum of two applications to rapidly reduce and control the mealybug infestation, with all planned applications to be completed within the next two months.

The Government of Belize remains committed to working closely with cane farmers, sugar industry stakeholders, technical partners, and local authorities to safeguard sugarcane production, strengthen pest management practices, and support the long-term sustainability and resilience of the northern sugarcane industry.

Ends

For more information, please contact:
Mr. Carlos Pol
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Economic Transformation
ceo@met.gov.bz