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PRESS RELEASE

MAFSNGI Holds Coconut Workshops in Southern Districts

Belmopan, October 21, 2026.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and New Growth Industries (MAFSNGI) has successfully completed two-day intensive coconut farmer training workshops in both the Stann Creek and Toledo Districts. This vital capacity-building initiative is being implemented as part of the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) global initiative "One Country One Priority Product" (OCOP), which promotes sustainable value chains for coconuts across Belize.

The technical training sessions were led by the FAO's national coconut pest and disease specialist, with critical field and technical support provided by dedicated personnel from MAFSNGI's Fruit Tree Program, Research Unit, and District Extension Units.

The workshops achieved an impressive milestone, drawing active participation from over 60 coconut farmers across both southern districts. The trainings saw strong participation from women and youth farmers; all committed to advancing the long-term sustainability of Belize's expanding coconut sector. The sessions were hosted on September 29 and October 2 in the Stann Creek District, and on September 30 and October 1 in the Toledo District.

The training workshops integrated theoretical lectures with immersive field exercises. Participating farmers praised this hands-on approach, emphasizing the value of learning practical techniques for the detection, identification, and control of critical pests and diseases in local coconut groves.

Furthermore, the training introduced a citizen science approach to regional pest management. Beyond standard classroom learning, farmers are now equipped to monitor their own acreage, build specialized traps, and

consistently report their field findings and weekly trapping results back to agricultural officials. This data-driven community network ensures immediate, real-time tracking of pest populations to safeguard local crops.

Building on the success of these southern events, additional training sessions are being scheduled for the remaining districts across Belize. Coconut farmers and interested sector stakeholders are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

For more information regarding upcoming workshop schedules or to register for future sessions, interested participants are asked to contact their respective District Agriculture Office.

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