



Harvesting the Ag News from all of Belize

Special BLPA Meeting has Directors smiling as prospects for beef trade with Mexico near realization.

After decades of frustration with surplus animals and no place to go with them, news that a very logical solution is near at hand - trade with our neighbor to the north - is sweet music to BLPA's Directors. At an extraordinary meeting held June 24th, Directors were updated by Chairman Dr. Errol Vanzies on proposals being hammered out between countries at the technical level. Dr. Vanzies, being a cattle rancher himself with extensive public health experience, is uniquely qualified to sit at BLPA's helm now. The association's main task at hand is to disperse relevant information to producers, who will need to be ready for the upcoming testing phase.

BLPA will announce in July the schedules for meetings with livestock producers in every district which will be held during August. Learn the particulars for your area meeting from BLPA or on page 21 page of our online edition, (as soon as they are available).

The first step to export is being officially accepted by Mexico as an importer of beef to Mexico. Directors are told that Belize should be 'on the list' in a matter of weeks. Proposals

are to begin the national sweep of TB and Brucellosis tests in Corozal, Orange Walk, and Cayo Districts, as they are home to over 80% of Belize's bovines. SENASICA, the Mexican equivalent to BAHA, plans to bring in professionals to train Belizeans and assist us with this undertaking. Testing could begin in September, and will be an ongoing process. Every animal will be ear tagged with a numbered metal tag, and the database will record the breed, sex and age of that animal, with its unique number, which will be kept by GOB in a master database. This is a vital component, as TRACEABILITY is one of the key issues in the transaction. All ranchers should have their corrals and chutes in good working order, as all animals will need to be processed in these. Restrictions on animal movement will be implemented as 'disease free' farms and zones are identified. Exports could begin before the entire country sweep is complete, that is, towards the end of 2009. Bovines to be exported must comply with the health requirements, which include the following:

1. official ear tag as above
2. negative to the caudal TB test within 60 days of shipment
3. negative to Brucellosis test (card or rivanol test)
4. treatment for ticks, to guarantee that animals entering Mexico are free of ticks

The testing phase will provide a new cattle census for Belize.

The testing phase will provide a news cattle census. The current estimate of 70,000 head is exactly where we stood 25 years ago. Current prices \$1. to 1.10 BZ\$/lb livewt, discourage development. (current U.S.prices are \$.95 to 1. US\$/lb.) When the cattle inventory dropped a few years ago and there was not longer a glut, prices reached \$1.25 to 1.35 BZ\$/lb. Currently, there is an estimated surplus of 8,000 head in Belize. This is the number available for export annually from the existing national herd, without threatening disruption of the local market. Export will empower existing ranchers to upgrade and encourage new ranchers to enter the field. Other advantages include improved pastures, more A.I., more importation of live animals and embryos, new slaughter facilities, and new and upgraded products for the local market too.

Mexico's 110 million population needs and wants our product; Belize wants and needs to service that market. Mr. Rene Montero, Minister of Agriculture, BAHA and GOB personnel have all been on the same track working diligently to coordinate Belizean and Mexican requirements. Belizean cattle producers have found a strong advocate in Mexico's Ambassador to Belize. H.E. Luis Manuel Lopez Moreno, a gentleman well respected in the diplomatic and business

Mission Statement;

The Belize Ag Report is a monthly agriculture newsletter. Our purpose is to collect, edit and disseminate information useful to the Belizean producer, large or small. We invite opinions on issues, which are not necessarily our own. Belize Ag neither solicits nor accepts political ads.



Continued on page 12



From the Editor

Congratulations and thanks to all who worked hard for the success of the recent National Agriculture and Trade Show. We share with you some of the comments we heard about the 2009 show.

All agree that Agriculture and Trade industries overlap, and have been served fairly well in the past with one integrated annual show. However, due to the growth of both sectors, is it time to consider separation, and a distinct show for each? Questions arose in the planning of this show, stemming from the divergent marketing philosophies of these groups. Belize Ag Report heard several suggestions to split up and reorganize, from the Ag. sector. Although no formal survey was conducted, positive comments were expressed by trade sector individuals too. Splitting the show might have avoided some controversy with the 2009 show, and could result in some positive changes for future NATS.

Proposals and plans were made by the NATS Committee to rezone the show ground's exhibitor areas. Many of the more rambunctious and noisier attractions, and notably the alcohol vendors would have been placed apart from the agriculture/livestock section. Indications were that as a result of this, one of the larger Mennonite groups would have infused a large amount of capital to renovate the very rundown livestock barns, etc. of the existing showground's. Belize Ag Report heard only praise and enthusiasm for this proposal. People not previously interested in either attending or participating in the show were looking forward to experiencing the new environment. Reports to us are that after the Committee had agreed to the new zoning, for some reason the zoning decision was negated. It was business as usual or, as some describe it, 'noisy confusion'.

Revision of the show's management system would enable future committees to better meet the hefty challenge involved. The existing system, with the heavy oversight from the top is a lingering legacy from the colonial system, shunned vociferously by most people. The NATS management system as it stands now and in the past, is a committee appointed by the government of the day through the Ministry of Agriculture. This committee of management usually changes when we have

.....
Belize Ag Report , P.O. Box 150, San Ignacio, Cayo

Phone: 663 6777/664 7272

Editor: Beth Roberson

Technical Manager: Jane Beard

Submissions as follows:

Ads: ads@belizeagreport.com

Articles: articles@belizeagreport.com

Letters to the Editor: editor@belizeagreport.com

Deadline date—12th of every month

Printed by BRC Printing, Benque Viejo

a GOB party change. This disrupts the continuity necessary for improvements in long term planning . In order for our NATS to compete with other Agricultural shows, it takes decades of time and hundreds of thousands of dollars. We need a new type of board make-up, one with industry stakeholders who stay involved no matter what the outcome of National Elections. This would of course include Government input as well. Trust and respect between GOB and the private sector are essential for growth. A more modern democratic approach will lead to improvements beneficial to all through a revitalized show.

With the delays from pandemic flu causing a rescheduled NATS, controversies cooled and cooperation reigned in an atmosphere infused with relief that Belize was spared from the brunt of the flu. Agriculturalists from all parts of the country, many who only see each other annually at the show, discussed business, visited and shared ideas for future shows. Discussions covered the possibility of shows focusing more on agriculture, to be held throughout the calendar year at the GOB showground's or on private lands. Some stakeholders are suggesting that the show be held in late summer or early spring, when more crops are available for display (this could complement the high tourist season). Transport difficulties in the past, during the rains with the roads at that time had caused NATS to be set for late May. With our improved roads, that obstacle is removed.

As rapid global ramifications of the flu so clearly showed, the modern world demands the cooperation between the public and private sectors. To make the strides in agriculture necessary to meet the future, Belize must also follow this path. The agriculture industry surely needs a smooth functioning National Show. It's up to the private sector to see if they are ready to organize some additional shows.

As rapid global ramifications of the flu so clearly showed, the modern world demands the cooperation between the public and private sectors. To make the strides in agriculture necessary to meet the future, Belize must also follow this path. The agriculture industry surely needs a smooth functioning National Show. It's up to the private sector to see if they are ready to organize some additional shows.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

My name is Arnulfo Perrera, am a Belizean student at Escuela Agrícola Panamericana, El Zamorano, Honduras. Am currently on my final year of a 4 year course for a Bachelor's Degree in Science and Animal Production.

I think this is a wonderful idea to have to some actual information about the agriculture sector in our beautiful jewel of ours. Since producing our own food is an important key to our development as a country. I think there is plenty more that can be done on our productive sector, for example things that would be good to include are views of the important crops such as Sugar Cane, Bananas, Citrus amongst others.

Continues on page 3

Continues from page 2

- As well as to how we as a country are taking advantages of Genetically Modified Crops.
- How are we dealing with climate change: in the productive sector, with the excess use of pesticides and artificial fertilizers.
- Do our famers have had information on Biological Control agents as an option to pesticides

Once again I think this was a wonderful idea and there should be an issue in Spanish as well. So that this information may get to our small farmers for their knowledge.

Thanks,

Arnulfo A. Perrera
4th Year Student
Science and Animal Production
El Zamorano, Honduras

Dear Editor,

On a recent trip to Belize from Canada I noticed many backyard goaters. I was curious if there is any commercial goat farming in Belize? In your publication there was an article about raising sheep and the fact that demand outweighs supply. It seems to me that the climate and terrain of much of Belize would be more suited to the production of meat goats. Considering the numerous backyard goats I would have to assume there would be a market for goat meat. In much of Central America and most of the Caribbean countries the vast majority of red meat consumption is goat, so there would be the possibility of an export market as well. Great to see your new publication, I will be looking forward to your next issue on the internet, keep up the good work.

Stephen Blank
Alberta, Canada

Note

A very common but erroneous assumption is to mistake 'hair breed' sheep, such as Barbados Black Belly sheep, for goats. Another easy identifying trait is the tail. Sheep's tails are 'down', and goats' tails are 'up'.

Goat population is minimal countrywide, perhaps because Belizeans don't seem to share their Caribbean brothers' taste for the meat. The potential for goat meat production, and export to the Caribbean does seem viable though.

Dear Editor:

I have recently received emails like the following excerpted below, on the subject of DIOXIN CONTAMINATION FROM BOTTLED WATER LEFT IN CARS. I am wondering, if these carcinogens can leak out so easily in North American cars, in their temperate climate, what about contamination possibilities of the 5 gallon plastic bottles here in tropical Belize? These sit for weeks (or longer?) in the sun and extreme heat outside many business establishments. Is the Government of Belize able to test bottled water here for Dioxin contamination? Have they done so? Please look into this and print answers in your newsletter. I expect that bottled water is also as dangerous to men and children, as it is to women- they just haven't pinned it down yet. Carcinogenic is carcinogenic.

'women should not drink bottled water that has been left in a car. The heat reacts with the chemicals in the plastic of the bottle which releases dioxin into the water. Dioxin is a toxin increasingly found in breast cancer tissue. So please be careful and do not drink bottled water that has been left in a car. Pass this on to all the women in your life.'

Thank you.

Sincerely,

worried in Belmopan (name withheld by request)

Note

The Belize Ag Report has forwarded your concerns to BAHA. Unfortunately at the time of going to press we had not received a response. Hopefully, we will have one by our next issue.

Moms Place

629-5252

Serving Belizean / American
and Tex/Mex Foods

Open daily 6am - 10pm
Breakfast served all day!

Located on Joseph Andrews Dr.
San Ignacio
Parking Available

Organic Production

The Balance of the Seesaw...

I know that by now you are asking what an article about Seesaws is doing in an agricultural paper, but a Seesaw has more to do with agricultural practices than you would imagine.

The Seesaw is a device that is operated on balance. Thus agriculture is a practice that operates on balance. As a skinny child sitting on the Seesaw, I would always lose the balance when a healthier child would join the opposing seat. This taught me a lesson that I would like to share. The balance that must be maintained in any agricultural field is the balance of nutrients, the balance of insects and the balance of microbes. To obtain the balance there are two seats on the Agricultural Seesaw. One seat is weighted with chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides and chemical fungicides; the other seat is weighted with compost, organic pesticides and microbial propagation. Which seat is correct? The truth is that both are correct. The correctness is dependent on the perspective of the farmer and the choices they will make prior to starting a crop.

The land preparation costs are the same for both choices; each method is dependant on fuel costs for plowing and harrowing. The ph adjustment is very similar; the difference is that organic requires dolomitic lime. The dolomitic lime is slower to release, but will continue release over a longer period of time. With the cost comparison, the price per acre is similar. The increased variance in costs begins with the next processes. Chemical fertilizers compared to organic fertilizers in the Belize market is usually a minimum of a 2 to 1 price difference. The addition of insecticide application further adds to the initial planting stage for conventionally produced crops. For organic produced items, no insecticide is applied at this stage to protect the micro-organisms used in fertility breakdown. The micro-organisms biologically convert minerals into plant useable states for growth. As you see, the application of a pesticide at this point will remove the natural conversions for plant fertility use, and this process must be replaced with a chemical amendment to replace the nutrient availability. To state in a different way, the cost of the pesticide further requires the added cost of a chemical fertilizer for the crop to grow. Weed control takes two different methods; In conventional farming, the use of a pre-emergence or herbicide maintains weed suppression: and in organic methods cultivation is required on a more continual basis. A cost comparison between the two methods discloses that the conventional method requires the fuel and herbicides at a cost, where the organic method requires the fuel cost, and both costs are very similar over the crop season. With organic cultivation methods, the nitrogen, which is contained within the weeds, is turned under to allow the micronutrient fertility conversion for use by the current crop. Harvest pricing between the two different methods is identical.

The final comparison for the Seesaw is from the USDA database. Currently conventionally produced feed grade Soybeans are priced at US\$10.79 per bushel and organically produced Soybeans are US\$28.71 per bushel. This pricing difference has been maintained historically. With this final comparison, I have to ask the question, which seat of the Seesaw do you see your farm taking?

For further information on pricing see the following links:

Organic Pricing: http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/gx_gr120.txt

Conventional Pricing: <http://www.cbot.com/>

Greg Clark


Organic@belizeagreport.com

Tourist Information

Cheers

Great Bird Watching
Walk in Our Garden
Come check out our Gift Shop
We're only 2 & 1/2 Miles West
of the Belize Zoo

Mile 31 & 1/4
Western Highway
Belize



with a
tropical
twist

Local Specialties as
well as Burgers,
Soups, Salads,
And lots more...
All at very reasonable
prices.
We have Cabañas too!
Mon - Sat 6 am-8 pm
Sun: 7 am-7 pm

Phone: 501-822-8014
E-mail: anita@cheersrestaurant.bz
chrissy@cheersrestaurant.bz

Esperanza Fertilizer Established 1984

Call: 628 9301 or 620 1351

Severing Belize the Fertilizer It Needs

Save 50%-70% on all fertilizer!!!

100% Belizean Organic Fertilizer and Slow Releasing Rock Fertilizer

Dolomite 18 MgO	36.00/ton
Rock Fertilizer 0-1-17	\$90.00/ton
Rock Fertilizer 0-3-4	\$90.00/ton

Blended Mixes Supplying Trace Mineral and MgO, Calcium, and NKP

2-4-14	\$260.00/ton
6-3-6 General Purpose	\$200.00/ton
0-1-16	\$190.00/ton
2-1-6	\$200.00/ton
5-5-5 Flowering mix	\$250.00/ton

All prices by Metric Ton in Bulk. In bags, add \$20.00 per ton. Delivery \$15 to \$40 per ton Depending on location.

Organic fertilizer mix based on a 5,000 year old Chinese recipe!

COMPARE & SAVE!

Chemical fertilizer 19-9-19	Organic Fertilizer 6-3-6	Chicken Manure 1-0.5-1
1 Ton Chemical Fertilizer N.P.K	3.16 Ton Organic fertilizer N.P.K	19 Ton N.P.K Chicken Manure

General recommended application N.P.K
120lbs Nitrogen Chemical
60 Nitrogen organic or Manure
50lbs Phosphorus chemical or organic
120lbs Potassium

Thus total then to =

6.3 bags chemical fertilizer 19-9-19 per acre	19-9 bags organic 6-3-6 Fertilizer per acre	114 bags chicken manure Per acre
--	--	---

Cost per acre Chemical fertilizers \$510.30	Organic fertilizers \$200.00	Chicken manure \$684
--	---	---------------------------------



Bissy For Sale

I have been driving the Hummingbird Highway for many years and have a favorite fairy tale house that I admire. One day a few months ago a sign appeared outside saying "Bissy for Sale". I asked around and no one had the answer as to what bissy was. After driving passed several times curiosity got the better of me, I stopped, honked the horn and finally got to meet the owner of this pretty house. "What exactly is bissy?" I asked. I learned that her father, originally from Jamaica, had brought it here. It is a cure all for everything and a little grated and put under the tongue a few times a day will fix you up in a hurry for whatever ails you. "Ok but what exactly is it?" "I really do not know it as anything but bissy dear, but all I know is it works." \$1 bought me 3 hard somewhat triangular shaped nuts. Looked a little like a cross between a chestnut and a nutmeg. So off I went and once home tried it. Not unpleasant, no real taste, so could not really imagine it doing anything beneficial. Got on the internet and found it to be Kola nut, Cola nut, Guru nut, originally from Africa, many species but all touted as a miracle cure. Weeks later I took ill with fever and headache. The next day was even worse. On the third day feeling like death I dragged myself up to go seek medical attention. Got as far as the kitchen and saw the bissy. Grated it to a powder and put some under the tongue following the dosage instruction. Would you believe it by the evening I was not only better but fully recovered with renewed energy. So now I too am a bissy believer. In a nutshell this is what I have found out about it: Stimulant similar to caffeine. Used to be in Coca Cola. Said to be a good heart regulator, pick me up tonic, cure jaundice, control diabetes, headaches, menstrual cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and also improves digestion

Ways to take:

Add 1 teaspoon of fine grated bissy and 1 teaspoon of grated dry ginger to a flask of white rum. Leave for time to cure. Sip for upset stomach or belly ache.

Chew for alcohol poisoning or bad hangover.

Infusion of 1-2 teaspoon of powder in one cup of water bring to a boil and then reduce heat to a simmer for 15 minutes. Drink when needed. This can also be used as a tincture.

Safety: well I imagine as with anything caution should be

the word. Do not overdose.

Not for anyone allergic to caffeine. Anyone with heart problems and epilepsy should definitely consult a doctor and pregnant or nursing mothers avoid.

The tree comes originally from the Sierra Leone and Congo regions of Africa and these evergreen trees grow to about 40 feet.....

I do not know what varieties can be found in Belize but I expect Central Farm could tell us this.

If anyone has something interesting to add to this please e mail me Jenny Wildman: spectarte@gmail.com or pass on to the newsletter: Editor@belizeagreport.com



Bayshore Ltd.
www.bayshorebelize.com

REAL ESTATE

100 Embarcadero Road,
Maya Beach, Placencia,
Stann Creek, Belize.

Telephone: 501.523.8019
Cells: 672.2255, 604.8910
email: jwildman@lincsat.com

Telephone: 501.523.8019
Cells: 672.2255, 604.8910
email: jwildman@lincsat.com

You have seen our signs, come visit us at Maya Beach.
Check out our website for updates at
www.bayshorebelize.com



Spectarte

There is no place like **Spectarte** for paintings, sculptures, furniture, lighting, and unique treasures for home and gifts crafted by **Belizean** artists.



100 Embarcadero Road, Maya Beach,
Placencia, Stann Creek, Belize

We are open Thurs - Sun
10 am - 6pm or by appointment

501.523.8019
spectarte@gmail.com
Spectarte.com



If you enjoy this
Newsletter,
Tell Others.

If you think of a suggestion
for future issues

Tell us!

editor@belizeagreport.com

Diamond Realty



A Cut Above the Rest



West Street, San Ignacio, Cayo

Phone & Fax: 011-501-824-4450

Cellular: 670-7530 & 665-8894

E-mail: diamondbz@btl.net

Website: www.diamondbz.com

Peters Brake Service

Specializing in: ⁷

Repair and Reline of brakes and clutches



Herman Peters

Owner/Cell.: 604-2745



Contact Us At:
Garage Cell: 627-2797

Mile 66, Western Highway
Santa Elena, Cayo District

Ceiba Realty

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE INTERNATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Please let us send you a brochure that can aid you in a smart and safe purchase-just call or email us and we'll help you get started.

Sales: Jonathan Lohr
Telephone: 011-501-610-4458 (Belize)
Fax: 1-831-854-5983 (US)

Postal address:
119A Western Highway
San Ignacio, Cayo,
Email: properties@ceibarealtybelize.com
www.ceibarealtybelize.com



ACROSS

AIR CONDITIONER REPAIR
OR SERVICE SPECIALIST

Tel: 501 823 0358
SPANISH LOOKOUT

'cool across the jewel'

ALLEN'S HARDWARE

Rod & Aurelia Allen

Western Highway
Santa Elena Town
Cayo District
Belize C. A.

Tel.: (501) 824-2060
(501) 824-3751

Email: rallen@btl.net

Off the Grid

By

Belize Communication & Security Ltd.

Alternative energy is more than wonderful when the wind is blowing or the sun is shining or the creek is rushing. However, when the air becomes still, clouds are gathering and the creek becomes dry it is difficult to regress by pulling out the kerosene lanterns.

The words, "Alternative Energy" is not very descriptive and has differing definitions based upon one's experience. While wind, solar and hydro sources seem to be the common understanding to some, others consider alternative energy as walking rather than driving. Walking not only gets you somewhere but it also allows you to live longer and have a moment to look around at things you do not usually see and have time to visit with the person who may walk with you.

There are certainly other forms of alternative energy around and used in Belize and other countries. Biogas interest seems to be growing and those using biogas have good things to say about it. Then there is the more complex power systems such as solar thermal energy. As far as we know there are no solar thermal energy systems used in Belize but some have mentioned its value.

Alternative energy is not cheap which is why everyone does not participate. One would think with all the interest in solar or wind, mainly in developing countries, that the prices would drop. One reason that prices do not become more affordable is the increase in demand. Another reason is that developing countries have tax benefits for those using something other than fossil fuel (oil). We know that some States in the U.S. have tax deductions up to almost 50% of the first cost. Needless to say folks that could not afford the 100% price may be able to justify 50% of the original cost, thus more demand. Of course, in Belize, we do not have such substantial benefits and therefore pay the first price followed by shipping cost, duty, environmental tax and finally, sales tax.

BCSL has been using alternative energy for almost 20 years and has a great deal of experience, most of which involved in what not to do. And, we are still learning as technology changes. On the positive side you can reduce your power consumption compared to fossil fuel. But (there is a "but") you must do your home work and change your habits. We recommend to all our customers that they must learn how (and make it a habit) to switch something off when it really is not needed.

If you live in the bush and do not have any power, the motivation and justification grows and power becomes extremely important. If your budget is tight, start small and plan for the future. Four solar panels and a solar controller with an average of 170 Watts each will produce 765 Watts a day assuming you have sun and no clouds. Solar power does not start charging significantly until around 10:00 AM and starts decreasing around 2:30 PM. If you live in a remote area without power you can start your alternative energy effort by acquiring batteries and run your lighting using 12Volt Direct Current Lights. (Yes, Spanish Lookout still offers 12VDC bulbs).

When funding is available you can make your solar system more robust. In addition to a controller, batteries and solar panels you may wish to run 120Volt AC loads. For this you require an inverter to convert a 12VDC battery power (24V and 48V is also available) to 110V AC. Inverters are different in quality and price. We see China offering inverters for as little as US\$200.00. However, our experience with customer's bringing in low quality inverters is not good. Parts may not be available and technology is not sound. The best inverters have followed technology and have real sine wave inverters – just like mains power. Sometimes paying a bit more will save money in the long run.

About 15 years ago we discovered wind power. It is great if you have wind. Use of wind more or less limits those living inland. However, if you are on the coast or high in the mountains it is a joy. Small wind turbines will produce 400 Watts if the wind is blowing at 26mph. Turbines are not loud and obnoxious as they were in the times past. Our first wind turbine made so much noise that we were afraid to go outside thinking it might fall apart. But, today it is different. The names of the best turbines express the lack of noise or and vibration – The Whisper, Air Breeze, Skystream just to mention a few.

Regardless of need there is a wind turbine to match almost everyone's individual need from 400 Watts to 10,000 Watts. Turbines need to be installed in a clear area, away from or substantially above trees or other obstructions. The smaller turbines have voltage controllers built in the unit so no additional devices are required, except a mast or tower to raise the turbine to a higher level. We do not recommend attaching a wind turbine on a house. When the turbine is installed (yes, you can do it yourself if you read the directions) all you need to do is connect the wires to a battery and you are making power. Assuming wind speed is around 17 mph you can provide/produce up to 60 kWh per month. Of course, the wind must keep blowing which is not always the case.

Should you invest in wind or solar? Just a few thoughts. Solar's first cost is more expensive than turbines but turbines have a greater chance for maintenance. After all, turbines are mechanical but solar is passive with no moving parts.

We have found that solar and wind have a partnership when installed together. During the sunny day, the solar panels do their job. And, as the sun goes down, wind increases and takes care of nighttime power storage. While this does not happen all the time we have experienced this event often.

We mentioned that just installing alternative energy does not complete the alternative energy formula. You must take time to understand how wind and solar power works. Now that we have Internet it is not difficult to find numerous articles, instructions and anticipated and real results.

Continues on page 9



Keep your own counsel and visit with those who have the experience. Buy products that have a warranty in Belize and select a vendor you can trust and fix the problems.

If interested, start your investigation now; don't wait. Wind and sun are just waiting for you.

After your self-education your next effort should include making a survey of what power you require. Sit down and make a list of all loads you run. Loads are anything that draws electricity. The next step is to find out what the manufacturer indicates what appliance draws. It will be expressed in Watts or Amps. All electrical devices nowadays have a plate on the rear or bottom that gives you this information. (It's a good idea that you also write down the model and serial numbers which is usually near the power statement.)

Your final job is to estimate how long you use the load (appliance) during a 24 hour period – 15 minutes, 1 hour, etc. With the data you have collected you can estimate how many Watt hours you need to run your house or business.

Once your alternative energy system is in place it is important to monitor, measure, and meter (the 3M's) your system for optimal results. Living with alternative energy is a life-style. Knowledge of your systems performance statistics, combined with experience of local weather conditions and your family's seasonal energy needs becomes a part of that life-style.

Finally, we must address generators and fossil fuel. While we encourage the investigation and use of alternative energy, we do have recommendations which have worked for us. Install solar and wind power (if you have dependable wind) AND have an adequate generator in standby mode. In Belize we anticipate November through January. If the days are cloudy and wind is less than expected the ability to start a generator may save you from dark nights.

Alternative Energy will NOT take over power replacement right away, if ever in our lifetime. If you watch TV, listen to the radio or read the newspaper you will hear the "experts" tell us that alternative energy is the answer to money and power problems.

Belize Communication & Security Ltd.

For all your remote power and communication needs

BCSL

Because Communication Saves Lives

Two Unity Blvd - Belmopan
office@belizecommunication.com
Tel:822-2149

**Wholesale
Supplier**

Specialty Organic Items:

- Round Zucchini
- Seedless Watermelons
- Grape Tomatoes
- Leaf Lettuce
- Romaine Lettuce
- Yellow Cauliflower
- Organic Peanuts
- Fresh Herbs
- Cucumbers
- All Peppers
- Carrots

Certified Organic Producer of Fruits and Vegetables.

**Continuous Supply Available
for Restaurants, Resorts and
Markets.**

**Contract Grower for Menu
Planning Months in Advance.**



Sol Farms, Ltd.

Mile 52.1 Western Highway, Teakettle

628-9040

sales@solfarmsltd.com

Agriculture Prices at a Glance -\$\$\$\$

July 1, 2009

A & B denotes the difference in price between first preference & second preference
Trend (H) higher (L) lower (S) same

Cattle	Trend	A	B
Young Bulls, Steers, Heifers for slaughter	L	1.00- 1.05	0.95 -1.00
Aged Cows	L	0.80 - 0.85	0.75- 0.80
Old Bulls	L	0.95 - 1.00	0.80- 0.95
Heifers for breeding by the head	L	\$800 to	\$1500
Young grass cattle (300-550lbs)	L	1.05 - 1.10	1.00 - 1.05
Hogs		A	B
Weiner Pigs, per head - 30 to 50lbs	S	\$75.00 to	\$95.00
Butcher Hogs, per lb. - 125 - 200lbs	S	1.70 - 1.75	1.65 - 1.70
Sheep		A	B
Young Lambs for slaughter, per lb.	L	2.25 - 2.50	2.00 - 2.25
Mature Sheep, per lb.	L	1.70 - 1.75	1.60 - 1.70
Eggs		A	B
A & B according to size- per tray of 30	S	\$5.75	\$5.25
Chickens		A	B
Broilers- live per lb.	S	\$1.28	\$1.23
Old Hens	S	\$0.65	\$0.60
Citrus			
Oranges - per 90 lb	H	\$6.02 (final estimated pmt)	
Grapefruit - per 90 lb. box	H	\$3.50 (final estimated pmt)	
Grains, Beans & Rice		A	B
Corn per lb.(high quality, cleaned & sometimes bagged, makes the difference)	L	.23 - .26	.21 - .23
Milo per lb.	L	.20 - .22	.18 - .20
RK's, Blacks & Little Reds- per 100 lbs (wholesale)	S	125 -150	115 - 125
Black eye peas	S	1.00 - 1.20	.75- #1's @ S.P.
Rice: Paddy per lb.	L	\$0.30 - .33	
Wholesale milled per lb.	L	\$1.12	
Retail Control per lb	L	\$1.21	
Sugar		Corozal	Orange Walk
1st Payment (Cane)	S	\$36.81	\$34.50
After 2nd Payment (Cane)	S	46.00 est.	46.00 est.
Processed Sugar - White (112#sack)	S	.45 controlled	.50 retail
Processed Sugar - Brown (112#sack)	S	.39 controlled	.45 retail
Bananas			
Export Price - per 40 lb Box	S	\$8.42 U.S.	
Wholesale - per 40 lb Box	S	\$6.00 BZ	
Retail - per 10	S	\$1.00 BZ	
Fruit & Vegetables per lb		Wholesale	Retail
Tomatoes	S	.50 - 75	1.00 - 1.50
Cabbage	S	.30 - .60	.75 - 1.25
Cucumber	S	.30 - .50	.75 - 1.25
Peppers	S	1.25 -2.00	2.50 - 3.50
Carrots	S	.75 - 1.00	1.25 - 1.50
Milk (price paid to farmers by the processor) per lb	S	.48 - .51	

The supplies vary according to the time of the year, weather and imports. Also the wholesale to retail price mark ups vary as well. The prices and terms are best estimates from our best sources and simply provide range to assist buyers and sellers in negotiations. I included a trend line to give an idea about the supply and demand price results.

Notes: It seems that we in agriculture are being caught by the economic crisis that is affecting us, our neighbors and the world. In past similar eras, Belize seemed to be less effected. As I talk to farmers and livestock producers around the country, everybody is feeling the pinch. The common answer seems to be that we need to seek markets with our neighbors who have high populations and are seeking imports. To that end, it will only happen when Government and private sector join together to establish relationships with the users about BELIZEANS PRODUCTS - I am very encouraged and I see it beginning to happen- Thanks Minister and GOB

Material and information gathered by John Carr

Ask Rubber Boots

Hi there, Rubber Boots,

Question: How can I prevent grasshoppers, leaf-cutter ants and other leaf-eating insects from eating my plants?

Answer: Use 3 tablespoons of *garlic oil* with 3 drops of detergent in a quart of water and pour solution into a spray bottle. The spray does not harm the plants but deters insects. The recipe for garlic oil is the following:

- 1 whole bulb of garlic, minced
- 1 cup of vegetable oil

Mix the garlic and oil together in a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Put the mixture into the refrigerator to steep for a day or two. (If your eyes don't water when you open the lid, add another bulb of minced garlic and wait a day.) Strain out the solids; pour the oil into a fresh jar. Keep it in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it.

R.B.

+++++

If you have any questions or tips for Rubber Boots, please send them to; rubberboots@belizeagreport.com

Stallion Service

2009 Nats Champ

3/4 Thoroughbred

1/4 Quarter Horse

\$500.00

Cedar Bluff Ranch

664-7272

Belize Ag Report

Looking for oldest
working tractor
in Belize.

Please call 664-7272
or Email editor@belizeagreport.com

Sweet Ting



Cheesecakes

Over 30 Gourmet Flavors Available!

Cakes & Party Trays

Jaime Vega

610-4174

Continued from front page

community, is known as one who does not hesitate to set priorities, roll up his sleeves, and follow things through. He has attended BLPA meetings and is a valued friend to Belizean agriculture. His efforts are deeply appreciated at this critical juncture.

Ranchers and members of the public wanting more information from BLPA can reach the executive Secretary, Mr. Harry Parham or Office and Field Manager Mr. Roger Cal, at BLPA's headquarters, Mile 47 Western Highway. BLPA reminds ranchers to be current with the Annual Fee of \$100., prerequisite to qualify for voting privileges at the 2009 Annual Meeting. Directors are Mr. Frank Remple, Mr. Leo Sanchez, Mr. Rudy Crawford, Mr. Fred Hunter, Mr. Edmond Longsworth, Mr. Abdala Bedran, Mr. John Carr, Treasurer, Mr. John Dyck, Secretary, and Dr. Errol Vanzies, Chairman.

By B. Roberson

for more information, go to pages 21-23 of our online edition to read the Oct. 08 article, "Belize cattle producers work to open markets", from The Western Livestock Journal.



Come and join us at

KO-OX HAN-NAH

(LET'S GO EAT)

Best Restaurant in town!

Located on Burns Ave,

San Ignacio, Cayo





Belize National Youth Chess Foundation
"Chess as an Educational and Motivational Tool"



THE ADVENTURE OF CHESS ..

During the past two years the Belize National Youth Chess Foundation has developed a nation wide primary youth chess program, teaching chess as a "Motivational and Educational Tool" to primary children throughout the Nation.

At this time, over 400 children are now playing members of over 50 chess teams throughout the country and 120 volunteers have been trained as entry level chess coaches.

Although all children are encouraged to join chess clubs sponsored by BNYCF, the Foundations goal is working with disenfranchised and at-risk youths from throughout the six districts of Belize.

Chess is far more than just a game. If taught correctly, as an educational and motivational tool, chess will benefit a child in more ways than can possibly be imagined.

Developing the "Chess In Belize" national program teaches the children: Discipline, Critical thinking, Logical thinking, Memory development, Ability to analyze actions and consequences, Pattern recognition, Creativity, Problem solving, Planning ahead, the ability to setting up short and long terms goals, sportsmanship and Intellectual and emotional maturity and development of Cognitive skills. All skills that will enhance a child's future ability to be successful throughout their lives.

The Belize National Youth Chess Foundation is now close to ending its full second year of promoting chess throughout Belize and is holding its second annual "Belize Chess Olympiad, 2009" on Saturday, April 25th, starting at 8:00 am at the Belmopan UB Gymnasium. We invite donations to support the efforts of the BNYCF in the organizing of the "Chess Olympiad 2009" and to have all interested in supporting the BNYCF to attend the Olympiad on the 25th.

For more information, please write to: BNYCF, belizechess@cavesbranch.com . To see the current events information and pictures from the previous events, please visit our website at www.belizechess.org and we hope that you will get involved and join us in this great adventure of chess.

Profitable Ag Markets

The Key to One of the Twin Pillars.

I mention one of the twin pillars as we have heard for years about the Twin Pillars of our economy *****Tourism and Agriculture***** You can talk to about anyone involved in the tourism industry at about any level and they will probably say they are in a business slow down phase (some tourism aspects have nearly stopped). How we market what we have produced determines our future, affecting: 1. Local food sustainability 2. Expansion 3. Foreign exchange. 4. Debt repayment 5. Government revenues and 6. Improvement of a progressive standard of living for all of us. On the other hand, if we produce agricultural products and are unable to sell them or we have to sell them at below cost of production, we will be a non-contributor to all of the above.

We must take care of and support the Agriculture Pillar which includes sugar, citrus, bananas, corn, beans, rice, pigs; we will also include shrimp and fish farming as well. Needless to say we all **eat vegetables everyday** and those producers also need markets and profits.

Often times we farmers (all inclusive by name) get so involved in crop production that we forget to put an equal or appropriate amount of time to seek a fair and ready market. One thing is for sure, that farm production takes months and even years of preparation and it requires a continuous flow of labor, sweat, sleepless nights and not to mention money you must use (often times borrowed) to succeed. All of the above applies to a farmer whether he works ten acres of vegetables or a citrus/corn/beans farmer with several hundred acres- we are all in the same boat. Because of unpredictable

weather, insects, fungi and hurricanes, we always face the risk of low production or disaster. We compensate those problems by sometimes having a good year in which we pay our bills and maybe have some left over.

I am talking to farmers, GOB officials and other business men who believe we can **expand our food product by ten times over the next ten years**. This will only happen if we develop a trade relationship with our neighbors -**We must export to survive**. We have close neighbors in Mexico, Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras and the Caribbean who all import corn and other products from the U.S. We are closer to many of these destinations and in many cases we feel we have an equal or better product.

We have to form relationships locally- **producers and government**- and convince our neighbors that it is to their advantage to trade with us. We must lobby together which includes the Ministries of Agriculture, Finance, Trade, Health, Customs and certainly BAHA. We must develop a changed attitude that says "Here's what we can do to facilitate the export market". Often times there exists an attitude of "Here's the reason we can't do it". For many of us, positive marketing or lack of the same leads us to success or failure.

Let's all join hands and share ideas that promote two way trades with our neighbors.

By John Carr, Banana Bank Ranch

- **Fresh cuts and processed meat products**
- **Beef & Pork**
- **The Running W store at Mile 63 Western Highway offers factory outlet prices on all products**



**Wholesale and Retail
Gasoline & Diesel
We Deliver**

**Tel: 824-2199
Cell: 610-1970**



**Santa Elena
24 Hrs.**

TOBAR'S
Home Construction

½ Mile Iguana Creek Bridge
Spanish Lookout / Cayo
Belize / Central America

Phone: 824-2660, Fax: 824-2673
office@tobar-construction.com
www.tobar-construction.com



Innovative Wood and Concrete Houses - A Variety of Construction and Service.

Belize Agriculture & Adventure Package

Package Description

Every morning you will start your day with a delicious Caribbean breakfast of eggs, beans, tropical fruits, fry jacks or pancakes, fresh squeezed orange juice, coffee or tea. All the farm tours are personally conducted by the owner or our qualified guides who know and have been a part of the culture and history of Belize and Banana Bank. During river activities you can see birds, iguanas and monkeys. Our river activities can be fishing with a local (bring your own pole) boat tour, river tubing or kayaking. Our horses are trained as per horse whispering methods.



For a clearer image in colour go to www.belizeagreport.com July/Aug issue

Learn about the German descent Mennonites, their farming methods then and now. They produce 90% of the country's dairy and poultry products as well as export grains and beans. Central Farm is a government centre where the agriculture school and many labs for soil & seed testing are based. During the course of the tour, information and discussions will include: *Tropical climate farming with year round 80 degrees plus and 80 inches of rain *Soil types and how they are managed, maintained and improved. *Cattle breeds that are successful in the tropics *Markets both local and export *Niche crops specific to the tropics and the biodiversity of Belize *Farming practices yet emerging from the Stone Age to mechanization *Land ownership and retirement

7 days / 6 nights - includes meals, tours, transfers, accommodations, entry fees, guides & taxes

\$1305.00 per person (based on double occupancy)

BELIZE-MICHIGAN PARTNERS MORINGA TREE NUTRITION PROJECT

Dr. Chris Bennett, President

I first heard of Moringa in August, 2005, when Dr. Don Harter visited Belize. Dr. Harter is a retired Professor of Agriculture from Idaho, U.S.A. and a member of the Partners of the Americas. I was excited to hear about the nutritional and health benefits of Moringa and I was immediately convinced that Moringa could have tremendous benefits in Belize.

The National Moringa Tree Nutrition Project was launched in November, 2006, during the Partners of the Americas 2006 International Convention, which was being hosted in Belize by the Belize-Michigan Partners. Belizeans are very nutrition and health conscious and were therefore easily convinced of the great benefits of Moringa.

The Moringa Tree is actually referred to as a 'Miracle Tree' and it originates in Asia/Africa. It provides a boost in energy, nutrition and health. In fact, in the Philippines they refer to it as 'mother's best friend' because of the great health and nutrition benefits the tree has to the whole family. Research has shown that ounce per ounce, the leaves of the Moringa Tree have seven times the amount of Vitamin C that would be found in oranges. It has four times the Vitamin A found in carrots, three times the Iron found in spinach, four times the Calcium in milk, two times the protein in milk and three times the Potassium in bananas. Besides the nutritional benefits, international research has also shown that it affects high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis and the immune system.

In March, 2007, 5000 young Moringa plants, along with Moringa Tree Information Leaflets were distributed FREE of cost to families in villages, towns and cities throughout Belize. The Moringa Tree Information Leaflet described methods of using the Moringa leaves, the Pods, the Peas, the Flowers and the dried seeds. The various nutritional and medicinal benefits were also highlighted.

The plant was later put on sale and the general population continued to secure their Moringa plants. We received requests from people from high, middle and low socio-economic backgrounds. They were using the leaves raw or in their favourite recipes. As their plants matured, they were making Moringa drinks with the leaves. Others were drying the leaves and grinding them to make Moringa Powder. This was then sprinkled on their prepared foods to obtain the immense benefits. Charlie's wine is now producing Moringa wine. Perhaps a pleasurable way to get health benefits.

In March, 2009, in Punta Gorda Town, a Moringa Tree Nutrition Workshop was conducted to expand the Moringa Tree Nutrition Project, in the Toledo District. More than 100 community leaders, from various communities in the Toledo District, were given 9,000 Moringa seeds and 9,000 nursery bags. The leaders would then form Committees and plant the seeds, and so instead of distributing the Moringa seeds to the families, two young Moringa plants will be given to each family in the Toledo District, along with a Moringa Tree Information Leaflet. The participants gave an undertaking that they will encourage the families in the Toledo District to use the Moringa on a daily basis.

The Belize-Michigan Partners is hoping that Moringa will become a household name and a staple food in Belize.

It should be mentioned that Moringa Oil is of an excellent quality (73% Oleic Acid) similar to Olive Oil. Again Agricultural Research has shown that Moringa leaf extract contains growth hormone, Moringa shoots can be used as a green manure, and Moringa leaves improve milk yields and daily weight gains in cattle and pigs.

For further information or to purchase Moringa plants at \$10 each, please contact

Dr. Chris Bennett, Tel: 223 0404 email: bennett@btl.net.



Dr Chris Bennett & Dr Don Harter

Partners of the Americas was formed in 1965, by U.S.A President, John F. Kennedy, as the people-to people component of the Alliance for Progress. The Partners of the Americas works by linking 45 U.S. States with Mexico, Caribbean, South American and Central American countries. Belize is linked with Michigan to form the Belize-Michigan Partners. Partners promotes broader citizen participation, train leaders and mobilize hemisphere collaboration. Partners Programs include different aspects of citizen participation, education, youth, agriculture, health, family life, economic development, culture, etc.


BRC PRINTING &
DESKTOP PUBLISHING LTD.

Nazarene St. Benque Viejo
Tel: 823-3139 Fax: 823-3082
E-mail: brc@btl.net

ADVERTISER INDEX

AG SUPPLIES/PRODUCTS Page

Agro-Vet Jiron	19
Allen's Hardware	7
Esperanza Fertilizer	5
James Brodie & Co.	20
Running W	14
Sol Farms Ltd.	10

BUILDERS

Tobar's Home Construction	15
---------------------------	----

FARMS/RANCHES

Banana Bank Ranch	16
-------------------	----

GALLERIES/GIFTSHOPS

Spectarte	6
-----------	---

HOTELS/RESTAURANT/CATERING/TOURISM

Agriculture adventure tours	16
Banana Bank Lodge	19
Cheers	4
KO-OX HAN -NAH (lets go eat)	12
Moms Restaurant	3
Sweet Ting	12

LIVESTOCK/ANIMALS

Stallion Service	12
German Sheppard Puppies	18
Belize Bird Rescue	18

REAL ESTATE BROKERS

Bayshore Ltd.	6
Ceiba Realty	7
Diamond Realty	7
Holdfast Ltd.	18

SERVICES

Across	7
Belize Communication & Security Ltd.	9
CP Gas	15

IF YOU LOVE THEM ... LET THEM FLY FREE

If you see an injured wild bird, or an abused or poorly cared-for captive bird report it to the Government of Belize Forestry Department, 822 1523/4



Bird Sanctuary and Rehabilitation Centre

Cayo District, Belize

Phone: (+501) 822 1145

Cell: 610 0400 / 602 4291

E-mail: info@belizebirdrescue.com

contact Belize Bird Rescue if you would like advice on caring for your pet or wish to enter your bird into our Rehabilitation Program

Injured bird? Unwanted or problem parrot?

Consider donating him to Belize Bird Rescue's Rehabilitation Program.

Our aim is to rehabilitate and return the bird to the wild. See www.belizebirdrescue.com or call 602 4291 for details

Black pure bred German Shepherd pups for sale

Born May 11/09. 2 males, 2 females

\$650 Bz

Contact Nadege at 678-6700



HOLDFAST LTD.

RIVER FRONT SPECIALISTS

Cedar Bluff

Riverfront Community

Macal River , Common Area

Security, Underground Utilities

1 mile from San Ignacio

662-5700 / 663-6777

HoldfastBelize.com



BANANA BANK RANCH
FARMING, CATTLE, HORSES, HOTEL
 E-mail: bbl@bananabank.com

Ph: 501-820-2020



ONE YEAR
 HAWK COUNTRY
 HAWK BROWN

CORN
 RED KIDNEY BEANS
 BLACK EYED PEAS
 SPECIALTY BEANS



JOHN CARR OWNER



www.bananabank.com

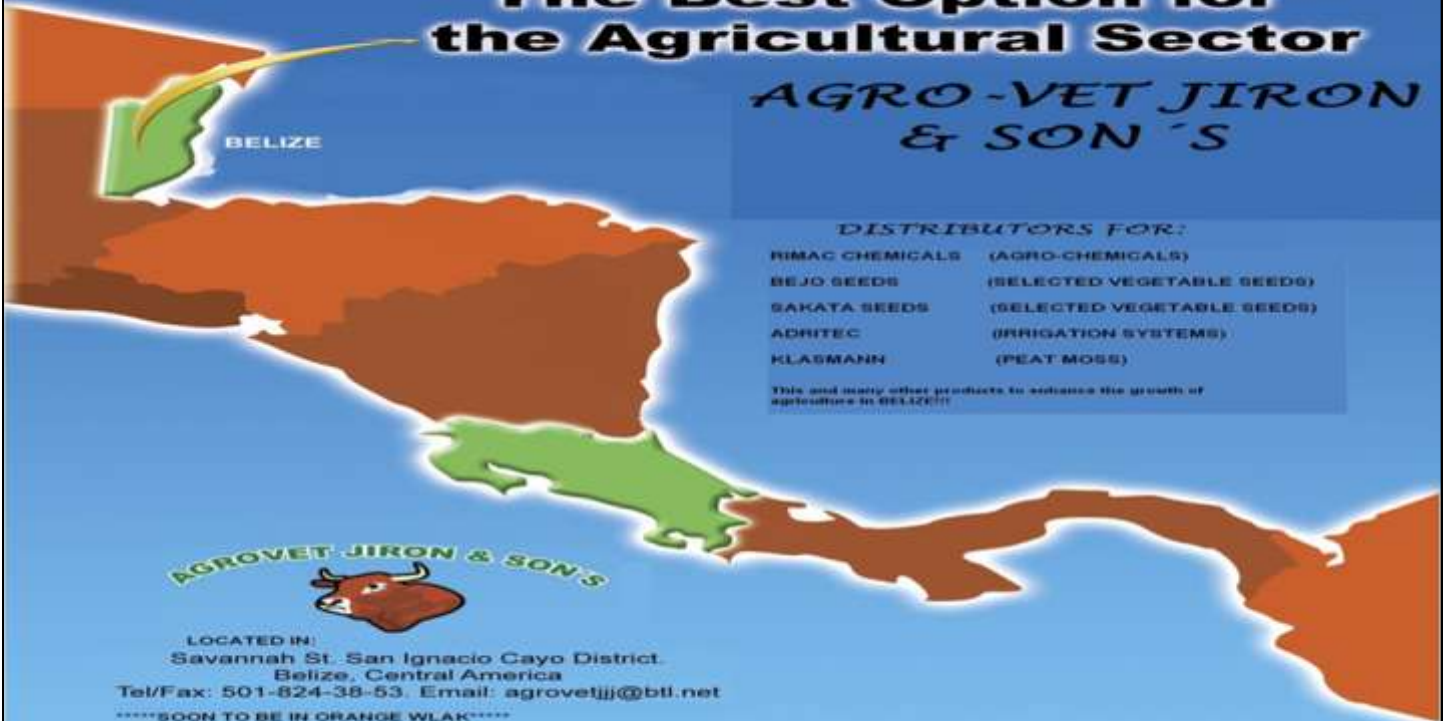
**Now in Belize...
 The Best Option for
 the Agricultural Sector**

**AGRO-VET JIRON
 & SON'S**

DISTRIBUTORS FOR:

- RIMAC CHEMICALS (AGRO-CHEMICALS)
- BEJO SEEDS (SELECTED VEGETABLE SEEDS)
- SAKATA SEEDS (SELECTED VEGETABLE SEEDS)
- ADRITEC (IRRIGATION SYSTEMS)
- KLASMANN (PEAT MOSS)

This and many other products to advance the growth of agriculture in BELIZE!!!



LOCATED IN:
 Savannah St. San Ignacio Cayo District.
 Belize, Central America
 Tel/Fax: 501-824-38-53. Email: agrovettjj@btli.net
 *****SOON TO BE IN ORANGE WLAK*****

"Quality Products At The Best Prices In The Country"

JAMES BRODIE & CO. LTD.

AGROCHEMICAL DIVISION

For Reliable High-Quality
Agricultural Products



syngenta

Amistar

KRISMAT

BRAVO

VONDOZEB

Ridomil GOLD

Semevin350

TOUCHDOWN
FORTE

ENGEO

WEEDMASTER

METALOSATE

MERTECT

KNO₃

Gesaprim

GESAPAX50sc

Igran_{sc}5c

MATCH

Aliette

PEGASUS

SANSON

FOLIO GOLD

ACARISTOP

VERTIMEC

karate

WIFEOUT 35.65L

Actara



www.brodiesbelize.com

Gift Certificates
Available

Take Advantage Of Our
Hire Purchase & Lay Away Plans
And 5% Discount on Fridays
Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays

Details for the BLPA District Meetings for Cattle Producers to be held in August 2009

Look for Dates, Times and Venues, which will be posted online here mid-July.

COROZAL -

ORANGE WALK -

BELIZE -

CAYO -

STANN CREEK-

TOLEDO -

BELIZE CATTLE PRODUCERS WORK TO OPEN MARKETS

-Trade with Mexico a top priority

From the perspective of a U.S. cattle producer, it may sometimes seem that trade woes are isolated to, or at least exaggerated, in the U.S. The truth, however, is that cattle producers around the world fight the same battle as producers in the U.S., working hard to keep reliable avenues of trade open with other countries for mutual benefit.

Such is the case in Belize, where the successful future of cattle ranching may hinge on the country's ability to open live cattle trade with Mexico, a country with a burgeoning middle class and nearly 110 million people.

Cattle producers there have long been fighting to work towards trade agreements with neighboring countries that would offer a chance for Belize's high cattle production potential to find a stable, open market.

Belize is a tiny country in Central America (though it is recognized as part of the Caribbean) roughly the size of Massachusetts. With a population of only 300,000, it is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world. One of the Belizean government's top priorities is developing agriculture within the country, which means providing infrastructure and greater trade opportunities. A large portion of the country's population in rural areas still engages in subsistence agriculture, raising a few chickens or cattle and growing food on a limited basis.

Bordered on a short stretch to the north by Mexico, and to the west and south by Guatemala, the country is well situated to provide a supply of cattle to its higher-population neighbors,

but trade is currently a major hang-up.

John Carr, a longtime cattleman in Montana and Kansas, has been living in Belize for over three decades and has become fully involved in the Country's efforts to expand beef production and trade. Statistics on Belize's cattle industry are few and far between, but Carr and others know that because of the country's low population – and beef consumption – trade with outside interests would benefit the Belizean cattle industry greatly.

“[We have] a rather loose population count of some 70,000 head of cattle in the country, and Belizeans only eat an estimated 15 – 17 pounds of beef per capita per year,” explains Carr. “We eat little because of a stigma going back to no electricity or refrigeration, low quality standards, and it costs more than chicken- we eat 90 pounds of chicken per capita annually. We do have a surplus of beef and room for expansion, along neighbors who seemingly want to buy -but there are a few hurdles.”

Indeed, with one of the largest cities in the world (Mexico City, with well over 20 million inhabitants) just a short truck ride away from Belize, analysts agree that beef-hungry Mexico would be a strong market for Belizean cattle.

“Mexico is definitely short on cattle; there's no doubt about that,” says Jim Robb of the Livestock Marketing Information Center. “Year-to-date, the U.S. has already imported about 300,000 fewer head of feeder cattle from Mexico, which is saying something. Many people don't realize that cattle production in Mexico's northern states is mostly limited to cow/calf operations which market specifically to the U.S. for domestic consumption – and for places like Mexico City – most of those cattle are getting sucked out of the countries to the south of Mexico.”

Carr, who like most Belizean producers has raised exclusively Brahma cattle in the past, has recently brought in Simmental genetics from the U.S. in an effort to improve carcass characteristics. But with no place to go with the beef, opening borders is crucial.

“The main worries are brucellosis and tuberculosis, said Carr, noting the greatest hurdles to open border trading policies with Mexico and Guatemala. “We are rapidly working on some sort of country-wide process to find and declare disease-free areas. We are not aware of any suspects for those diseases for over 20 years, but we can't verify this because we have no checking system.

He continued by saying cattle movement in both Belize and surrounding countries in unregulated, and that many officials turn a blind eye to smuggling. By the same token, this un-

checked movement of animals is another known hitch in developing legal trade.

“Because only a fence or a river separates the pastures [between countries], smuggling is somewhat acceptable – as officials on both sides know,” said Carr. “But turn it the other way, and this makes it very hard to develop trade and move forward.”

Derrell Peel of Oklahoma State University says that Mexico City alone would indeed be a strong market for cattle if Belize were to gain access.

“The data that I have suggests that the monthly total for major slaughter facilities in Mexico City is around 45,000 head per month. Undoubtedly, there is some additional slaughter not captured in that number,” he noted.

As Treasurer of the Belize Livestock Producers Association (BLPA), Carr is at the forefront of Belize’s efforts to open trade with Mexico, BLPA, which has been active for some 50 years, initially gave automatic membership to those owning five head of cattle or more, but recently changed membership requirements to include a fee of \$100 BZ (about \$50 USD) per year in order to become a voting member.

Illegal cattle trade with Mexico has been happening for quite some time, as Mexican cattle producers have traditionally worked to keep out competition. Now that Mexico is in need of more cattle for a population which increasingly demands more expensive sources of protein, that may be changing.

In addition, Carr said he is excited by the recent appearance of the Mexican ambassador to Belize at BLPA’s meetings, which he hopes will help fast-track the efforts of Belizean cattle producers to gain access to Mexico.

“We are very excited that the resident Mexican ambassador wants to expose us and help us with our trade problems - we are optimistic that this will be a big help,” Carr pointed out. “Trade on a limited basis has always existed on the back roads, but we both recognize the need for something better. The Mexican livestock associations have wanted to protect their industry from competition, even if we weren’t exactly competition, so there was some resistance. But actually, we are the closest to closure on transaction procedures that we have ever been, in my opinion.”

– **Tait Berlier, WLJ Editor**

Article appeared in October 27 2008 issue of Western Livestock Journal.