

U.S. Mission Belize

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA/APHIS/IS)

Fact Sheet



USDA/APHIS/IS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), International Services, (IS) is the international arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture charged with protecting U.S. agriculture with missions abroad. This is achieved by working in cooperative programs with foreign governments in dealing with different plant and animal pests and diseases of importance to the United States and the foreign country depending on the region.

Mediterranean Fruit Fly Program

In Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico, the pest of most economic importance for USDA is the Mediterranean fruit fly, or medfly. This program has been ongoing in Belize since 1977. The main objective of the program in Belize is to maintain an established surveillance system capable of detecting and eradicating any introduction of this pest quickly and efficiently. Working closely with our counterpart agency, The Belize Agricultural Health Authority, BAHA, we have managed to detect and eradicate every medfly introduction since it first appeared in 1987.

Plant Health

The plant diseases that the USDA keeps an alert on in Belize are the Fruit flies including the Mediterranean Fruit fly (Medfly), Mexican Fruit fly, and host of other fruit flies known as the Anastrepha Species. Huanglongbing, also known as Citrus greening is having an impact on Belize's citrus industry and the US is also being affected in Florida and Texas. California is already taking precautionary measures to prevent the establishment of this disease in their State. The Kudzu Bug, which affects most of the bean family but prefers soybean is established the State of Georgia is also of interest in Belize, several specimens have been found in traps established at the Belize Philip Goldson International Airport. The potato Zebra chip virus, another disease established in certain parts of the US is of interest for the Belize authorities and the USDA, which monitors the disease movement. The tomato leaf miner known as *Tuta absoluta* is known to occur in Panama and is moving up north. This is also a disease of concern for countries like Belize and the USA.

Animal Health

The USDA keeps a keen interest in Foreign Animal Disease of interest to the United States and the region. Classical Swine Fever, Avian Influenza, Foot and Mouth Disease, Vesicular Stomatitis, Antrax, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Equine Encephalomyelitis are just a few of the diseases of interest in the region. We keep a close working relationship with the Animal Health Department and provide training and laboratory referral disease diagnoses for these disease. We assist in the diagnosis of any disease that has the symptoms above mentioned disease. Throughout the years the years the USDA has sponsored veterinarians from Belize for training activities at the Plum Island Center for Disease in New York. This is the only Laboratory in the world that keeps the disease agents for most of the disease mentioned above for research purposes.

Papaya Certification Program

Belize is the only country in Central America that is recognized as a Medfly free area by the USDA and the International Plant Protection Convention IPPC of the United Nations. Thus Belize is allowed to export Fresh Papayas to the Continental United States under certain Phytosanitary and Food Safety conditions stipulated in the Papaya Certification Program workplan. The USDA ensures that BAHA complies with the stipulated conditions in the work plan in the field and the packing house.

Digital Resources

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