

BACKGROUND

The National Biosafety Committee (NBC) was appointed in November 2002 by the Minister of Agriculture. The agencies, organizations, government departments that are represented on the NBC include the following: Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, Natural Resources and the Environment, Commerce and Industry, National Development, Health, The Attorney Generals Ministry, The Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), International Regional Organization for Health in Agriculture (OIRSA), Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), Belize Citrus Growers Association, Belize Banana Growers Association, and the University of Belize. The mandate of the NBC includes: reviewing the use of Living Modified Organisms or Genetically Modified Organisms (LMOs/GMOs); drafting an appropriate policy and legislation for biosafety and LMO/GMO use; and making recommendations for addressing current and future biosafety issues in Belize.

The NBC became a formal entity when Belize joined other regional countries to participate in the United Nations Environment Programme/ Global Environment Facility (UNEP/GEF) project entitled "Development of National Biosafety Framework". This project aims to assist countries in the development of national biosafety regulatory and administrative regimes, decision-making systems including risk assessment, and mechanisms for public participation in biosafety related issues and decisions.

The Government of Belize, through the Ministry of National Development is the National Executing Agency (NEA) providing administrative support to the project. The Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) is the Implementing Agency and provides technical and scientific assistance to the NBC. These entities work in close collaboration with relevant government departments, international agencies, private sector participants and non governmental organizations.



2nd National Consultation on

The Development of a National Biosafety Framework in Belize

Ministry of National Development
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
National Biosafety Committee
Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA)
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
Global Environmental Facility (GEF)

National Public Consultation on the Draft Biosafety Policy will be held in:

Orange Walk	October 18	<i>CLICO (Formerly British Fidelity Assurance Ltd)</i>	<i>8:00 am</i>
Belize City	October 20	<i>Northern Fishermens Cooperative</i>	<i>8:00 am</i>
Belmopan	October 25	<i>George Price Center</i>	<i>8:00 am</i>
Punta Gorda	October 27	<i>Father Ring Parish Hall</i>	<i>8:00 am</i>

Facilitated by: National Biosafety Committee (Belize)



Biotechnology

The term “Biotechnology” refers to any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms, or derivatives thereof, to make or modify products or processes for a specific use. Biotechnology in the form of traditional fermentation techniques has been used for decades to make bread, cheese or beer. It has also been the basis of traditional animal and plant breeding, such as hybridization and the selection of plants and animals with specific characteristics to create for example crops which produce higher yields of grain. The difference with “modern Biotechnology” is that researchers can now take a single gene from a plant or animal cell and insert it in another plant or animal cell to give it a desired characteristic, such as a plant that is resistant to a specific pest or disease.

Biosafety

Biosafety is a term used to describe efforts to reduce and eliminate the potential risks resulting from Biotechnology and its products.

Living Modified Organism (LMOs) or Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

A Living Modified Organism (LMO) is defined in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as any living organism that possesses a novel combination of genetic material obtained through the use of modern biotechnology. The Protocol also defines the terms “living organism” and modern biotechnology’. In everyday usage LMOs are usually considered to be the same as GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) and is the term that will be used in Belize.

OBJECTIVES

1. To sensitize stakeholders and the general public on the development and implementation of the National Biosafety Framework (NBF) in Belize.
2. To present and obtain input on the draft National Biosafety Policy of Belize.

AGENDA

October 18, 2006

Facilitators: Dr. Edwin Martinez Technology and Information Specialist
Mr. Neville McAndrew Agronomist - CARDI

- 8:00 am Registration of Participants**
- 8:30 am Welcome and overview of Consultation**
Mr. Wilmot Garnet, Chairman, National Biosafety Committee (NBC)
- 8:45 am The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: History, content and implementation**
Dr. Michael De Shield, National Biosafety Focal Point
- 9:45 am Coffee Break**
- 10:00 am Belize Capacity Assessment and NBF recommendations**
i. Policy
ii. Legal
iii. Administration
iv. Risk assessment
v. Public Awareness and Education
NBC Committee Members
- 11:30 Discussions – Comments – Recommendations**
Participants
- 1:00 pm Closing**
Ms. Francine Magloire, Director of Projects, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
- 1:15 pm Lunch**