

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

## **BAHA, MAF & MOH RESPOND TO RABIES CASE IN BELIZE DISTRICT**

Belmopan - 22 August, 2008

The Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory of the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) in Central Farm reported that two horse brain samples submitted from the Belize District were positive for rabies. These findings have been confirmed by the Diagnostic Laboratory in Guatemala.

As rabies was highly suspected by the veterinarians attending the cases, the remaining 60 horses were immediately vaccinated for rabies. Given the BAHA results, a coordinated response among BAHA, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health was initiated early. As it is believed that the rabies disease was transmitted by vampire bats, a vampire bat control programme is being planned, beginning next week. Rabies was last reported in the Belize District in 2006.

While BAHA is at the forefront in the diagnosis and control of animal diseases, the achievements are as a result of strong partnerships and coordination among all stakeholders. The Ministries of Agriculture and Health are working closely with BAHA to ensure control of this rabies outbreak.

The Ministry of Health is providing vaccination for all people considered exposed to the horses and will be vaccinating dogs in the affected village. The Ministry of Agriculture and BAHA will be vaccinating farm animals and trapping vampire bats.

BAHA recommends that all animal owners vaccinate their animals including cattle for rabies every year.

Further information can be obtained from:

Dr. Victor Gongora,  
BAHA, Central Farm, Cayo.  
Tels. 824-4899/4872.