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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Sugar Industry Control Board Holds Special Meeting to Revise Crop Production Estimates**

*Belmopan. December 28, 2020. 10:20 a.m.*

The Sugar Industry Control Board (SICB) held a special meeting on Sunday, December 27, to discuss and review the production estimates for crop 2020-21 that had been previously presented by the Sugar Cane Production Committee.

The meeting was held due to concerns that more than 2,700 cane farmers, which is approximately 50% of existing cane farmers, would be negatively impacted by the previous production estimates, resulting in significant losses in tonnage of cane delivered to the factory. Cane farmers had raised concerns about this issue and had indicated they were not willing to start the crop season with the estimates as previously presented, and would hold protests to make their concerns heard. As a result, the meeting was called as a fulfillment of the Government of Belize's promise to listen and work closely with farmers to ensure the productive sector is assisted as much as possible.

The meeting was attended by six of the 11 directors of the SICB, constituting a quorum for the meeting, though it is noted that neither ASR-BSI nor the Progressive Sugar Cane Producers Association or the Corozal Sugar Cane Producers Association sent representation to the meeting. The motion to discuss and review the production estimates was tabled and passed, and as a result, the chairman of the Sugar Industry Control Board, Mr. Marcos Osorio, has instructed the manager of the Sugar Cane Production Committee to implement the adjustments agreed on during the meeting. The adjustments to the production estimates approved at the meeting ensure that cane farmers will not be impacted as negatively as before with the same losses in tonnage of cane delivered to the factory. The SICB chairman has also mandated that the date for the beginning of the grinding season be gazetted, as per the Sugar Cane Act.

All stakeholders will now receive production estimates and implement adjustments. It is hoped the sugar cane crop has a smooth start for the 2020-2021 season.

**Ends**