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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Investment Concludes Tour of Agro-Processing Facilities in Southern Belize

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The Ministry of Investment continued its tour of agro-processing facilities in southern Belize on September 2, 2022.

The first stop on day two of the tour was TexBel Processors Limited in Maya Centre Village, Stann Creek District. A part of a group including four farms in the Stann Creek and Cayo districts, the company's owners are based in Texas and managed by Belizeans. Their main products are whole limes, bottled coconut water, lime juice, orange juice, watermelon juice, and juice blends.

TexBel Processors Limited is currently in the process of conversion to organic certification and, using a biomass recycling approach, the company hopes to eliminate the use of agrochemicals and mineral fertilizers. Additionally, the company has introduced new technology to extend the refrigerated shelf life of most foods and natural drinks using a novel approach to aseptic packaging at its central factory. As well, the company is making plans and investing to certify its value-added products as organic. They have been exporting to the USA and are now also selling into Europe. Seventy factory and farm workers are employed and trained by TexBel Processors Limited; however, the company needs many more machinists, mechanics, welders, electronic machinery programmers, and operators of high-technology food processing machines.

The second stop was BelEuro Aquaculture Limited, a shrimp farm located near Independence and Bella Vista villages in the southern Stann Creek District. Despite being affected by vibriosis, like all the other shrimp farms

since 2015, the company has largely been able to withstand both the pathogenic challenges to shrimp production and the COVID-19 pandemic. BelEuro Aquaculture Limited is owned by Rainforest Seafoods Limited, the Caribbean's largest processor and supplier of premium quality seafood and other frozen products. Rainforest Seafoods is headquartered in Jamaica and has made substantial investments in BelEuro to continue to manage the bacteria that has been affecting shrimp. Through the increased production of its hatchery, the company has also become a primary supplier of post larvae to other shrimp farms in the country.

The final stop was at Copal Tree Distillery in Toledo, the only processor of organic rum in Belize. The company produces premium spirits made from organic heirloom sugarcane sourced from a nearby farm. The farm is owned by a sister company that produces organic red and black sugarcane. Copal Tree Distillery produces both white and gold rums.

The company employs 40 people when in full production. In 2021, they produced 40,000 proof gallons of rum, which is expected to increase to 53,000 proof gallons in 2022. The products are exported to the USA and the European Union under an organic certification that is recognized in both markets. Recently, Copal Tree Distillery increased its warehouse space to store more rum for export.

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