

## **The Impact of ISO/IEC 17020 Accreditation on the**

### **FSPID's Inspectorate and Disinfestation Unit**

Inspection has been one of the core functions of the Food Storage and Prevention of Infestation Division (FSPID) since our establishment in 1958, over 60 years ago. We have been vigilant in ensuring that only safe and wholesome food and feed reach consumers. Though we have been conducting inspections of containers at ports of entry and on site, food businesses and on cargo ships, there are many who are still not familiar with the name 'FSPID'. In fact, FSPID officers might simply be known as 'Infestation Inspectors'.

Since April 2019, however, when the FSPID's Inspectorate and Disinfestation Unit (IDU) was ISO/IEC 17020 accredited by the Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) for the inspection of food and feed on ships, premises and in containers, we have seen a rise in new businesses contacting us with regard to our inspection services. The number of our inspections has increased as old and new clients are now requesting inspections of their food businesses or their food containers.

Attaining accreditation has also seen improved morale and a stronger work ethic at the FSPID, particularly among our inspectors who interact with clients on a daily basis. This inspection accreditation has also re-ignited the FSPID's laboratories thrust to obtain ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. The hard work and commitment of the IDU with regard to our accreditation programme - which began in 2016 - has finally borne fruit. Our commitment does not, however, end here as we will continue to conform to international guidelines and seek to continually improve our processes. Scheduled IDU staff meetings and proper recording of minutes have become the norm, which previously were not seen as important. "Our meetings every two weeks are now much more lively and interactive as we evaluate ourselves and look at how we can do things better" says Maxine Hoffman, our Chief Food Storage Inspector.

The IDU, supported by the FSPID's laboratories, training unit and administrative staff, is even now more determined to continue working in the country's best interests. Consumers can place their confidence in us as we strive to protect them while also assisting food entities in remaining viable. We expect better from ourselves and, no doubt, so does Jamaica. We are proud to be Jamaica's first accredited inspection body and we will live up to the higher calling that this has placed on us.