

## **The First ISO/IEC 17020 Accredited Inspection Body in Jamaica**

The Inspectorate and Disinfestation Unit (IDU) of the Food Storage and Prevention of Infestation Division (FSPID) is proud to be the first inspection body in Jamaica and the second inspection body in the English-speaking Caribbean to be ISO/IEC 17020 accredited. In April 2019 the FSPID was accredited for the inspection of food and feed within premises and containers, and on cargo ships. As a department of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, this internationally-accepted accreditation serves to give our stakeholders confidence that our inspection processes are in keeping with global standards.

The IDU is the FSPID's frontline unit and conducts regulatory inspections and sampling of food and feed at ports of entry (including ships) and at facilities where food and feed are stored, manufactured and sold. Vehicles transporting food and feed may also be inspected. Other establishments where food is prepared and/or consumed, e.g. hospitals, prisons, schools, may also be inspected. Our Western Regional Office, stationed in Montego Bay, conducts inspections in St. James, Trelawny, Westmoreland and St. Elizabeth. The IDU is ably supported by the FSPID's five testing and research laboratories, namely: Entomology; Rodent Biology and Control; Microbiology; Pesticide Residue/Mycotoxin; and Postharvest Technology. Not to be outdone by the IDU, these laboratories are currently pursuing ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation (i.e. international accreditation for testing laboratories). The FSPID's Training and Information Unit also conducts training and information dissemination to stakeholders with regard to food storage and integrated pest management in food areas.

The FSPID currently operates under the Food Storage and Prevention of Infestation Act of 1958 and Regulations of 1973. These pieces of legislation, which are quite outdated, are now being amended to better allow the FSPID to carry out its mandate.

In this our 61st year, the FSPID's zeal to support the Jamaican food industry while simultaneously ensuring the safety and wholesome of food and feed entering commerce is stronger than ever. The FSPID's continued involvement in the Jamaican Import/Export Inspection Centre (i.e. "The One Stop Shop") and ASYCUDA World will reduce red tape for importers and allow for greater collaboration among Government entities when conducting inspections at ports of entry.

At this time when our island and the world at large are facing varied challenges, the FSPID will assiduously continue to play its part in ensuring a better life for all Jamaicans. As we reflect on the FSPID's achievements since our inception in 1958, there is no doubt that our team of well-qualified professionals will meet future challenges with innovation, determination and passion and ensure that Jamaica reaches greater heights.