Summary of the Presentation by Kenrick Witty

The presentation focuses on the risk management decisions made for the importation of coconut seedlings and ungerminated coconut seed nuts from Mexico into Belize.

A risk assessment was initiated after an importer expressed interest in firstly importing coconut seedlings from Mexico in order to establish a coconut plantation in southern Belize with the intention to export coconut products i.e. coconut water, coconut oil and eventually more products.

The risk assessment revealed the presence of fifteen pests of quarantine concern for Belize, most noted of these being the red palm mite (*Raoiella indica* Hirst). This pest was of major concern due to its effects on several species of palms (Palmae family) and also plants of the Musaceae family. Both of these plant families are very important to Belize. Belize has a thriving banana industry, which is the most important industry (4.5 million boxes exported in 2010, which is equivalent to US $35 million) along with citrus and sugar.

The importer could not meet the risk management measures for the importation of the coconut seedlings which posed a higher risk due to the presence of foliage. The importer could have complied however with the risk management measures for the ungerminated coconut seed and hence the latter was imported into Belize.