

# Statistical Institute of BELIZE

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# ET

## EXTERNAL TRADE

For the month of:  
**DECEMBER 2019**

**IMPORTS UP  
6.4%  
EXPORTS UP  
18.9%**

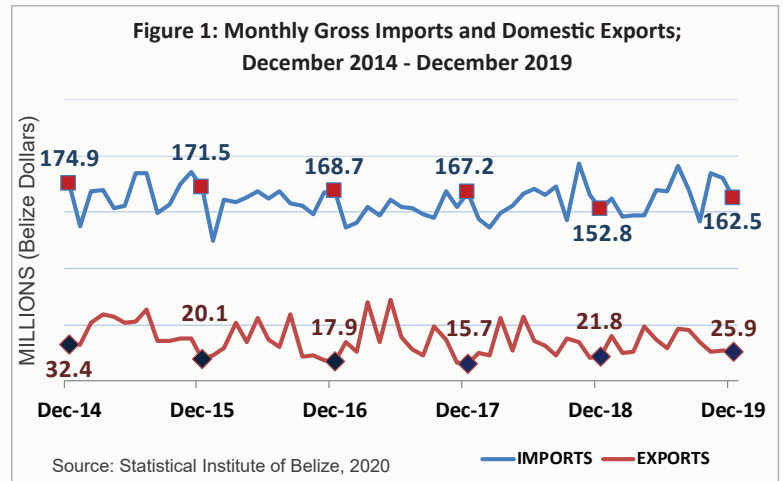
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## IMPORTS UP 6.4%, DOMESTIC EXPORTS UP 18.9% IN DECEMBER 2019

### IMPORTS

**DECEMBER 2019:** During the month of December 2019, goods imported into Belize were valued at \$162.5 million, up 6.4 percent or \$9.7 million from the \$152.8 million imported in December of 2018.

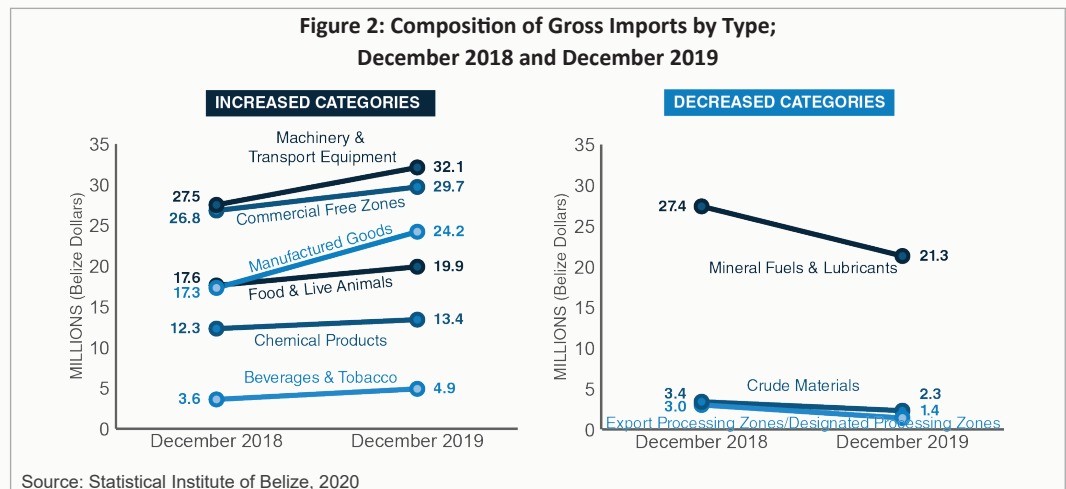
**Increasing Categories:** Imports of 'Manufactured Goods' saw the most significant growth for the last month of 2019. That category rose by 40 percent, from \$17.3 million in December 2018 to \$24.2 million in December 2019, as the country imported more metal structures and galvanized steel coils. Imports of 'Machinery and Transport Equipment' also rose notably in the month, growing from \$27.5 million to \$32.1 million, as a result of greater purchases of water pumps, portable agricultural sprayers and conveyor belts. Goods destined for the 'Commercial Free Zones' went up from \$26.8 million in December 2018 to \$29.7 million in December 2019, due to bigger imports of cigarettes and clothing, while boosted imports of rice seeds, infant formulas and soybean meal led to an increase in the 'Food and Live Animals' category, from \$17.6 million to \$19.9 million. With heightened imports of beer, hard liquor and cigarettes in December 2019 compared to the same month in 2018, the 'Beverages and Tobacco' category grew from \$3.6 million to \$4.9 million. Imports of 'Chemical Products' went up by \$1.1 million, from \$12.3 million to \$13.4 million, with larger purchases of medicines, fertilizers and vaccines being recorded during December 2019.



**Decreasing Categories:** Notwithstanding the overall increase in imports, the categories of 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants', 'Designated Processing Areas' and 'Crude Materials' all declined noticeably in the month. 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' saw the most considerable drop, decreasing by more than \$6 million, from \$27.4 million in December 2018 to \$21.3 million in December 2019, mainly on account of smaller imports of diesel fuel. Imports meant for the 'Designated Processing Areas', formerly the 'Export Processing Zones' went down from almost \$3 million to \$1.4 million, due to reduced purchases of various types of containers and video game consoles, while diminished imports of fruit and vegetable seeds and used clothing, led to a decline in the 'Crude Materials' category, from \$3.4 million to \$2.3 million.

**TWELVE MONTHS OF THE YEAR:** Merchandise imports for the year 2019 amounted to \$1.97 billion, representing a 2.9 percent or \$56.3 million increase from the total imports recorded for 2018.

**Increasing Categories:** Greater imports were observed across most commodity categories during the year, when compared to 2018. 'Manufactured Goods' recorded the largest growth, with an increase of over \$23 million, from \$244.4 million in 2018 to \$267.5 million in 2019, due to greater imports of metal structures, gas tanks and tires. Likewise, 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' increased notably for the year, from \$282.9 million in 2018 to \$295.1 million in 2019, as the country imported larger quantities of diesel and regular fuels, as well as kerosene and bunker C fuels in 2019. The year also saw a rise in food imports, with the



'Food and Live Animals' category increasing from \$219.7 million to \$230.2 million. Goods such as lard (shortening), milk and cream, and margarine were among the items within this category recording boosted imports during the year. Imports of 'Machinery and Transport Equipment' went up from \$390.9 million in 2018 to \$397.6 million in 2019, as the country saw higher purchases of vehicles, computers and dielectric transformers. Larger imports of treated pine lumber, fruit seeds and calcium sulphates led to an increase in the 'Crude Materials' category, from \$30.1 million to \$36.7 million. Furthermore, with bigger purchases of men's clothing and sweaters over the twelve-month period, goods meant for the 'Commercial Free Zones' went up from \$324 million in 2018 to \$329.9 million in 2019. Increased imports of cooking oils, such as soybean oils, were also recorded for the year, prompting an increase in the 'Oils and Fats' category, from \$16.8 million to \$19.6 million. Similarly, boosted imports of alcoholic beverages and supplemental nutrition drinks led to a growth in the 'Beverages and Tobacco' category, from \$37.9 million in 2018 to almost \$40 million in 2019.

**Decreasing Categories:** Imports into the 'Designated Processing Areas' and 'Other Manufactures' were the only two categories to see a reduction during the year 2019. Imports into the 'Designated Processing Areas' dropped from \$38.8 million in 2018 to \$31.9 million in 2019, due to decreased purchases of parts for food processing machinery, filtering equipment and fruit concentrates, while lowered imports of surveying equipment, lamps and lighting fixtures caused the 'Other Manufactures' category to decline from \$150.9 million to \$144.6 million.

## DOMESTIC EXPORTS

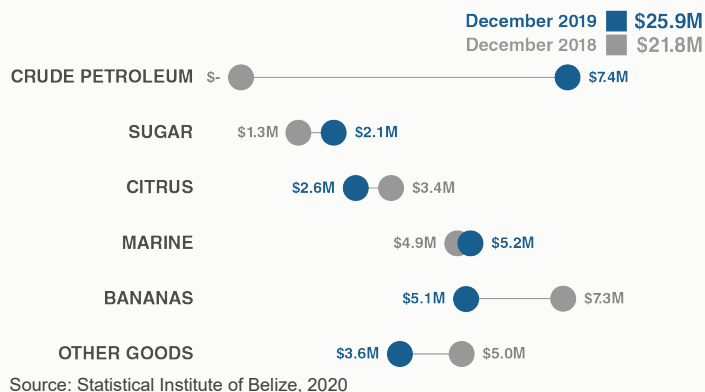
**DECEMBER 2019:** Total domestic exports for December 2019 amounted to \$25.9 million, up 18.9 percent or \$4.1 million from the \$21.8 million recorded for December of 2018.

**Increasing Categories:** Crude petroleum exports recorded the biggest gain among all major exports in December 2019, with earnings from this commodity totaling \$7.4 million. Since there were no exports of crude petroleum in December of 2018, this commodity was the main contributor to the marked increase in overall export earnings for the month. Exports of sugar saw a much smaller increase of \$0.8 million, from \$1.3 million in December 2018 to \$2.1 million in December 2019, while improved sales of shrimp resulted in a slight growth of \$0.3 million in marine exports, from \$4.9 million to \$5.2 million.

**Decreasing Categories:** While total export revenues grew during the month, earnings from two of the country's major exports, bananas and citrus products, declined. Earnings from bananas dropped from \$7.3 million in December 2018 to \$5.1 million in December 2019, while sales of citrus products diminished from \$3.4 million to \$2.6 million, owing to decreased exports of both orange and grapefruit concentrate.

**Major Destinations:** Export revenues from CARICOM grew substantially in December 2019, from \$3.8 million to \$11.6 million, attributable mainly to the crude petroleum exports for the month, along with the improved sales of shrimp to this

**Figure 3: Composition of Domestic Exports by Type; December 2018 and December 2019**



region. With reduced exports of bananas, on the other hand, earnings from the United Kingdom fell by \$1.3 million, from \$5.8 million in December 2018 to \$4.5 million in December 2019. In addition, earnings from Central America dropped from \$1.7 million in December 2018 to \$0.5 million in December 2019, due to smaller exports of both animal feed and orange concentrate.

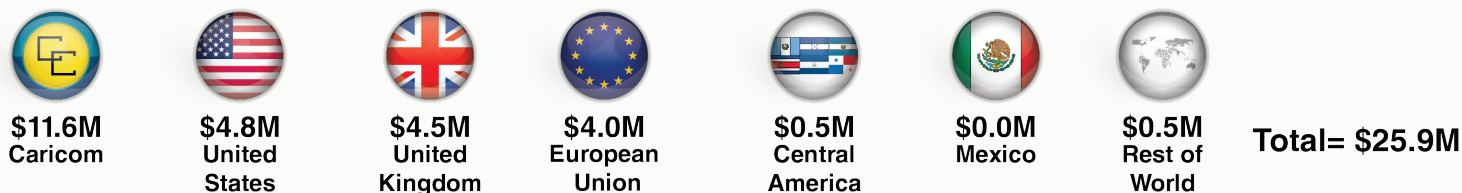
**TWELVE MONTHS OF THE YEAR:** Merchandise exports for the year 2019 totaled \$411.8 million, up 4.6 percent or \$17.9 million, from the total exports of 2018, which amounted to \$393.9 million.

**Increasing Categories:** Sugar remained the country's top export earner in 2019, with that commodity alone accounting for one-third of all export earnings for the year. Earnings from sugar grew significantly from \$112.8 million in 2018 to \$136.4 million in 2019, as exported quantities of sugar increased by 25 percent during the year. Exports of marine products and bananas also fared well in 2019, with revenues from marine exports up from \$42.4 million to \$48.8 million, due to improved sales of lobster tails and conch, while earnings from bananas grew from \$74.3 million to \$77.4 million during the year.

**Decreasing Categories:** In contrast, revenues from citrus exports declined markedly in 2019, dropping by more than \$17 million, from \$73.7 million in 2018 to \$56.3 million in 2019, due to noticeably smaller exports of orange concentrate. In spite of a 5.6 percent increase in exported quantities of crude petroleum, earnings from that commodity fell from \$24.6 million to \$20.3 million, as a result of diminished world market prices.

**Other Exports:** In addition to some of the major exports, a few other commodities, including molasses, red kidney beans and black-eyed peas, also had a notable showing in year 2019. Earnings from molasses rose from \$6.3 million in 2018 to \$10.1 million in 2019, while revenues from red kidney beans went up by one-third, from \$9.4 million to \$12.6 million. Exports of black-eyed peas grew from \$4.2 million in 2018 to \$5.5 million in 2019. On the other hand, sales of animal feed dropped by almost one-fourth, from just above \$15 million to \$11.4 million, during the year.

**Figure 4: Composition of Exports by Destination; December 2019 (Millions of BZ Dollars)**



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2020