



## ET EXTERNAL TRADE

For the month of: **October 2020** • Published on: **December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

### IMPORTS DOWN 29.1%, DOMESTIC EXPORTS DOWN 5.5% IN OCTOBER 2020

#### IMPORTS

**OCTOBER 2020:** During the month of October 2020, Belize's imported goods were valued at \$131.4 million, down by 29.1 percent or \$53.9 million from the \$185.2 million imported in October of 2019 (see Figure 1).

#### DECREASING CATEGORIES:

Most commodity categories saw reduced imports during the month, with the most significant decreases being in imports of 'Machinery and Transport Equipment', 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants', and goods destined for the 'Commercial Free Zones' (see Figure 2).

#### Machinery and Transport Equipment

The 'Machinery and Transport Equipment' category dropped by a substantial 40 percent or \$18.1 million, from \$45.3 million in October 2019 to \$27.2 million in October 2020. This was due to decreased purchases of various items, including water filters, computers and aviation equipment.

#### Mineral Fuels and Lubricants

Imports of 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' plummeted by 65 percent or over \$17 million, as reductions in the imported quantities of all main fuel types, coupled with lower world market prices, drove this category down from \$26.4 million in October of last year to \$9.2 million in October of this year.

#### Commercial Free Zones

Imports meant for the 'Commercial Free Zones' plunged by nearly 50 percent, as this category declined by more than \$14 million during the month, from \$30.7 million to \$16.2 million, owing to smaller purchases of clothing, bags and perfumes, among other items.

#### Other Manufactures

The 'Other Manufactures' category was down by a lesser \$4 million, from \$14.6 million to \$10.6 million, as the country bought less gold jewelry, wrist watches and plastic bottles in October of this year, when compared to that same month last year.

#### Manufactured Goods

With fewer purchases of items such as galvanized steel coils, tires and metal structures, the 'Manufactured Goods' category decreased by \$3.8 million for the month, from \$24.2 million to \$20.4 million.

#### Crude Materials

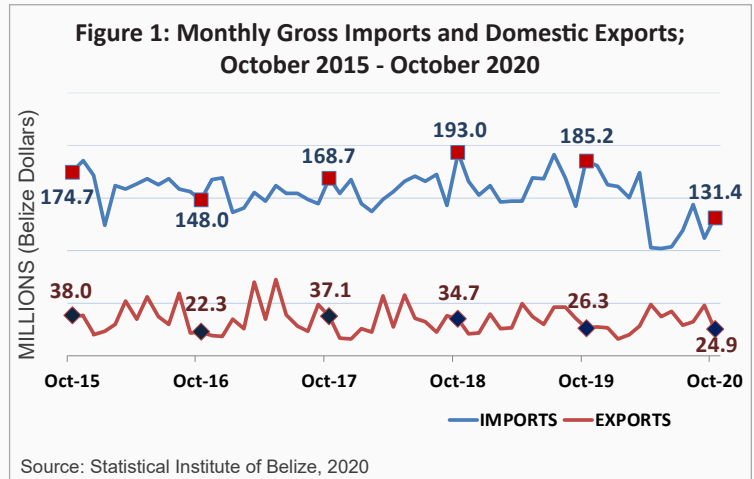
Imports of 'Crude Materials' declined sharply from \$4.9 million in October 2019 to a mere \$1.3 million in October 2020, due mainly to a notable reduction in imports of treated pine lumber.

#### INCREASING CATEGORIES:

Only two categories, 'Chemical Products' and Food and Live Animals', recorded noteworthy increases in comparison to October of last year (see Figure 2).

#### Chemical Products

Owing to heightened purchases of fertilizers, disinfectants and hand



sanitizers, imports of 'Chemical Products' grew from \$14.2 million in October 2019 to \$17.3 million in October 2020.

#### Food and Live Animals

The 'Food and Live Animals' category rose from almost \$18 million during last October to \$20.9 million in October 2020, due to increased imports of wheat, lard (shortening), powdered milk and various other food products.

**FIRST TEN MONTHS OF THE YEAR:** Merchandise imports for the period January to October 2020 totaled almost \$1.3 billion, representing a 20.2 percent or \$328.5 million drop from the same ten-month period last year, when imports totaled \$1.6 billion.

#### DECREASING CATEGORIES:

There were sizeable decreases in imports for a number of commodity categories over the period, with 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' recording the largest decline, followed by goods going to the 'Commercial Free Zones' and 'Machinery and Transport Equipment'.

#### Mineral Fuels and Lubricants

The 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' category plunged by 47 percent or \$115.5 million, from \$246.7 million in 2019 to \$131.2 million in 2020, as the country imported substantially lower quantities of fuel at notably reduced prices over the ten-month period.

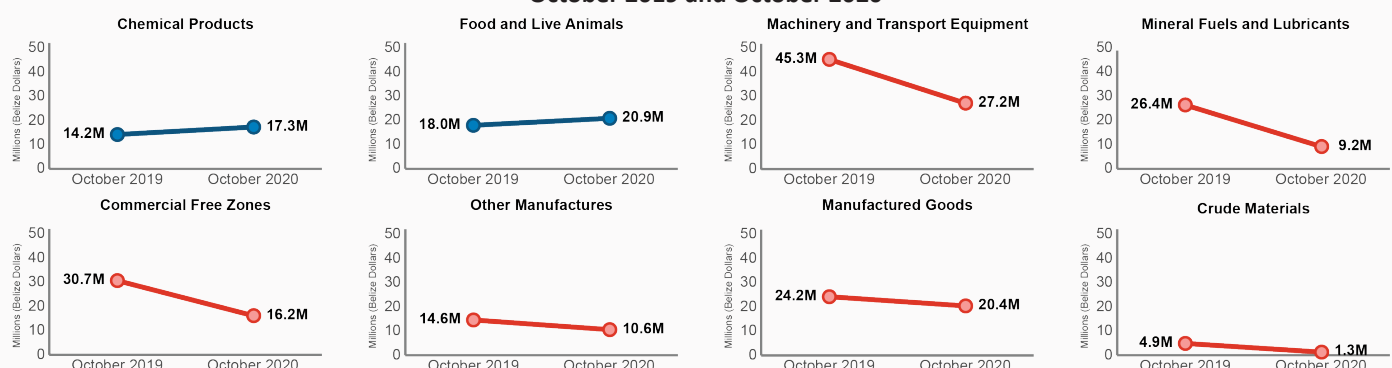
#### Commercial Free Zones

Goods meant for the 'Commercial Free Zones' dropped by one-third or \$89.3 million, from \$269.9 million to \$180.6 million, the result of a sharp decrease in imports of clothing and handbags over the period.

#### Machinery and Transport Equipment

Imports of 'Machinery and Transport Equipment' fell by 20 percent or more than \$65 million, from \$330.8 million in 2019 to \$265.2 million in 2020, due largely to reduced purchases of telecommunication parts, aviation equipment, and liquid dielectric transformers.

**Figure 2: Composition of Gross Imports by Type; October 2019 and October 2020**



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2020

## Manufactured Goods

With decreased imports of corrugated steel bars, galvalume steel coils and cement, the 'Manufactured Goods' category declined by 14 percent or over \$30 million, from \$218.5 million in the first ten months of 2019 to \$188.4 million in the same months of 2020.

## Other Manufactures

Goods classified as 'Other Manufactures' went down by 19 percent or just over \$23 million, from \$120.2 million in 2019 to \$97.2 million in 2020, due to fewer imports of gold jewelry, plastic bottles and wrist watches.

## Crude Materials

Imports of 'Crude Materials' dropped by a substantial 45 percent, or \$13.5 million, from \$30.2 million to \$16.7 million, as the period saw notable decreases in purchases of treated pine lumber and used clothing.

## Designated Processing Areas

Imports into the 'Designated Processing Areas' fell by a relatively small \$1.3 million, from \$27.6 million to \$26.3 million, due for the most part to diminished imports of office furniture and shrimp feed.

## INCREASING CATEGORIES:

Notwithstanding the marked decrease in total imports, a few commodity categories, including 'Beverages and Tobacco' and 'Food and Live Animals', did see a modest rise in imports during the first ten months of this year.

### Beverages and Tobacco

As a result of a spike in beer imports, the 'Beverages and Tobacco' category grew by \$3.7 million, from \$31.8 million in 2019 to \$35.5 million in 2020.

### Food and Live Animals

Similarly, increased purchases of food items, such as breakfast cereals, canned meats and margarine, led to a \$3.6 million rise in the 'Food and Live Animals' category, from \$187.1 million in 2019 to \$190.7 million in 2020.

### Oils and Fats

The 'Oils and Fats' category rose by \$2.4 million or 15 percent over the period, from \$16.6 million in 2019 to more than \$19 million in 2020, due to bigger imports of various types of cooking oils, including olive oil.

### Chemical Products

Imports of 'Chemical Products' went up slightly by \$1.2 million, from \$146.4 million to \$147.6 million, owing to an uptick in purchases of disinfectants, hand sanitizers, insecticides and herbicides during the first ten months of the year.

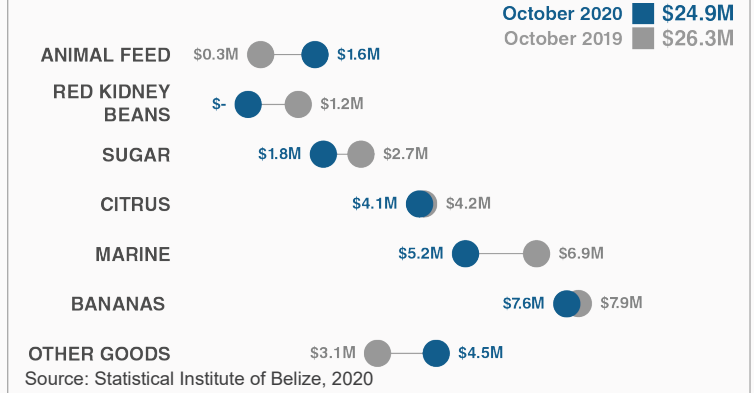
## DOMESTIC EXPORTS

**October 2020:** Total domestic exports for October 2020 amounted to \$24.9 million, down by 5.5 percent or \$1.4 million from the \$26.3 million recorded for October of 2019 (see Figure 1).

## DECREASING CATEGORIES:

All major exports experienced decreased earnings during the month. Revenues from marine products declined by one-fourth or \$1.7 million, from \$6.9 million in October 2019 to \$5.2 million in October 2020, due to diminished sales of lobster tails and shrimp. As a result of a reduction in exported quantities of sugar, revenues from this commodity dropped from \$2.7 million to \$1.8 million during the month. Earnings from citrus products went down marginally, from \$4.2 million to \$4.1 million, due to smaller exports of orange concentrate, while bananas also declined slightly from \$7.9 million in October 2019 to \$7.6 million in October 2020. Among the country's other exports, earnings from red kidney beans dropped by \$1.2 million, as there were no exports of this product during October of this year (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Composition of Domestic Exports by Type; October 2019 and October 2020**



## INCREASING CATEGORIES:

In contrast, animal feed was the only domestic export to have seen a notable increase during the month, boosting earnings from this commodity from \$0.3 million in October of 2019 to \$1.6 million in October 2020 (see Figure 3).

## MAJOR DESTINATIONS:

Revenues from the CARICOM region fell by more than one-third, from \$6.7 million in October 2019 to \$4.2 million in October 2020, a drop reflective of the diminished exports of sugar, orange concentrate and red kidney beans during the month. Earnings from the United Kingdom were down from \$6.3 million to \$4.8 million, also a consequence of the decrease in sugar exports for the month. Revenues from Central America, on the other hand, rose by \$1.3 million, from \$0.6 million to \$1.9 million, a growth attributed to the favourable sales of animal feed recorded in October of this year (see Figure 4).

**FIRST TEN MONTHS OF THE YEAR:** Merchandise exports for the period January to October 2020 totaled just over \$325 million, down 9.9 percent or \$35.9 million from that same period last year, when total domestic exports were valued at \$360.9 million.

## DECREASING CATEGORIES:

Earnings from sugar, crude petroleum, citrus and marine products all declined markedly over the ten-month period. Revenues from sugar exports fell by a considerable \$26.1 million, an almost 20 percent drop, from \$132.3 million in 2019 to \$106.2 million 2020, as exported quantities of sugar decreased by more than one-third during the first ten months of this year. With the country exporting only one shipment of crude petroleum during the first ten months of 2020 compared to two shipments during the same period last year, earnings from crude petroleum plunged by 62 percent or more than \$8 million, from \$12.9 million to \$4.9 million. Owing mainly to decreased world market prices for orange concentrate, earnings from citrus exports went down by 11 percent or \$5.5 million, from \$49.4 million in 2019 to \$43.9 million in 2020. Despite increased sales of lobster tails over the period, exports of marine products declined by 8.5 percent or \$3 million, from \$35.3 million in 2019 to \$32.3 million in 2020, as a result of decreased exports of conch, whole lobsters and lobster meat.

## INCREASING CATEGORIES:

Among all the country's major commodities, only bananas recorded increased export earnings during the first ten months of this year. Revenues from bananas went up by a respectable 8 percent or \$5.5 million, from \$67 million in 2019 to \$72.5 million in 2020. Among other exports, revenues from molasses rose by \$2.5 million, from \$8.2 million in 2019 to \$10.7 million in 2020, due to improved market prices for this commodity.

**Figure 4: Composition of Exports by Destination; October 2020 (Millions of BZ Dollars)**

