

Statistical Institute of BELIZE

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ET

EXTERNAL TRADE

For the month of:
AUGUST 2019

**IMPORTS DOWN
1.7%
EXPORTS UP
101.9%**

Date published:
SEPTEMBER 25TH 2019

IMPORTS DOWN 1.7%, DOMESTIC EXPORTS UP 101.9% IN AUGUST 2019

IMPORTS

AUGUST 2019:

Belize's total imports for the month of August 2019 were valued at \$169.5 million. This was a decrease of 1.7 percent or almost \$3 million from imports for August 2018, which totaled \$172.5 million.

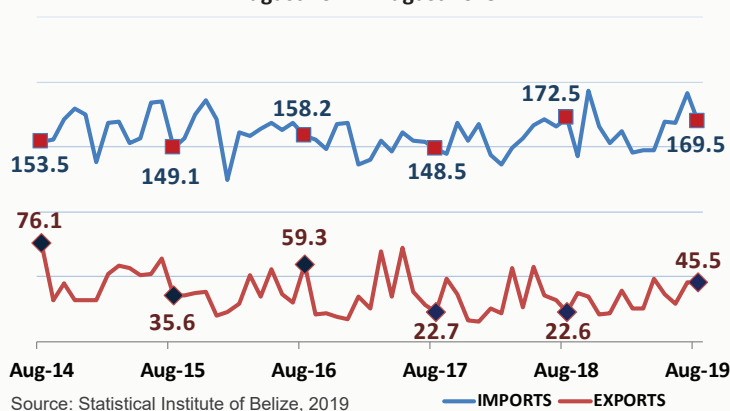
Decreasing Categories: Decreased imports across four of the major categories led to this overall drop for the month. Owing for the most part to diminished imported quantities of kerosene and diesel fuels, the 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' category declined by \$4.1 million, from \$24.2 million in August 2018 to \$20.1 million August 2019. Imports of goods classified as 'Other Manufactures' went down from almost \$16 million to \$13.4 million, mainly due to smaller purchases of books, lamps and lighting fixtures, and prefabricated steel buildings. Expenditures on 'Machinery and Transport Equipment' shrank from \$38.7 million to \$36.6 million, as the country bought less high-value transportation equipment in August of this year, than it did for that same month last year. Furthermore, with reduced imports of chemical wood pulp and shrimp feed, goods destined for the 'Designated Processing Areas', formerly known as the 'Export Processing Zones', fell from \$3.7 million in August of last year to just above \$2 million in August 2019.

Increasing Categories:

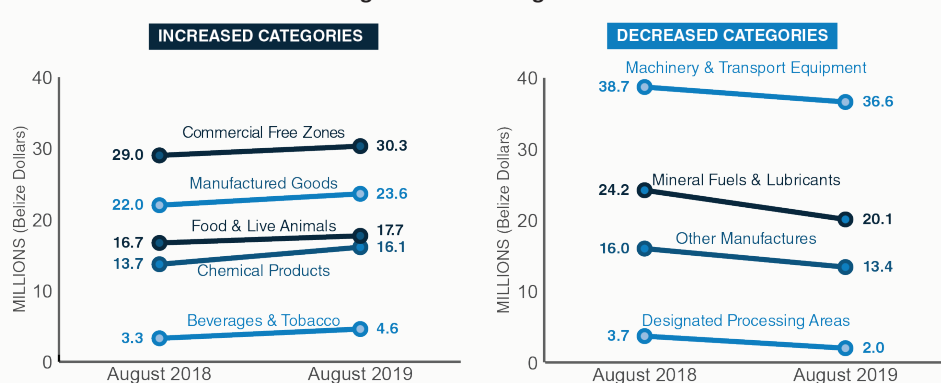
Despite the slight downturn in total imports for the month, greater purchases were recorded for a number of categories. The 'Chemical Products' category grew notably from \$13.7 million in August of 2018 to \$16.1 million in August 2019, due to bigger imports of fertilizers, PVC pipes and medicines. Imports of 'Manufactured Goods' rose from a little over \$22 million to \$23.6 million, owing mostly to increased purchases of carton boxes, screws and bolts, as well as metal structures and their parts. In addition, on account of boosted imports of hard liquor, cigarettes and aromatic bitters, the 'Beverages and Tobacco' category went up from \$3.3 million in August 2018 to \$4.6 million in August 2019. Imports into the 'Commercial Free Zones' rose from just above \$29 million to \$30.3 million, with items such as clothing and standing fans being among the increased purchases. Also, with heightened food imports, specifically powdered and condensed milks and canned corned beef, there was an uptick in the 'Food and Live Animals' category from \$16.7 million to \$17.7 million.

FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF THE YEAR: Merchandise imports for the first eight months, January to August 2019, amounted to \$1.3 billion, representing a 3.2 percent or \$40 million increase from the same period last year.

**Figure 1: Monthly Gross Imports and Domestic Exports;
August 2014 - August 2019**



**Figure 2: Composition of Gross Imports by Type;
August 2018 and August 2019**



Increasing Categories: Imports across most commodity categories grew over the eight-month period, with the largest recorded increases being in the categories of 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' and 'Manufactured Goods'. Attributable to greater imported quantities of diesel and kerosene fuels, the 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' category rose by \$18.5 million, from \$182.5 million in 2018 to just above \$201 million in 2019, while imports of 'Manufactured Goods' went up from \$159.7 million to \$176.3 million, due to larger purchases of steel structures, corrugated steel rods and carton boxes. In addition, higher imports of clothing prompted an almost \$9 million increase in goods meant for the 'Commercial Free Zones', with that category growing from \$204.8 million in 2018 to \$213.8 million in 2019. The 'Food and Live Animals' category went up from just above \$147 million to \$152.4 million, as a result of bigger purchases of lard (shortening), and powdered and boxed milks. Imports of 'Crude Materials', such as pine lumber and seeds, rose from \$18.8 million in 2018 to \$22.4 million in 2019, while purchases of 'Chemical Products', including fertilizers and PVC pipes, increased from \$117.4 million to \$120.6 million. Furthermore, heightened imports of hard liquor, supplemental nutrition drinks and wines largely led to an increase in the 'Beverages and Tobacco' category, from \$24.6 million in 2018 to \$26.8 million in 2019. The 'Oils and Fats' category grew from \$11.5 million to \$13.2 million over the period, resulting from boosted imports of cooking oils, including soybean and coconut oils.

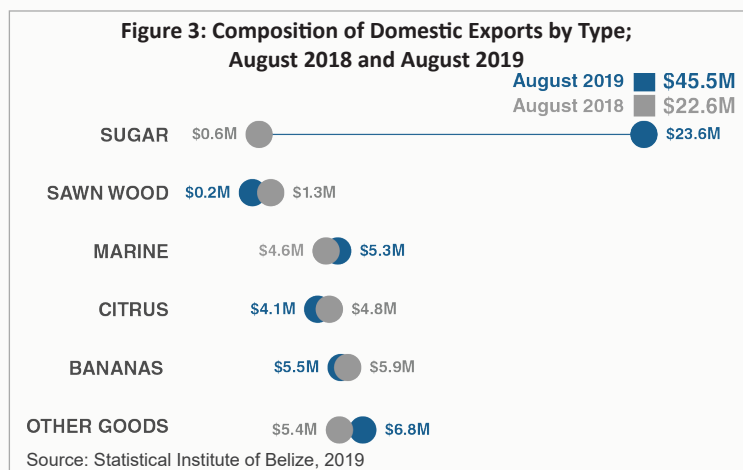
Decreasing Categories: On the other hand, the categories of 'Other Manufactures', 'Machinery and Transport Equipment' and 'Designated Processing Areas' all fell notably over the eight-month period. The 'Other Manufactures' category declined from \$102.3 million in 2018 to \$94.1 million in 2019, due mostly to decreased purchases of surveying equipment, lamps and lighting fixtures and gold jewelry, while the 'Machinery and Transport Equipment' category was down, from \$261.7 million to \$256.2 million, owing to reduced imports of fiber optic cables, telecommunications equipment and electrical circuit protectors. Imports into the 'Designated Processing Areas' dropped from approximately \$28 million in 2018 to \$22.5 million in 2019, with shrimp feed and food processing machinery and their parts being among the goods in decline over the period.

DOMESTIC EXPORTS

AUGUST 2019: Total domestic exports for August 2019 amounted to \$45.5 million, up substantially by 101.9 percent or almost \$23 million when compared to exports for August 2018, which were valued at \$22.6 million.

Increasing Categories: As has been the case in other months this year, sugar was almost entirely responsible for the substantial difference in domestic exports between August of 2018 and August of this year, owing to variations in the scheduling of bulk sugar shipments from one year to the next. Earnings from sugar rose sharply, from only \$0.6 million to \$23.6 million, due to the fact that there were bulk sugar shipments recorded during August 2019, while there were none in the same month of last year. Revenues from marine products went up only marginally, from \$4.6 million to \$5.3 million, due mostly to improved exports of lobster products for the month.

Decreasing Categories: The month saw a minimal decline in earnings from citrus exports from \$4.8 million in August 2018 to \$4.1 million in August 2019, due primarily to falling sales of orange concentrate, while



revenues from banana exports also went down, from \$5.9 million to \$5.5 million. Among the other export commodities, a notable reduction in exports of sawn wood was recorded, as revenues from this product dropped from \$1.3 million in August 2018 to less than \$0.2 million in August 2019.

Major Destinations: Consistent with the substantial earnings from exports of bulk sugar for the month, earnings from the United States of America rose considerably from \$6.8 million in August of 2018 to nearly \$18 million in August 2019, while revenues from the United Kingdom also grew significantly, from \$3.8 million to \$13.4 million. In contrast, exports to the European Union, which were valued at \$5.3 million in August of last year, dropped by \$1.3 million to a little over \$4 million, as exports of orange concentrate were redirected elsewhere in August of this year.

FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF THE YEAR: Merchandise exports for the period January to August 2019 totaled just above \$298 million, up 6.9 percent or \$19.2 million from \$278.8 million for the same period last year.

Increasing Categories: A surge in earnings from sugar, coupled with marked increases from both banana and marine exports led to this overall growth over the first eight months of the year. Notwithstanding a drop in world market prices, revenues from sugar rose sharply by more than \$23 million, from \$86.5 million in 2018 to \$110.2 million in 2019, due to a considerable 34.9 percent increase in exported quantities of this commodity over the period. Earnings from bananas went up from \$46.3 million to \$51.6 million, while revenues from improved sales of lobster products and shrimp led to an increase in marine exports from approximately \$23 million in 2018 to \$25.2 million in 2019.

Decreasing categories: Despite the increase in total exports, the period saw a particularly steep decline in exports of citrus products. Owing mostly to reduced shipments of orange concentrate, along with diminished sales of orange oil, earnings from citrus exports dropped by nearly 29 percent or \$17.5 million, from \$60.6 million in 2018 to \$43.1 million in 2019. Additionally, due largely to falling world market prices, revenues from crude petroleum exports fell by almost \$3 million, from \$15.9 million to \$12.9 million over the eight-month period.

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



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2019