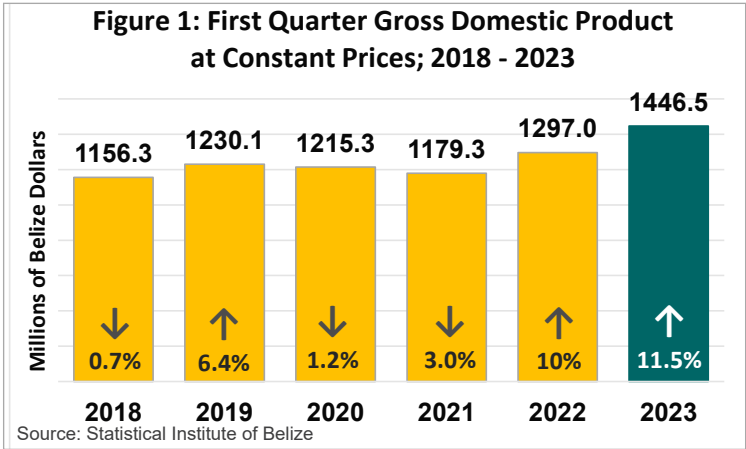




ECONOMY GROWS 11.5% IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2023 BOOSTED BY STRONG PERFORMANCES IN SECONDARY AND TERTIARY SECTORS

FIRST QUARTER 2023:

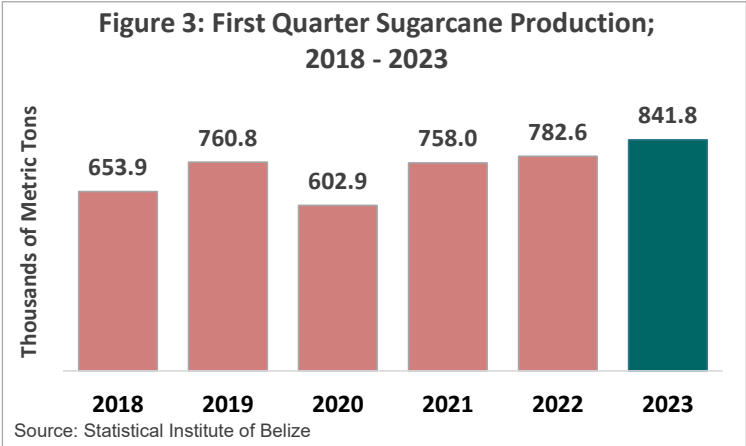
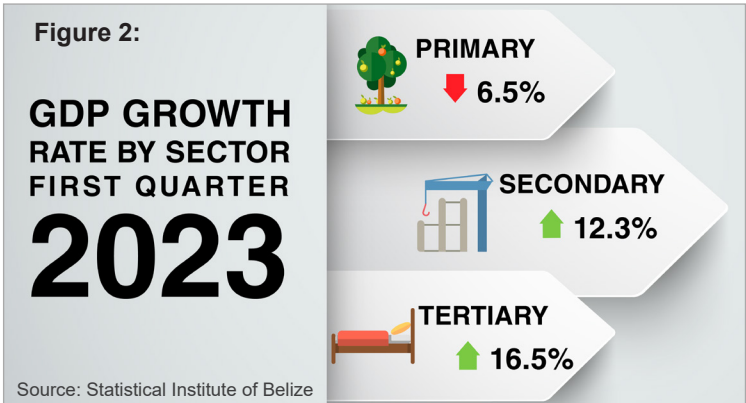
The Statistical Institute of Belize’s preliminary Gross Domestic Product estimates for the first quarter months of January to March 2023 indicated that the total value of goods and services generated within the country for this period was \$1.447 billion. This was an increase of 11.5 percent or \$149.5 million from the first quarter of 2022, when total production was valued at \$1.297 billion (see Figure 1). Strong performances were recorded for both the secondary and tertiary sectors, driven mainly by growth in the ‘Hotels and Restaurants’, ‘Transport’, ‘Wholesale and Retail Trade’, ‘Financial and Insurance Services’, ‘Construction’, and ‘Manufacturing’ industries. Activities in the primary sector, on the other hand, declined during the quarter, as multiple factors combined to adversely affect the ‘Agriculture’ industry. ‘Taxes on Products’ were up by 3.9 percent, from \$164.8 million in the first quarter of last year to \$171.1 million in the first quarter of this year.



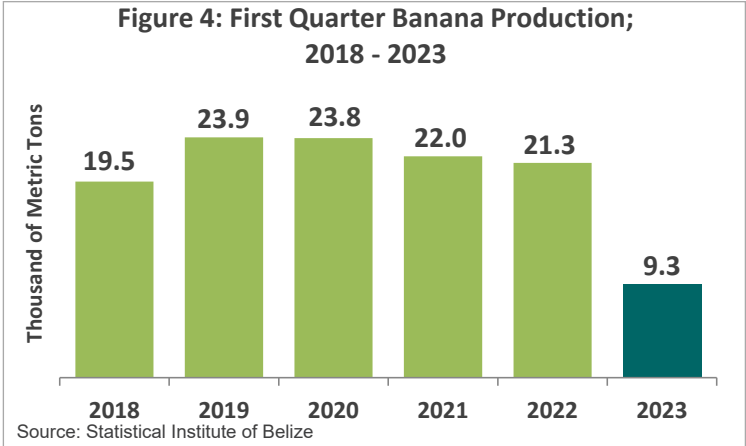
PRIMARY ACTIVITIES:

Production within the primary sector was valued at an estimated \$147.9 million for the period, down by 6.5 percent or \$10.3 million from \$158.2 million during the first quarter of 2022.

Sugarcane production totaled 841.8 thousand metric tons in the first quarter of this year, up by 7.6 percent from 782.6 metric tons (see Figure 3). Banana production, on the other hand, declined by more than one-half from 21.3 thousand metric tons to 9.3 thousand metric tons, the combined effect of rising input costs, labour shortages, disease, and adverse weather conditions (see Figure 4). Similarly, citrus fruit deliveries decreased sharply for the quarter, falling by 65 percent from 24.1 thousand metric tons to 8.4 thousand metric tons (see Figure 5). This was attributed to losses in acreage, citrus greening, high input costs, and labor shortages.

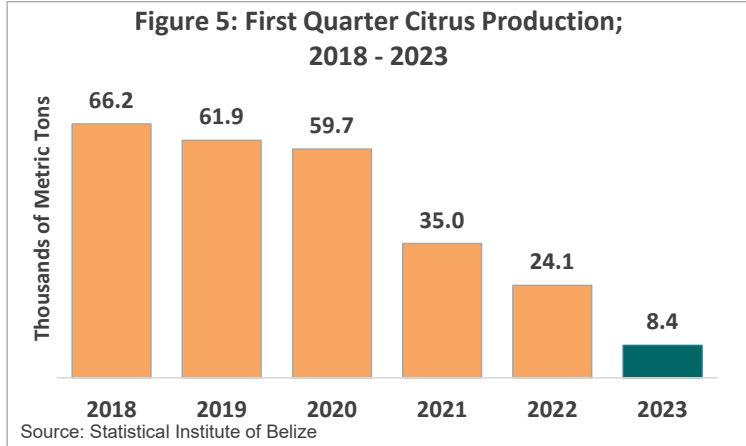


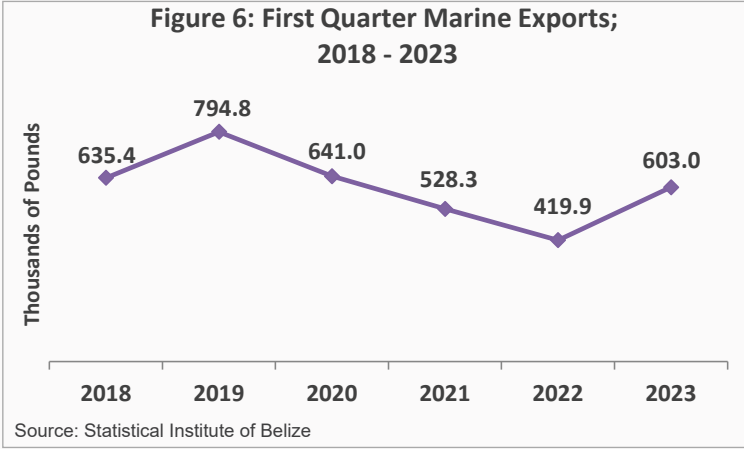
The livestock industry grew by 5 percent overall, driven by a 9.2 percent increase in pig production from 10.9 thousand heads in the first quarter of 2022 to 11.9 thousand heads in the first quarter of 2023, and a 10.3 percent rise in poultry production from 10.2 million pounds to 11.2 million pounds. Cattle output saw a marginal 1 percent decline over the period, from 12.3 thousand heads to 12.2 thousand heads. The fishing industry was up by a notable 43.6 percent compared to the first quarter of last year, with increases recorded for both shrimp and other marine products (see Figure 6). Crude petroleum production continued its steady decline, falling by 3.5 percent from 43.8 thousand barrels in the first quarter of 2022 to 42.3 thousand barrels in the first quarter of 2023.



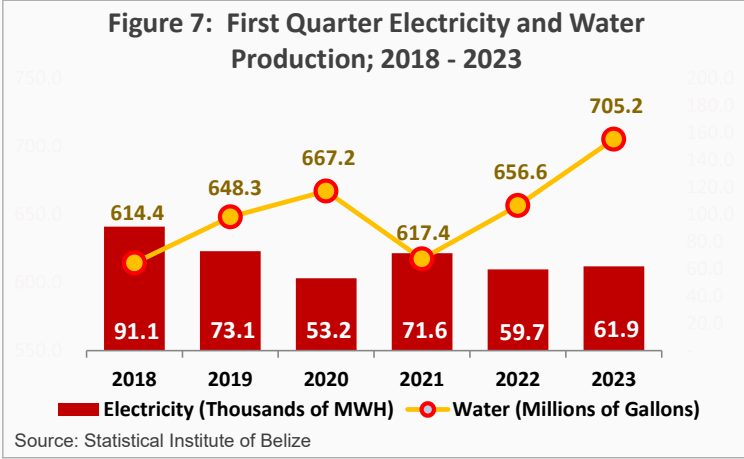
SECONDARY ACTIVITIES:

Activities within the secondary sector expanded by 12.3 percent or \$23.1 million, from \$188 million in the first quarter of 2022 to \$211.1 million in the first quarter of 2023.





Manufacturing activities were up by 5.7 percent, from \$97.9 million in the first three months of last year to \$103.5 million in the first three months of this year, as several industries recorded improved performances over the period. Rising consumer demand, boosted by growing numbers of tourist visitors, led to a 34 percent expansion in beverage output, with significant increases seen in both soft drink and beer production. Flour production rose by 16.8 percent compared to the first quarter of last year, while outputs of dairy products increased by 8.4 percent. The ‘Construction’ industry grew by 28.4 percent, from \$63.3 million in the first quarter of 2022 to \$81.3 million in the same period this year, as reflected in increases in both loans for construction and cement imports. Water production was up by 7.4 percent, from 656.6 million gallons to 705.2 million gallons, while electricity generation rose by a more moderate 3.6 percent, from 59.7 thousand megawatt hours to 61.9 thousand megawatt hours (see Figure 7).



TERTIARY ACTIVITIES:

Production in the tertiary sector was valued at \$917 million for the first quarter of 2023, an increase of \$129.6 million or 16.5 percent from \$787.4 million produced in the first quarter of 2022. The ‘Hotel and Restaurants’ industry rose by a substantial 47 percent, from \$71.3 million to \$104.8 million, reflecting significant increases in both overnight visitors (46.5 percent) and cruise ship passengers (60.1 percent), as well as a 28.8 percent rise in hotel revenues (see Figure 8a and Figure 8b). Similarly, activities within the ‘Transport’ industry expanded by 49.7 percent or \$33.3 million, from \$16.4 million to \$49.7 million, owing to an increase in the flow of goods and passengers across all forms of transportation. The ‘Wholesale and Retail Trade’ industry grew by 9.4 percent or \$16.9 million over the period, from \$180.1 million to \$197 million. ‘Financial and Insurance Services’ rose by 16.7 percent or \$17.9 million, from \$107 million in the first three months of 2022 to \$124.9 million in the first three months of 2023. ‘Real Estate Services’ increased from \$64.1 million to \$70.1 million, while ‘Administrative and Support Services’, which includes business process outsourcing and travel agencies, were up by 20.6 percent from \$42.5 million to \$51.2 million.

