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## Belize

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### Annual

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## Disclaimer

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Guatemala City, Guatemala for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

## SECTION I. FOOD LAWS

There are various government agencies in Belize involved with the food laws. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) (<http://www.agriculture.gov.bz/>) has the legal responsibility of food safety and quarantine. The Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce, Industry and Consumer Protection has the responsibility in terms of local production and import quotas. Finally, the Belize Bureau of Standards (BOS) is responsible for all food standards and labeling laws.

In accordance with Section 86 of the Belize Agricultural Health Act, No. 47 of 1999, in April of 2000, the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) was created. The purpose of this agency is to incorporate and modernize the plant and animal health and quarantine services of Belize. Although this agency is under the MAF, the board of directors consists of members from the four ministries that represent agriculture, trade, health, and economic development, and five members from private sector associations representing the agriculture and fishing sectors (details of BAHA and its board can be found at [www.baha.bz](http://www.baha.bz)).

For the purpose of shipping food and agricultural products from the U.S., exporters must deal directly with BAHA for all sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) issues. BAHA is responsible for approving the import procedure, and when needed, it will process import applications with other agencies for approvals.

The documentation needed to import food and agricultural products into Belize is an import permit from BAHA, an SPS certificate, a certificate of origin, a commercial invoice, and a bill of lading. Most plant products will also need a certificate of treatment and inspection by quarantine officials.

Belize does not have a product registration law; therefore the sanitary permit number of the product issued by the country of origin is automatically accepted in Belize.

## SECTION II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

### A. General Requirements

Belize law requires the labeling of all processed food products. Since English is the official language, the U.S. product labels are accepted. However, U.S. firms should verify that for product labels, all of the following requirements are met:

- The name of the food
- List of ingredients, in descending order
- Net contents and drained weight
- Name and address of the manufacturer
- Country of origin
- Batch/Lot identification
- Expiration Date
- Storage instructions
- Instructions for use

General Exemption: A processed food product that is prepackaged and labeled in English in accordance with the laws and standards in force in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean Community, or the European Union shall be deemed to comply with this standard.

## B. Requirements Specific to Nutritional Labeling

The Belize Bureau of Standards has standard requirements for the labeling and marking of locally manufactured and imported products sold in Belize. The standard requires that the label affixed to a product give detailed information on the good, such as the ingredients used and nutritional facts.

### SECTION III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REQUIREMENTS

There are no known limitations or requirements on containers or packaging.

### SECTION IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

Food additives also fall under the responsibility of the BOS. This agency uses Codex Alimentarius as its standard. The United States Food and Drug Administration additives are also approved. The law per Article 4.3.2.3 states that food additives which appear in the list of food additives permitted for use in foods generally are allowed. The following class titles shall be identified with the specific name or recognized numerical identification as required by national legislation.

- Acidity Regulators
- Anti-caking agents
- Anti-Foaming agents
- Antioxidants
- Artificial Sweeteners
- Colors
- Emulsifiers
- Emulsifying Salts
- Flavor Enhancers
- Flour Treatment agents
- Gelling Agents
- Glazing Agents
- Preservatives
- Propellants
- Raising Agents/ Baking Powder
- Stabilizers
- Thickeners

### SECTION V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS

The Pesticide Control Board, an agency within the MAF, regulates pesticides. Belize uses internationally accepted standards, and pesticides which enter the country must be registered at the Pesticide Control Board (PCB) located in Central Farm, Cayo District, Belize. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.pcbbelize.com/> or by email: [pcbinfo@btlnet.net](mailto:pcbinfo@btlnet.net).

### SECTION VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the sanitary rules and regulations for imports of food and agricultural products, there is also an import license that must be obtained from the Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce, Industry and Consumer Protection for certain products that are considered by the government to compete with local production. The license is issued when there is a shortfall between local production and demand, though importers are seriously concerned about the discretionary nature of approvals.

Importers must request this license at least one week in advance, prior to shipment. The license is specific in terms of the quantity to be imported and for the duration of its validity. The application for the license is done at BAHA and the officer assigned to the case will internally request approval from the Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce, Industry and Consumer Protection. FAS Guatemala has observed that many times the licenses are approved for certain commodities, but the quantities permitted are so small as to not be

economically feasible to import. There are many products that require this import license. Controlled products are listed below: .

- Rice
- Beans
- Bleaching Agents
- Eggs
- Flour
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Furniture of wood, cane, osier, bamboo, rattan or similar material
- Lumber and articles of wood
- Meats and meat preparations
- Molasses and sugar (excluding icing sugar)
- Wearing apparel: T-Shirts (all types) for commercial purposes
- Beer and beverages (excluding dietetic beverages)
- Maize
- Fuels (petroleum products) Milk
- Gases
- Poultry: Live fresh chilled or frozen (excluding baby chicks)
- Citrus and beverages containing citrus products
- Jams, jellies and pepper sauce
- Dry Pasta products
- Matches
- Animal feed
- Toilet paper
- Peanuts
- Yachts and other Vessels
- Brooms
- Soaps

To view updates to this list, see this website:

<http://www.mof.gov.bz/faqresults.asp?category=SUPPLIES+CONTROL&question=24>

To view the law, search for "Supplies Control" at this website: <http://www.belizelaw.org/>

#### **SECTION VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS**

None

#### **SECTION VIII. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADEMARK LAWS**

Although product registration is not required in Belize, trademarks are protected. Belize is a member of the World Trade Organization and a signatory of Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which was set up to protect intellectual property. Copyright violations have not been a problem in Belize. Property rights are well understood in this country, which was a British Colony for many centuries, and is part of the British Commonwealth. The Belize Intellectual Property Office (BELIPO), can be contacted through their web-site [www.belipo.bz](http://www.belipo.bz) where detailed information can be found regarding legislation, regulation, customs consults, enforcement manuals, fees, links to lawyers and others.

#### **SECTION IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES**

The import procedure begins at the nearest BAHA office, herein referred to as the Authority. For a list of the offices please refer to Appendix II or go to web-site [www.baha.bz](http://www.baha.bz). Documents must be in English, the official language of Belize. For routine items, it is recommended that importers begin the process one week before the actual import is to occur.

First, the applicant files an application at the BAHA office and pays an application fee. The Belize dollar (BLZ\$) is pegged to the US\$ at BLZ\$2=\$1. In this application, the importer must specify the products and quantities for importation. If any of the products are on the list of controlled products, approval is required from the Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce, Industry and Consumer Protection. The officer in charge of the application will meet with the appropriate officer at the Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce,

Industry and Consumer Protection and establish whether there is a supply deficit as well as the maximum amount to be imported.

The documents needed for this stage are either the sanitary or phyto-sanitary certificate, and the certificate of origin (these can be faxed copies). This part of the procedure can take up to a week, but generally is accomplished in three days. Once the import permit has been issued, the importer must send it to his supplier. The permit will specify the documents which must accompany the shipment. It is important to remember that the import permit must accompany the shipment from the point of origin to Belize.

Once the shipment has arrived, the importer must go to the customs office with the import permit. There the importer must fill out a Customs Declaration Form C-100 ([www.customs.gov.bz](http://www.customs.gov.bz)) and must present the following documents:

#### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Bill of Lading
- Commercial Invoice
- Phyto-sanitary Certificate or Sanitary Certificate (depending on product)
- Certificate of Origin
- BAHA Import Permit
- Customs Declaration Form C-100 (SAD- Single Administrative Document)
- Other certificates might be needed depending on the product (\*see below)

Once the importer submits the foregoing documents, they are checked and verified by a customs official. If all is in order, the documentation is sent to the customs cashier, where the importer must pay all relevant duties, after which he will receive documentation with the appropriate signatures. This part can take as from one day to one week. In general, it is accomplished in the first 48 hours.

Lastly, the importer takes all these documents to the port of entry and hands them over to the customs official in charge. At this point, the official will verify that all the amounts in the shipment are consistent with those specified in the documents. The paperwork then goes to a BAHA inspector who will also verify that all the SPS conditions have been met. After that, the importer will be allowed to exit the port with his merchandise.

\*It is important that the U.S. exporter have a good relationship with their Belizean importer, and get feedback on updated requirements for the SPS certificates. Unfortunately, specific SPS requirements (the attestations section on the certificates) change often.

Procedures for import permits can be found at: [http://baha.bz/import\\_permits.html](http://baha.bz/import_permits.html)

Guidelines for importation of live animals can be found at: [http://baha.bz/animal\\_health.html](http://baha.bz/animal_health.html)

**APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS**

**Government of Belize:** <http://www.governmentofbelize.gov.bz/index.php>

**Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF):** <http://www.agriculture.gov.bz/>

Name: Mr. Eugene Waight  
 Title: Chief Agriculture Officer  
 Address: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor West Block Building, Belmopan City, Belize  
 Tel: (501) 822-2241/42  
 Fax: (501) 822-2409  
 Email: minaf@btl.net

**Pesticide Control Board (PCB):** <http://www.pcbbelize.com/>

Tel: (501) 824-2640  
 Fax: (501) 824-3486  
 Email: [pcbinfo@btl.net](mailto:pcbinfo@btl.net)

**Belize Intellectual Property Office (BELIPO):** [www.belipo.bz](http://www.belipo.bz)

Address: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Habet Building, PO Box 593,  
 Constitution Drive, Belmopan City, Belize  
 Tel: (501) 822-1380, (501) 822-2073,  
 Fax: (501) 822-1382

**Belize Customs Office:** [www.customs.gov.bz](http://www.customs.gov.bz)

Name: Mr. Gregory Gibson  
 Title: Comptroller of Customs  
 Address: Customs House, Port Loyola, P.O. Box 146, Belize, City  
 Tel: (501) 227-7092 ext. 201  
 Fax: (501) 227-7091  
 Email: [cusnet@btl.net](mailto:cusnet@btl.net)

**Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce, Industry, and Consumer Protection:**

No website currently available.

Name: Ms. Yvonne Hyde  
 Title: Chief Executive Officer

**Belize Bureau of Standards (BOS):** No website available

Address: Located at the Ministry of Works Compound, Power Lane, Belmopan City  
 Tel: (501) 822-0446, (501) 822-0447  
 Fax: (501) 822-2571

**Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA):** [www.baha.bz](http://www.baha.bz)

E-mail: [baha@btl.net](mailto:baha@btl.net)

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**Nerie T. Sanz M.Sc.**

Managing Director  
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 Belmopan, Belize, Central America  
 Tel: 501-822-0197; 501-822-0818/1378  
 Tel: 501-822-0271

**QUARANTINE DEPARTMENT**

**Margarito Garcia**

Director of Quarantine  
 Belize Agricultural Health Authority  
 Central Farm, Cayo District, Belize, C.A.  
 Tel: 501-824-4899; 501-824-4872  
 Fax: 501-824-3773; 501-824-4889  
 E-mail: [quarantine@baha.bz](mailto:quarantine@baha.bz)

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 E-mail: [baha@btl.net](mailto:baha@btl.net) or  
[planthealth@baha.bz](mailto:planthealth@baha.bz)

**ANIMAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT****Victor Gongora D.V.M. M.Sc.**

Director of Animal Health  
 Belize Agricultural Health Authority  
 Central Farm, Cayo District, Belize, C.A.  
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 Fax: 501-824-3773; 501-824-4889  
 E-mail: [animalhealth@baha.bz](mailto:animalhealth@baha.bz) or

**VETERINARY DRUGS REGISTRATION AND CONTROL UNIT****Miguel Figueroa D.V.M.**

Veterinary Drugs Registrar  
 Veterinary Drugs Registration and Control  
 Unit, P. O. Box 181,  
 St. Joseph Street, Belize City, Belize, C.A.  
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 E-mail: [mikfigbz@yahoo.com](mailto:mikfigbz@yahoo.com),  
[foodsafety@btl.net](mailto:foodsafety@btl.net)

**FOOD SAFETY DEPARTMENT****Michael W. De Shield B.VSc. M.Sc.**

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 or [vdrcu@baha.bz](mailto:vdrcu@baha.bz)

**SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ENQUIRY POINT****Delilah A. Cabb B.Sc. M.Sc.**

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 Central Farm, Cayo District, Belize, C.A.  
 Tel: 501-824-4899; 501-824-4872  
 Fax: 501-824-3773; 501-824-4889  
 E-mail: [bahasps@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bahasps@yahoo.co.uk), or  
[bahasps@btl.net](mailto:bahasps@btl.net)

**MEDFLY SURVEILLANCE AND PINK HIBISCUS MEALY BUG (PHMB) CONTROL PROGRAMMES****Hernan Zetina**

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 Belmopan, Belize, Central America  
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 Fax: 501-822-3753  
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**APPENDIX II. OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS**

If you have questions regarding this report or need assistance exporting to Belize, please contact the U.S. Agricultural Affairs Office at the following address.

**Foreign Agricultural Service, Office of Agricultural Affairs, United States Embassy Guatemala**

Avenida Reforma 7-01, Zona 10  
 Guatemala, Ciudad 01010  
 Tel: (502) 2326-4030  
 Fax: (502) 2331-8293  
 Email: [AgGuatemala@fas.usda.gov](mailto:AgGuatemala@fas.usda.gov)

You may also wish to contact:

**Foreign Commercial Service, United States Embassy Belize**



P.O. Box 497  
4 Floral Park Road  
Belmopan, Belize  
Tel: (501) 822-4011 ext. 4308  
Fax: (501) 822-4012  
Email: [BelmopanCommercialInquiries@state.gov](mailto:BelmopanCommercialInquiries@state.gov)  
Their Country Commercial Guide can be found at: <http://belize.usembassy.gov/>

**American Chamber of Commerce of Belize**

5 1/2 Miles Western Highway  
Cucumber Beach Marina  
Belize City  
Send correspondence to:  
P.O. Box 75  
Belize City, Belize  
Tel/Fax: (501) 222-4344

For further information on exporting U.S. agricultural products to Belize and other countries, please visit the Foreign Agriculture Service home page: [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov).