



PRESS RELEASE

The Department of Statistics is pleased to announce the release of its 2005 Foreign Trade figures. This report presents data on the volume and nature of trade between The Bahamas and its trading partners.

Annual Trade Highlights 2004/2005

Provisional estimates on external or foreign trade show that during the year 2005 the total value of commodities imported into The Bahamas totalled some \$2.5 billion dollars resulting in a 30% increase over 2004s' total of \$1.9 billion.

The category of Machinery and Transport Equipment continued to be the largest contributor to our imports, totaling some \$567 million (or 22% of all imports), followed closely by the category of Mineral Fuels which accounted for nearly 20% or \$508 million. The increase in this category however was due mostly to the significant increase in the oil prices and not so much an increase in the quantity.

Other categories worth mentioning in terms of their value are the categories of Manufactured Goods (such as wood, metal, steel or other construction materials, textiles and articles of clothing) which accounted for nearly \$400 million (15% of total imports) and the Food and Live Animals category (which included both fresh meats and fruits & vegetables and processed foods) which accounted for almost \$330 million (13%of total imports).

Merchandise Balance of Trade (B\$ '000)

Account	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
EXPORTS	369,801	388,776	364,827	401,311	450,842
IMPORTS	2,040,858	1,838,465	1,874,159	1,976,515	2,567,162
BALANCE	-1,671,057	-1,449,689	-1,509,331	-1,575,204	-2,116,320

When isolated, Imports of automobiles, part and accessories thereof, which is of particular interest to the wider public showed an increase of 9.5% from \$140 million in 2004 to \$153 million in 2005. When comparing imports from Japan versus the US market, the US still out weighed the Japanese market by %.

Exports

Provisional domestic exports during 2005 totalled \$293 million. The major categories of domestic exports consisted mainly of Chemicals (polystyrene & other plastic materials) which accounted for 53% of total exports and Food and Live Animals (33% of total domestic export). Included in this category are crawfish, rum, salt.

Main Trading Partners

The United States maintained its position as The Bahamas' number one trading partner. While The Bahamas did a significant amount of trade with the European Union (United Kingdom, Germany & France, among others) Curacao, Japan and Canada, the United States still represents just over 80% of total imports and about 66 % of exports. In terms of imports Curacao represented 7.1% (the majority of which is mineral oils), Puerto Rico (2%), European (1%) and Japan (1%).

The Bahamas' Main Trading Partners

Country	2004 (B \$)			2005 (B \$)		
	Imports	Exports	Balance	Imports	Exports	Balance
United States	\$1,708,051,413	\$305,926,699	-\$1,402,124,714	\$2,155,146,364	\$300,217,285	-\$1,854,929,079
Curacao	\$43,564,526	\$84,200	-\$43,480,326	\$184,390,927	\$150,224	-\$184,240,703
Puerto Rico	\$35,763,911	\$383,956	-\$35,379,955	\$49,935,276	\$721,939	-\$49,213,337
European Union	\$30,038,594	\$46,741,987	-\$16,703,393	\$31,156,065	\$82,281,312	\$51,125,247
Japan	\$23,926,777	\$400,326	-\$23,526,451	\$30,288,270	\$920,812	-\$29,367,458
Canada	\$14,025,444	\$11,838,995	-\$2,186,449	\$14,048,007	\$23,168,865	-\$9,120,858

Country Highlights

Import/Exports

- The major products imported from the United States were various food products (\$285.1 million); nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery & mechanical appliances (\$140.3 million); mineral fuels, mineral oils, & by products (\$256.4 million); art works & antiques (\$97.9.0million); electrical machinery equipment & parts thereof (\$160.6 million); and vehicles (\$117.2 million).
- Polystyrene (\$94.8 million); Crawfish (\$38.2 million); however some \$52 million worth was exported to France; Sea Salt (\$14.6 million) and Rum (\$1.1 million) were among the main items exported to the United States.

Percent Change over Previous Year

	2004 (Millions of \$)	2005 (Millions of \$)	Percent Change over Previous Prior Year	
Merchandise of Trade (B\$ Million)				
Item	Total	Total	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Exports	\$401.3	\$450.8	\$49.5	-12..3%
Imports	\$1,976.5	\$2,567.2	\$59.1	2.9%
Balance	-\$1,575.2	-\$2,116.3	-\$54.1	-3.4%

Footnote: Exports include Re-exports

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- Because The Bahamas is for the most part an importing country with very little domestic export, the balance of trade (which is simply total exports minus total imports) continues to result in a deficit. The 2002 deficit in merchandise trade (-\$1,449.7 billion) was the lowest deficit recorded for the five year period 2001-2005. The 2003 deficit (-\$1,509.3 billion) was the second lowest for the same period. Conversely, the trade deficit (\$-2,116,320 million for 2005) was the highest for the same period. The implications are obvious for the Balance of Payment Accounts of The Bahamas. A negative trade balance negatively affects the foreign reserves of the country.