

THE SUGAR CANE INDUSTRY IN BELIZE, CENTRAL AMERICA

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Tate & Lyle has purchased cane sugar from Belize for over 35 years and recent Fairtrade certification makes the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association its first Fairtrade grower-partner.



The Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association is a democratic association that represents farmers and their interests. The association is formed of two regional district divisions: Corozal and Orange Walk.

Generations and generations of farmers in the North of Belize have grown cane sugar; no other crop can be grown in any great quantity in that part of the country. Sugar provides around 8% to total GDP in Belize and 35% to foreign exchange earnings as a percentage of agricultural exports. It is estimated that over 40,000 people are dependant on the sugar industry in Belize.

Farmers in the tropics such as Belize have a very low carbon footprint, and sugar cane generally is much more efficient in converting sunlight and rainfall to produce sugar. Sugar is shipped, not flown, and even with the shipping miles added, sugar cane is a good choice for those concerned about the environment.

The producer partners in Belize are also very concerned about environmental protection and climate change. In fact, Belize Sugar Industries, the only sugar-processing mill in the country, is currently investing in a renewable green energy plant. This will use the residues of the crushed cane to generate enough power to meet 20% of the country's annual electricity demand, thereby reducing their use of fossil fuels. So buying this sugar cane is genuinely an eco-friendly option.