

Analyze the Aquatic Product Trade Situation between Caribbean and China from the Perspective of Management System

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Abstract: The Caribbean region is an indispensable and important participant in the construction of the “Belt and Road”, and has increasingly close contacts with China. Its aquatic products are one of the main trade products and have huge market potential and prospects. Suriname, Guyana, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Caribbean have close relations with the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States respectively, and their trade policies are mostly similar to those of the former colonial countries. Studying the trade situation and management system of aquatic products in the region under the Pandemic has a guiding role for every country’s import and export enterprises.

Keywords: Caribbean; Aquatic products; Management system

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1. Introduction

Although it is not early for the countries of the Caribbean region and China to start the construction of the “Belt and Road”, it also has very important strategic significance. The region also has an ancient historical relationship with Chinese “Maritime Silk Road”. In recent years, China and the Caribbean have cooperated in the fields of international order, economy and trade, and finance. In 2017, the trade value between China and Latin America exceeded US\$2600 billion, a growth rate of nearly 20%^[1]. The following year, the second ministerial meeting of the “China-CELAC Forum” passed the “Santiago Declaration” and “Joint Action Plan for Cooperation in Priority Fields between China and CELAC Member States (2019-2021)”, issued the “One Belt One Road” Special Statement, further optimizing and upgrading the regional bilateral trade situation.

The Caribbean countries have a unique geographical location, and the types of imported and exported agricultural products are not abundant, mainly aquatic products. According to the statistical analysis of customs, aquatic products are a must-have product for almost every country in the Caribbean to export to China, and at the same time, aquatic products also occupy an important position in the Caribbean’s imports from China. Especially Guyana, Suriname and other countries, their trade value of aquatic products even exceeds 95% of the total trade value.

Guyana was once a British colony, and the U.S. Virgin Islands is still under the jurisdiction of the United States. Suriname is the smallest country in South America and was once a Dutch colony. Although they are all very small countries in the Caribbean, their strategic importance cannot be ignored.

2. Trade Situation in the Past Two Years

2.1 Chinese Trade Situation

2.1.1 Chinese Overall Trade Situation

According to customs statistics, Chinese total foreign trade in 2020 reached US\$4,646.3 billion, a year-on-year increase of 1.5%, exports were US\$2,590.7 billion, a year-on-year increase of 3.6%; imports were US\$2,055.6 billion, a year-on-year decrease of 1.1%, and the trade surplus increased by 26.9%. The United States, Japan, and South Korea are Chinese three major trading partners. The European Union and Australia are also important trading markets, while trade growth with Africa and Latin America is not obvious ^[2]. According to the information released by the spokesperson of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, the total import and export volume between China and the countries along the "Belt and Road" reached RMB 9.4 trillion in 2020, a year-on-year increase of 1.0%.

2.1.2 Chinese Export of Aquatic Products

According to customs statistics, in 2019, Chinese aquatic product exports totaled US\$20.7 billion, a year-on-year decrease of 8.0%. Chinese aquatic product trade surplus has dropped significantly; aquatic product exports are relatively rich, with the top 10 products accounting for 48.4% of the total; exports The market is relatively fragmented. The export value of the top five markets accounted for 53.8% of the total, and the export value has all declined in varying degrees ^[3]. According to customs

statistics, in 2020, Chinese total aquatic product exports were 19.04 billion U.S. dollars, a year-on-year decrease of 7.8%. Under the dual impact of pandemic and the China-US trade situation, the value of exports to various markets continued to decline. The only major markets were Thailand and Hong Kong. There was a slight rebound ^[4], but the aquatic products trade surplus increased substantially.

2.2 Overall Trade Data in the Caribbean

Affected by pandemic and the global trade situation, the trade imports and exports of countries in the Caribbean will see an overall decline in 2020, as shown in Figure 1.

As can be seen from the above figure, in 2020, Guyana's import and export trade situation in the Caribbean is very special ^[5]. According to the information of the International Monetary Fund, the growth rate of its imports of goods in the past three years are 2.0%, 7.1%, 4.5%, and the situation is stable; The growth rate of export volume jumped from 0.4% and 3.5% to 182.5%. The main export category was fossil fuels, etc. (accounting for 9.0% of total exports). According to the announcement of the General Administration of Customs, Guyana has only 11 aquatic products companies registered in China by the end of 2020, and the market potential is huge.

3. Aquatic Products Trade Management System

3.1 Suriname

Currently, in the list of "Catalogue of Aquatic Products Exported to China from Countries or Regions Quali-

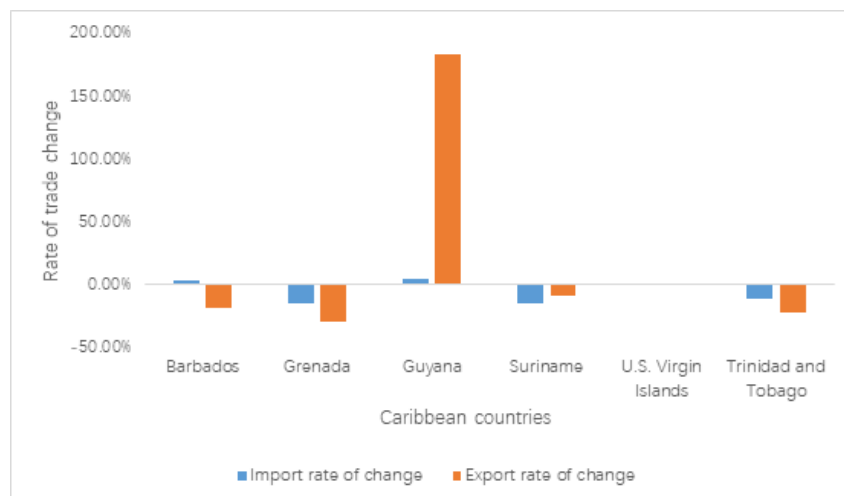


Figure 1. The percentage increase or decrease in the trade of Caribbean countries in 2020 compared to 2019

Note: Data source International Monetary Fund website

fied for Evaluation and Examination”, China has 18 types of aquatic products allowed into Suriname, plus “wild marine aquatic products.” In 2019, the bilateral trade volume between China and Suriname was US\$290 million, a year-on-year increase of 7.5%. China ranks fourth among Suriname’s import partners. Suriname imported 240 million US dollars from China, a year-on-year increase of 9.2%; China ranked sixth among Suriname’s export partners, and Suriname exported US\$50 million to China, a year-on-year increase of 0.9%. China-Suriname trade accounts for about 6.0% of Suriname’s total import and export trade. Suriname exported fish and crustaceans and other aquatic products worth US\$40 million, accounting for 2.6% of the total trade.

The competent authority for the fisheries and aquaculture industry in Suriname is the Stichting Viskeuringsinstituut (VKI). The main regulations are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. The main regulations of Suriname’s aquatic products

Name of laws and regulations	serial number	Establishing agency	Law enforcement authorities
Food law	GB 1911 No.25、 GB 1953 No.134	Ministry of Public Health	Department of Environmental Hygiene
Law of the sea	SB 1980 No.144、 SB 2001 No.120	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	Ministry of Fisheries
Fish Inspection Act	SB 2000 No.107	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	Fish Inspection Institute

Note: Data source Suriname government website

3.2 Guyana

Currently, in the list of “Catalogue of Aquatic Products Exported to China from Countries or Regions that Meet the Requirements for Evaluation and Examination”, China has 7 types of aquatic products that Guyana is allowed to enter. The total trade value between China and Guyana in 2019 was US\$320 million, a year-on-year increase of 20.3%. Among them, Guyana’s imports to China were US\$270 million, a year-on-year increase of 22.9%; Guyana’s exports to China were US\$50 million,

a year-on-year increase of 6.7%. In 2020, China ranked fourth among Guyana’s major trading partners. Guyana’s imports to China were US\$210 million, accounting for 8.6%; China ranked eighth among Guyana’s export destinations, and Guyana’s exports to China were US\$120 million, accounting for 4.2%. . Guyana’s export of frozen fish and other aquatic products amounted to US\$30 million, accounting for 1.0% of the total.

Guyana is in charge of aquatic products mainly by the Fisheries Department under the Ministry of Agriculture. The main regulations on aquatic products are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Guyana’s main regulations on aquatic products

Name of laws and regulations	serial number	Current version	Establishing agency
Food and Drug Law	FOOD AND DRUGS ACT CHAPTER 34:03	1983 version, released in 2012	Ministry of Health
Fisheries Law	FISHERIES ACT CHAPTER 71:08	2002 version, released in 2012	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

Note: Data source Guyana government website

3.3 U.S. Virgin Islands

The laws and regulations of the U.S. Virgin Islands basically adopt U.S. laws. Since the United States of America revised the Organic Law of the Virgin Islands in 1954, it has tried four times to replace the Organic Law with a constitution approved by the people of the Territory, but failed. So far, the U.S. Virgin Islands’ aquatic product management regulations refer to the United States, and the management agency is also under the supervision of the United States. Although there is a Department of Agriculture and a Department of Health, it is only responsible for daily work.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Former Colonial Power Has a Profound Influence on the Legal System of Caribbean Countries

The U.S. Virgin Islands is a non-self-governing territory under the Charter of the United Nations. As an organized territory not annexed by the United States of America, it is managed by the Office of Insular Affairs of the United States Department of the Interior. According to

the Organic Law of the Virgin Islands (1936), the amendment to the Law in 1954, and subsequent amendments to the 1954 Revised Organic Law, the Territory has a legislative body. The islands have a governor, not a president. The governor has the executive power for a four-year term and can only be re-elected once. The laws and regulations basically refer to the United States. Guyana is a Commonwealth country. Its institutional settings and laws and regulations refer to the British system. It is currently one of the countries with the best economic situation in the Caribbean. According to Guyana's relevant regulations on import and export of agricultural products, the import and export of agricultural products and livestock products should be approved by Guyana's Ministry of Agriculture, and quality inspection should be submitted to Guyana's Ministry of Agriculture and related departments. Imported live animals (including pets), fresh meat, etc. should submit an import application to the relevant departments of the Ministry of Agriculture, and apply for quarantine to the relevant departments of the Guyana Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. Suriname is once called Dutch Guiana. As a former Dutch colony, the legal system of Suriname will inevitably have the shadow of the Netherlands. These conditions have had a special impact on China's trade: when companies conduct transactions, they must not only pay attention to the laws and regulations of the corresponding country, but also pay attention to the relevant policies of their former colonial host country. Because once they encounter fuzzy areas or dispute areas, Caribbean countries will generally refer to the relevant requirements of the former colonial powers. In addition, these former colonial powers are basically members of the European Union or North America. Even if the Caribbean region refers to the current advanced international standards and regulations, it will inevitably involve the former colonial powers.

4.2 The International Situation Has a Huge Impact on Aquatic Product Trade in the Caribbean

The survival of small countries under the pandemic has a unique dilemma. Its economy is small, its trade product structure is relatively simple, and its ability to resist risks is weak. Especially in some island countries, the source of income still depends on the tourism industry that requires

the movement of people. Under the influence of the pandemic, the depression is unstoppable. Frozen products such as aquatic products have a lot of overlap with the prevention and control measures of the new coronavirus due to their special preservation and transportation. The virus can survive longer in a low temperature environment, which directly leads to the risk of carrying aquatic products transported in the cold chain, and related trade is greatly frustrated. Therefore, the trade channels opened by various policies have been severely affected. In addition, China-US trade frictions have continued, and disputes have not been significantly eased. Under the wrestling of big powers, small countries in the region will inevitably show a wavering attitude. The United States is the region's largest trading partner^[6], and even regards Latin America and the Caribbean as its own "backyard". Today, with the promotion of the "Belt and Road" and China-US trade frictions, the strategic significance of trade in the Caribbean is important. On the other hand, based on the aforementioned economic conditions, it is comprehensively judged that the economic development of the Caribbean in 2021 will still be characterized by a market downturn, weak trade, and pessimistic investment^[7], and the recovery speed may not be too fast. Therefore, this is also the ultimate goal for China to expand the market.

4.3 Complementary Advantages of the Management System

Although the economies of the Caribbean countries are relatively small, Suriname and Guyana are countries with a population of less than one million, and the U.S. Virgin Islands has a population of just over 100,000. However, their laws and regulations mostly refer to international standards and have a relatively high starting basis. They also have a test field. The significance of learning and reference in our country. China's aquatic product quality and safety regulatory agencies basically include: the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the National Health Commission, the National Market Supervision Administration, the General Administration of Customs, and the National Aquatic Product Standardization Technical Committee, covering various fields such as fishery, health, market circulation, import and export, etc. Each department has its own standard-setting authority (the General Administration of Customs has absorbed

the original inspection and quarantine standard-setting), its own inspection and testing institutions, and its own supervision and random inspections and supervision regulations, and their responsibilities are mostly overlapping. Optimizing the reform of inspection and testing institutions and unifying testing standards have an important guiding role in improving the standardization of Chinese aquatic products and the smoothness of conforming to international standards.

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