



BELIZE

**MEAT AND LIVESTOCK ACT
CHAPTER 214**

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MEAT AND LIVESTOCK
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CHAPTER 214**MEAT AND LIVESTOCK**

CAP. 177,
R.E. 1980-1990.
1 of 1977.
30 of 1980.
22 of 1987.
29 of 1988.

[16th April, 1977]

PART I*Preliminary*

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Meat and Livestock Act.

Interpretation.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

“Association” means the Belize Livestock Producers Association established under section 14 of this Act;

“butcher” means any person who slaughters or causes to be slaughtered any cattle, the meat of which is intended for sale or for human consumption;

“cattle” means castrated or entire of any bull, cow, bullock, heifer, calf, steer, ox, ewe, wether, ram, goat, kid, boar, sow, gilt of this Act or swine;

“cess” means a monetary imposition raised under section 21 of this Act;

“Commission” means the Meat and Livestock Commission established under section 3 of this Act;

“exporter” means any person licensed to export any cattle or to process meat for export;

“financial year” means, in respect of any matters relating to the revenue, expenditure and accounts of the Commission or the Association, the twelve months ending on the 31st December inclusive in any year;

“livestock” means any cattle as defined in this Act;

“meat” means the flesh or carcass of any cattle intended for human consumption;

“Minister” means the Minister for the time being responsible for Agriculture;

29 of 1988.

“owner” means any proprietor of any cattle and includes any of his authorised agents or managers;

“producer” means any person who breeds or fattens more than five cattle for sale or by way of trade;

“slaughter house” means any premises licensed under the Food and Drugs Act, Cap. 291, or maintained at public expense for the slaughter of cattle for sale or human consumption.

“trader” means any person engaged in the wholesale or retail trade in meat, not intended for export;

PART II

Establishment, Powers, Functions, etc, of the Meat and Livestock Commission

3.-(1) There is hereby established a Meat and Livestock Commission to be known by that name which shall be a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal, which shall be judicially noticed and which may sue and be sued in its corporate name and may make contracts and hold and dispose of land of whatever tenure and other property for the purpose of carrying out its functions under this Act.

Establishment of
the Commission.

(2) All deeds, documents or other instruments requiring the seal of the Commission shall be sealed with the common seal of the Commission in the presence of the Chairperson and one other member of the Commission who shall sign every such deed, document or other instrument to which the common seal is affixed.

Constitution of
the Commission.

4.-(1) The Commission shall consist of,

- (a) two *ex officio* members, namely,
 - (i) the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture; and
 - (ii) the Head of Animal Health in the Belize Agricultural Health Authority or any organisation which may succeed the Authority; and
- (b) seven other members appointed by the Minister, namely,
 - (i) one person representing the exporters;
 - (ii) one person representing the traders;
 - (iii) three persons from among not less than five members nominated by the Belize Livestock Producers Association; and
 - (iv) two persons having no connection with the meat and livestock industry.

(2) Where the officer mentioned in paragraph (a) (i) or (a) (ii) of subsection (1) of this section is unable to be present at any meeting of the Commission, he may appoint an alternate to represent him at that meeting.

Membership of
the Commission.
29 of 1988.

5.-(1) The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture shall be the Chairperson of the Commission and the officer appointed under paragraph (a) (ii) of subsection (1) of this section, shall be the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission.

(2) Every member appointed by the Minister shall, unless he earlier vacates office by death or resignation, hold office for a period of two years. Any appointed member who vacates office by passage of time shall be eligible for re-appointment.

(3) Any appointed member may at any time resign his office by letter addressed to the Minister.

(4) Any vacancy in the membership of the Commission shall be filled as soon as may be convenient, with due regard to section 4 of this Act.

(5) No act or proceeding of the Commission shall be invalid by reason only of the existence of any vacancy amongst its members or any defect in the appointment of a member thereof.

(6) If the Chairperson or any appointed member is temporarily unable to discharge the duties of his office on account of ill health or absence from the country or for any other cause, the Minister may with due regard to section 4 of this Act, appoint some other person to act in his place as Chairperson or as such member.

(7) Any person appointed in place of any member who has vacated office by death or resignation shall hold office only for the unexpired term of office of such member who has vacated office.

(8) Any member of the Commission shall be deemed to have vacated his seat if he,

- (a) dies, is certified insane, is adjudicated a bankrupt or accepts any office of profit under the Commission;
- (b) not being an *ex officio* member, is absent without the leave of the Commission from four consecutive meetings of the Commission;
- (c) not being an *ex officio* member, ceases to be eligible to serve on the Commission.

6.-(1) The Commission shall hold meetings for the transaction of its business at such time and place and upon such days as the Chairperson may determine from time to time.

Meetings and Quorum.

(2) The Chairperson may at any time, and shall within seven days of the receipt of a requisition for that purpose addressed to him by any three members, call a special meeting of the Commission.

29 of 1988.

(3) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings at which he is present and in his absence the Deputy Chairperson shall preside at the meeting, and in the absence of both the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, the Minister may appoint any other member of the Commission to act as Chairperson.

(4) At any meeting of the Commission, five members shall constitute a quorum, and the business shall be transacted on the vote of the majority present and voting.

Powers and duties
of the Commis-
sion.

7.-(1) The powers and duties of the Commission shall be,

- (a) to employ such officers and servants upon such terms and conditions as it may think fit;
- (b) to specify the records to be kept and the returns to be made by the Commission, Association, owners, exporters, importers, butchers and traders;
- (c) to receive and deal with returns made pursuant to paragraph (b) of this subsection;
- (d) to register and regulate cattle breeding societies;
- (e) to hold or otherwise operate auction sales of livestock;
- (f) to control the slaughtering of female livestock;
- (g) to impose minimum weight restrictions on the slaughtering of all livestock;
- (h) to regulate the movement of cattle and meat within and between districts;

30 of 1980.

- (i) to grade livestock and meat and to specify the standards to be applied therefor; 30 of 1980.
- (j) to control the sale and exportation of live cattle to be used for breeding or for slaughter and to specify the standards to be applied thereto;
- (k) to control the importation of live cattle for slaughter or for breeding;
- (l) to operate meat packing plants;
- (m) to establish depots and agencies for the purchase of livestock;
- (n) to advise exporters, traders and the Association on any matter concerning the meat and livestock industry;
- (o) to advise the Minister on all matters concerned with the meat and livestock industry;
- (p) to appoint such executive committees or sub-committees as may be required for the efficient performance of its duties and functions under this Act;
- (q) to be an arbitrator, when requested, in any dispute, issue or disagreement arising between any exporter and any trader or between either or both of these and the Association or between the Association and such company or companies as may be approved by the Minister under section 20 of this Act,

Provided that the Commission's decision thereon shall be final and binding on all the parties concerned;

- (r) to receive and expend such monies as may accrue to the Commission;

- (s) to do any other act that may be necessary to give effect to one or more of the above.

(2) The Commission shall comply with any direction whether general or particular given by the Minister in connection with the exercise or discharge of any powers or duties conferred upon the Commission.

Regulations.

8.-(1) The Commission may, with the approval of the Minister, make regulations for carrying out its powers and duties under the Act, for the development of the livestock industry and in particular for prescribing anything required to be prescribed.

(2) Any person who contravenes any regulations made under this Act commits an offence.

Funds of the Commission.

9.-(1) The Commission shall have its own fund.

(2) There shall be paid into the fund of the Commission,

- (a) such sums provided for in the annual budget as may be approved by the Minister;
- (b) any other sums due to the Commission from any other source.

30 of 1980.

(3) There shall be paid out of the fund in respect of each financial year all such sums as are required to defray the expenses incurred by the Commission in the exercise, discharge and performance of its powers, functions and duties under this Act or any regulations made thereunder.

Accounts of the Commission.

10. The Commission shall cause proper accounts to be kept of its financial transactions. Such accounts shall be made up in respect of each financial year and audited by an auditor appointed by the Commission and approved by the Minister and when so audited shall be submitted to the Minister, who shall cause them to be published in the *Gazette* and at least one local newspaper within six months of the close of the financial year.

Estimates.

11.-(1) The Commission shall, in respect of each financial year, as early as may be convenient, prepare and submit to the Minister in such form

as required by the Minister, the estimates of the income recoverable and expenditure to be incurred during that financial year. The Commission shall also obtain and submit the estimates of the Association, together with the comments, if any, on them.

(2) The Minister may approve or amend such estimates.

(3) When the Minister has approved the estimates he shall cause the same to be published in the *Gazette*.

(4) All new or special expenditure, with the exception of emoluments, shall receive the approval of the Minister before being included in the estimates.

(5) Except with the approval of the Minister, no further sum shall be expended during any financial year other than is provided for in the estimates relating to such financial year.

12.—(1) The Commission shall prepare annually a written report of its activities during the financial year together with a complete statement of its financial position and its accounts, audited as provided for in section 10 of this Act.

Annual Report.

(2) The Commission shall transmit certified copies of such report, statement and accounts to the Minister who shall lay them before the National Assembly.

13. The Commission may, with the approval of the Minister, make rules for regulating its proceedings and may from time to time alter or amend them.

Rules.

PART III

*Establishment, Purposes and Powers, etc.
of the Belize Livestock Producers Association.*

Belize Livestock
Producers Asso-
ciation.

14. For the purposes of this Act, there is hereby established an association of livestock producers in Belize known as the Belize Livestock Producers Association.

Objects of the As-
sociation.

15. The objects of the Association shall be,

- (a) to promote understanding and goodwill among the members of the Association;
- (b) to promote the development of the livestock industry;
- (c) to nominate the Association's representatives on the Meat and Livestock Commission to safeguard the interests of members in all matters concerned with the production and marketing of livestock;
- (d) to encourage the production of better livestock and the formation of cattle breeding societies;
- (e) to provide technical and other information of assistance to members;
- (f) to promote increased consumption of beef and livestock products;
- (g) to participate in livestock exhibitions;
- (h) to provide for the benefit of members, educational and training facilities in the livestock industry;
- (i) to negotiate with such company or companies as may be approved by the Minister under section 20, from time to time, the prices payable for livestock;

- (j) generally to do all things necessary to be done in the best interests of the livestock industry.

16.—(1) Every producer shall be eligible to be a member of the Association.

Membership.

(2) The Association may, with the approval of the Minister, make rules specifying the procedure to be adopted in the registration of members.

17.—(1) The Committee of Management of the Association shall keep, in such form as may be prescribed by the Commission, a register containing, in respect of each member of the Association, particulars of,

Register of Members.

- (a) his full name and address;
- (b) the number and kinds of cattle belonging to him; and
- (c) such other particulars as the Commission may from time to time prescribe.

(2) Separate registers shall be maintained in respect of the various districts.

(3) The registers shall be open to inspection during normal office hours by any member of the Association or of the Commission.

(4) Every registered producer shall be issued with a certificate of registration, which shall be surrendered when he ceases to be a member.

18.—(1) The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Committee of Management (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”, which shall have control of the income, capital and property of the Association and shall have full authority in all matters connected with the appointment and dismissal of the officers and employees of the Association and with the administration of the affairs and the accomplishment of the objects and purposes of the Association.

Committee of Management.

(2) The Committee shall consist of eight members.

- (3) The Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The election shall be by ballot.
- (4) The term of office of a member of the Committee shall be two years from the date of his election and he shall be eligible for re-election:
- Provided however that half the number of members determined by the drawing of lots shall resign their seats at the end of the first year.
- (5) The Committee shall elect annually from among its members a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and other office-bearers as it deems necessary.
- (6) A member of the Committee may resign his seat by a letter addressed to the Chairperson.
- (7) When any member resigns or vacates his seat or is deemed to have vacated his seat, a person may be nominated by the Committee in his place. The person so nominated shall hold office for the remainder of the term of office of such member.
- (8) Subject to the existence of a quorum, the powers of the Committee shall not be affected by any vacancy in the membership thereof.
- (9) Any member of the Committee who,
- (a) dies;
 - (b) is adjudicated bankrupt;
 - (c) is certified insane;
 - (d) holds any office of profit in the gift of the Association;
 - (e) is absent from three consecutive meetings without valid reasons acceptable to the Committee; or
 - (f) is serving a prison sentence,
- shall be deemed to have vacated his seat.

(10) The first Committee shall, however, be nominated by the Minister and it shall hold office till the first Annual General Meeting of the Association.

(11) The Committee shall meet on a regular basis for the transaction of business.

19.-(1) The Committee shall comply with any lawful direction given to the Association by the Commission.

Functions of the Committee.

(2) The Committee shall have and may exercise all the powers conferred upon the Association under this Act.

(3) The Committee shall submit an annual return to the Commission at such time and in such form as the Commission may determine, of all registered members of the Association, together with such other information as may be contained in the Register of the Association.

(4) The Committee shall take notice of any resolution passed by the Association in general meeting.

20.-(1) The prices payable for cattle intended for slaughter or export, shall, from time to time be determined by negotiation between the Association and such company or companies as may be approved by the Minister under subsection (2) of this section. In the event of a failure to arrive at a price by negotiation, the matter shall be referred by the Association to the Commission for arbitration.

Prices for livestock.

(2) The Minister shall, by Order published in the *Gazette*, approve such company or companies incorporated in Belize as are engaged in the meat and livestock industry with which the Association is to enter into negotiations as provided for in subsection (1) of this section.

21.-(1) The Association shall, with the approval of the Minister, impose, levy and collect a cess upon all cattle sold to butchers or sold for export. The rates of cess approved by the Minister shall be published in the *Gazette* before the start of each financial year.

Cess on cattle.

(2) The butcher is responsible for the collection of cess from the producer at the time of purchase and for its payment at the time of slaughter to the slaughter house operators or such other person as may be designated by the Minister.

(3) The cess shall be levied on the basis of per head of cattle and shall not be varied during the financial year in respect of which it was imposed.

(4) Until the cess on cattle sold for export is fixed by the Association with the approval of the Minister,

- (a) any exporter of live cattle for slaughter shall pay to the Association a cess of ten dollars plus an *ad valorem* tax of two per cent on the sales value; and
- (b) any exporter of live cattle for breeding shall pay to the Association an *ad valorem* fee of two per cent on the sales value.

Fund of the Association.

22.—(1) The Association shall have its own fund.

(2) There shall be paid into the fund of the Association,

- (a) all such sums as may be collected by the Association by way of cess;
- (b) any other sums due to the Association from any other source.

(3) There shall be paid out of the fund in respect of each financial Year,

- (i) all such sums as are required to defray the expenses incurred by the Commission in the exercise, discharge and performance of its powers, functions and duties under this Act or any regulations made thereunder; and

- (ii) all such sums as are required to defray the expenses of the Association and which have been provided for in the budget submitted to and approved by the Commission,

Provided that the annual budget of the Commission and the Association have been approved by the Minister.

(4) Any sum remaining after defraying the expenses referred to in subsection (3) of this section, shall be paid into a fund to be known as the “Livestock Producers Development Fund”.

(5) The administration of the Fund referred to in subsection (4) of this section, shall be vested in a Board of Trustees consisting of three trustees, one nominated by the Minister, one by the Commission and one by the Association. Regulations may be made by the Minister for the administration of the Livestock Producers Development Fund.

23. The Association shall cause proper accounts to be kept of its financial transactions. Such accounts shall be made up in respect of each financial year and audited by an auditor appointed by the Association and approved by the Minister, and when so audited shall be submitted to the Minister who shall cause them to be published in the *Gazette* and at least in one local newspaper, within six months of the close of the financial year.

Accounts of the Association.

24.-(1) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the Association before the end of the month of February of each year. This meeting shall be called by the Committee and shall consider Annual Reports dealing with the finances and management of the Association and the election of the Committee.

Meetings of the Association.

(2) The Committee shall, if requested to do so in writing by twenty members of the Association, call a Special General Meeting giving twenty-one day’s notice thereof to all members. Discussions at such meeting shall be restricted to the matter for which the meeting was called.

25. The Association may with the approval of the Commission, make rules to regulate the procedure at meetings of the Association and the Committee and the transaction of business at such meetings.

Rules regulating business of the Association.

Accounts of the Committee.

26. The Committee shall keep full and proper accounts of their financial transactions in respect of each financial year, and such accounts shall be audited and submitted to the Commission within six months of the close of the financial year and the accounts together with the auditor's report shall also be laid before the Association at the next Annual General Meeting.

Committee to submit estimates of revenue and expenditure.

27. The Committee shall in respect of each financial year prepare and submit to the Commission in the form required by the Minister estimates of the income receivable and expenditure to be incurred by the Association during that financial year.

Annual Report of the Association.

28. The Committee shall also prepare and present to the Annual General Meeting of members of the Association a report of its proceedings for each financial year.

PART IV

Miscellaneous

Liability of the members.

29. No member of the Commission, or the Committee of Management of the Association shall be personally liable for any act or default done or omitted to be done in good faith in the course of the operations of the Commission or the Association, as the case may be.

Duties of the Minister.

30.—(1) The Minister may give to the Commission in writing general or special directions as to the performance of the duties and the exercise of the powers of the Commission.

(2) The Minister may from time to time direct the Commission or the Association in writing to furnish to him in such forms as he may require, returns, accounts and other information with respect to the property and business of the Commission or the Association and the Commission or the Association as the case may be, shall carry out every such direction.

(3) The Minister may order all or any of the activities of the Commission or the Association to be investigated and reported upon by such person or persons as he may specify and upon such order being

made, the Commission or the Association, as the case may be, shall afford all such facilities to carry out such order.

31. Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or of any regulations made thereunder commits an offence under this Act and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months, or to both such fine and period of imprisonment.

Offence and
penalty.