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**Country:** Egypt

**Post:** Cairo

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**Report Highlights:**

Egypt’s hotel, restaurant, and retail food sectors continued growth in 2018 thanks to a budding recovery in tourism and consumer spending. Sources forecast demand increasing, with growth reaching 15-20 percent by 2021 as tourism and consumer purchasing power recover. Imports of consumer-oriented products decreased by 4 percent in 2018. This report provides an overview of Egyptian market dynamics and trends, as well as practical tips for doing business in Egypt.

## Market Fact Sheet: Egypt

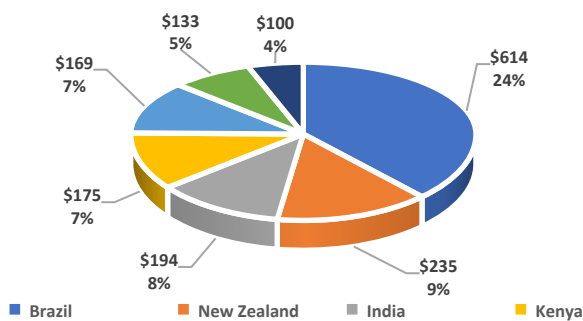
### Executive Summary

Egypt's hotels and restaurants sector has shown 50 percent growth in 2018 due to the recovering tourism and normalization of expenditure patterns among Egyptians. Sources in the sector forecast growth to reach 15-20 percent by 2021 as tourism and consumer purchasing power continue to recover. Consumer-ready products from the U.S. face stiff competition from suppliers in countries with more favorable trade relationships. In 2018, the highest value U.S. consumer-oriented products exported to Egypt were beef liver and offal, products of natural milk, and tree nuts.

### Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

Egypt imported \$2.5 billion in consumer-oriented products in 2018. Primary suppliers were Brazil, New Zealand, India, Kenya, Netherlands, United States, and Germany.

Imports of Consumer Oriented Products (\$ million)



### Retail Food Sector

The Egyptian retail foods sector size is \$15 billion. Higher income consumers drive much of the demand for imported products, while low- and middle-income consumers substitute imports with domestic alternatives. As incomes recover, in tandem with increased purchasing power, the market will grow. Sources foresee growth of 15-20 percent over the next five years. Traditional outlets still dominate the Egyptian market, representing 98 percent of total outlets and around 75 percent of total sales. Modern retail outlets are nonetheless growing in number and volume of sales. Online retail platforms are increasingly popular as internet penetration increases.

### Food Processing vs. Imports in the Retail Sector

In 2016, the Egyptian government implemented policies that discouraged the import of consumer-oriented products. Importers of ingredients and products for further processing were given priority. There are over 7,000 food processing and manufacturing companies in Egypt. They contributed to about three percent (\$8 billion) of 2018 GDP (\$251 billion) as reported by the Central Bank of Egypt. Though steadily improving, local production remains more limited in terms of quality and variety.

### Hotels, Restaurants, and Institutions

The hotels and restaurant sector sales grew in 2018. Their revenues reached \$17.4 billion (or seven percent of national GDP of \$251 billion). Egyptian institutional sales channels vary and information is limited. Certain institutions, such as hospitals, correctional, and military facilities, have centralized kitchens to provide meals for their patients, inmates, and soldiers. In many cases, these institutions issue government tenders for private firms to run the kitchens. In other instances, civil servants staff centralized kitchens. Post estimates the institutional food service industry at \$5.8 billion annually.

## SECTION I: MARKET OVERVIEW

### Quick Facts CY 2018

#### Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products US\$2.5 billion

#### List of Top 10 Growth Products in Egypt

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Beef Liver        | 2) Frozen Beef             |
| 3) Natural Milk      | 4) Whey Protein            |
| 5) Tree Nuts         | 6) Potato Chips            |
| 7) Pop Corn          | 8) Food Preparations       |
| 9) Dog and Cat Foods | 10) Pork and Pork Products |

#### Packaged Foods (US\$ billion) 2018

Packaged Food Sales	\$17.5
Exports*	\$3.0
Imports*	\$2.5
Inventory	N/A
Domestic Sales	\$14.5
Retail	\$8.7
Food Service	\$5.8

#### Top Egypt Hotels & Restaurants Chains & Retailers

- |                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Marriott International | - Americana Group          |
| - Hilton International   | - Manfoods                 |
| - Accor International    | - Intl. Co.Food Industries |
| - Mövenpick Hotels       | - Delicious Inc.           |
| - Steigenberger          | - Mo'men Group             |
| - Carrefour              | - Mansour Holding          |
| - Seoudi Market          | - Spinneys                 |
| - HyperOne               | - Gourmet                  |

#### GDP/Population

Population (millions): 99.4

GDP (billions USD): \$251.1 (2018), \$335 (2017)

GDP per capita (USD): 12,390 PPP

Sources: Bank of Egypt, World Bank, FAS Cairo office research.

#### Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Large consumer market 2. Consumer acceptance of U.S. origin products	1. High tariffs 2. Complex import regulations
Opportunities	Threats
1. Growing demand 2. Shortage in supply of imported consumer-oriented products	1. Trade competitors with free trade agreements 2. Trade competitors with closer proximity

Data and Information Sources: FAS Cairo office research.

Contact: FAS Cairo [AgCairo@fas.usda.gov](mailto:AgCairo@fas.usda.gov)

In 2016, the Egyptian government started an ambitious multi-pronged and time-phased economic restructuring program. In September 2016, the government implemented a 13 percent value added tax (increased to 14 percent in July 2017) on most commercial transactions. In November 2016, the Central Bank floated the national currency. In six months, the Egyptian pound depreciated from EGP 8.88 to EGP 18.00 against the dollar and continued to exchange around this rate through December 2018. With the economy recovering, the Egyptian pound has strengthened in 2019 against major foreign currencies (September 2019, EGP 16.02 to \$1.00). The Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) indicates that inflation has dropped from a peak of 33 per cent in 2017 to 2.7 percent in October 2019.

Since 2017, tourist arrivals have been on an upward trend. The Ministry of Finance reports visitor numbers went up 47.5 percent in 2018 compared to the preceding year. The number of tourists increased from 6.6 million in 2016/17 to 12 million in 2018/19, generating \$12.6 billion in revenue compared to \$4.4 billion in 2017. Hotel sector sources inform a 20-25 percent increase in occupation rate and overall operations in the first six months of 2019. FAS Cairo (Post) foresees approximately 14 million tourists visiting Egypt through the end of 2019 (see [GAIN-EGYPT Food Service – Hotel Restaurant Institution Annual 2019](#)).

Egyptian consumers are adjusting to the economic transformation and are resuming more normal expenditure patterns. Retail sources report increased demand for imported food and beverages starting in July 2017 (see [GAIN-EGYPT \(EG-19009\) Egypt Retail Foods Annual 2019](#)). Restaurant sales are up 45 percent since July 2017, notwithstanding higher menu pricing by roughly 30 percent (to cover the additional operation costs following the November 2016 devaluation). By some estimates, sales of restaurants in 2018 are reported at close to \$6 billion (EUROMONITOR). During the first half of 2019, the hotel restaurant institutional (HRI) sector outperformed 2018. Total revenues are about \$6.7 billion compared to \$3 billion previously.

**Table 1: Advantages and Challenges Facing U.S. Suppliers, Consumer-Oriented Products**

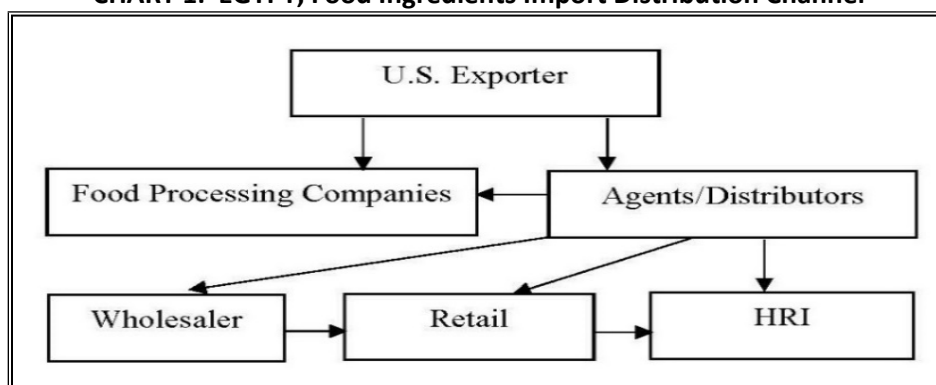
Advantages	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S.-origin food products and ingredients have a good reputation and image, they are associated with high quality and continue to enjoy acceptance in the Egyptian market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. exporters face competition from the EU member states. Egypt has a free trade agreement with the European Union, which provides preferential tariffs to EU-origin products.</li> <li>Egypt often follow EU standards, which do not coincide with U.S. or Codex standards.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing demand for high-value U.S. products in the hotel and restaurant sector.</li> <li>Growing demand for high-value, highly processed ingredients. Food processing is growing and; it requires imported food ingredients. Companies seek new ingredients, especially affordable unprocessed commodities. Food processors and manufacturers are exporting to the region. Egypt has 339 million consumers within 500 kilometers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many importers indicate lack of US supplier interest in Egypt.</li> <li>Geographic proximity favors competing suppliers due higher shipping costs from the United States.</li> <li>Egyptian import regulations are at times non-transparent.</li> <li>Importers are largely unfamiliar with U.S. export controls, procedures, standards, and certifications.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New-to-market products benefit from the recent expansion of supermarket and hypermarket chains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher tariffs often levied on imported consumer-oriented products.</li> </ul>

**SECTOIN II: EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS**

**Market Research:** U.S. exporters should identify an Egyptian importer or distributor, with whom they can build a relationship. Egyptian firms are best suited to navigate local regulations, understand distribution chains, and have relationships with retailers, food processors, hotels, restaurants and institutions (see [GAIN EGYPT - Egypt Food Processing Ingredients 2019](#), [GAIN-EGYPT \(EG-19009\) Egypt Retail Foods Annual 2019](#), and [GAIN-EGYPT Food Service – Hotel Restaurant Institution Annual 2019](#)).

**Market Structure:** Egypt’s market structure is straightforward. Importers are food processors, manufacturers, and or agents/distributors of these. Larger companies source their food ingredients and products directly to lower prices, guarantee product flow, and ensure quality. Agents/distributors service the food processing and manufacturing sectors, comprised of numerous fragmented small- and medium-size companies. Smaller manufacturers purchase reduced quantities, do not import directly, pay in Egyptian pounds, and maintain small inventories.

**CHART 1: EGYPT, Food Ingredients Import Distribution Channel**



**General Consumer Tastes and Trends:** FAS Cairo (Post) attributes the growth in local and imported consumer-oriented foods to Egypt’s time-starved middle-class consumers. Ready-to-eat frozen meals and instant noodles are popular time-saving meal options; ingredients for these products are imported. There is growing availability of packaged food products.

### SECTION III: IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS AND IMPORT PROCEDURES

**Customs Clearance:** [Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry Decree 770/2005 \(October 2005\)](#) establishes the General Organization for Export and Import Control (GOEIC) as the national authority responsible for the inspection and certification of food items. It is responsible for processing customs documents for food imports, as well as issuing the results of inspections through a certificate of conformity (see [GAIN EGYPT – FAIRS Egypt Country Annual 2018](#), and the [GAIN EGYPT – FAIRS Egypt Country Export Certificate 2018](#) reports).

The Egyptian Parliament approved the [law number 1/2017](#) establishing the [National Food Safety Authority](#) (NFSA) on Monday 2, January 2017. As of November 15, 2019; NFSA officially assumed responsibility for all ports’ inspections and sampling/testing.

Documents normally required for food imports include:

- Bill of lading
- Commercial invoice
- Certificate of origin (countersigned by the Chamber of Commerce and notarized by the Egyptian Embassy or Consulate in the country of origin)
- export/health certificate (FDA certificate of free sale, sanitary, phytosanitary)
- Packing List
- Certificate of Insurance
- Import Permit (issued to Egyptian importers)
- Payment guarantee (form 11) from a local bank advising payment transfer to the supplier

**Country Language Labeling Requirements:** The translation into Arabic of the foreign language label information is required. Inconsistency in the translation may result in a rejection. Arabic labeling can be printed on the package or be a permanent adhesive label. Products cannot show more than one date of manufacture or expiration. Label information cannot be erased, scratched, or altered in any way (see [GAIN EGYPT – FAIRS Egypt Country Annual 2018](#), and the [GAIN EGYPT – FAIRS Egypt Country Export Certificate 2018](#) reports).

**Tariffs and Free Trade Agreements (FTA):** Presidential Decree No. 419/2018 amends customs tariff categories listed in Presidential Decree No. 184/2013. The amendments published in the official gazette on September 9, 2018, came into effect on 12 September. The amended customs tariff schedule reaffirms Egypt’s commitment to the international nomenclature for the classification of products Harmonized System (HS) (originally introduced in 1988 and with the latest changes/revisions entering into force in 2017). Customs tariff cover 5,791 items, 60 percent of which are raw materials, capital and strategic goods. Intermediate goods (994 items) account for 17 percent of the new tariff schedule; consumer-oriented goods represent 20 percent.

Decree 419/2018 aims to bring Egypt’s customs tariff into conformity with the latest version of the international harmonized system, to reform and eliminate distortions in tariff systems, to safeguard national interests, and to abide by international standards. The new tariff lines aim to protect industry and achieve a tariff balance between intermediate inputs and final products. Post has not discerned any meaningful tariff impact on food and agricultural products. The main features of the amendments have been the inclusion of new, detailed HS codes for fish, fishery products, yoghurt and other imported food products. The amendments are not exceptional, taking place each five years to remain compatible with international standards.

Egypt maintains trade agreements with the European Union (EU), the Arab League (GAFTA), COMESA, and Turkey, facilitating preferential treatment within the Egyptian market. U.S.-origin products face a competitive disadvantage compared to EU- and/or Turkey-origin products.

**Trademarks and Patents Market Research:** In June 2002, [Egypt passed the Intellectual Property Rights \(IPR\) Law 82/2002](#). The law describes copyright’s legal rights and enforcement procedures, expedited trademark registration, and piracy protection (see [GAIN EGYPT – FAIRS Egypt Country Annual 2018](#)).

## SECTION IV: MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

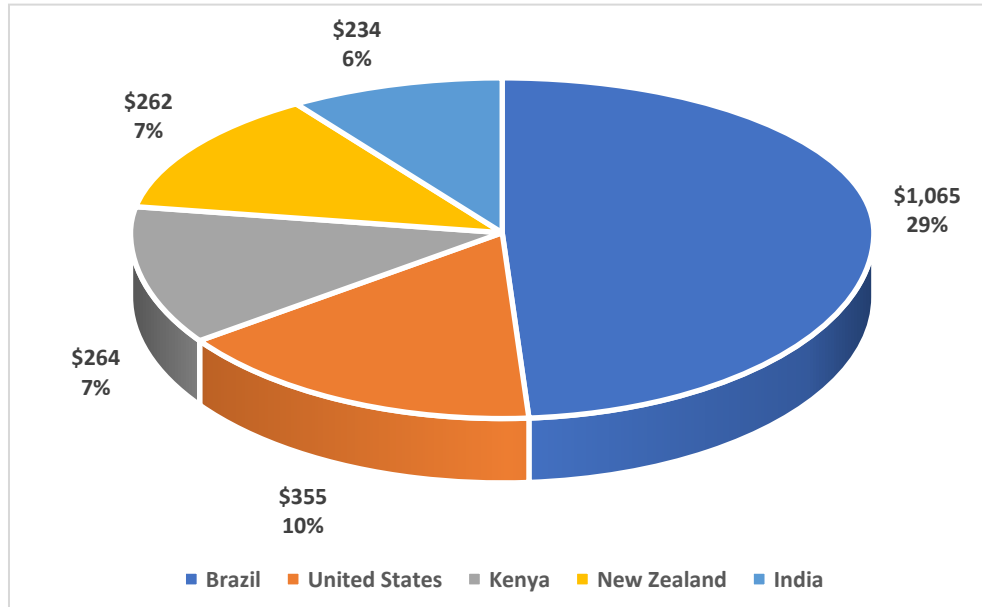
**Key Developments for Top 5 Sectors:** The 2016 devaluation of the Egyptian pound, and ensuing inflationary pressure on food prices, drove consumers to lower-priced locally produced consumer-oriented products. This shift contributed to the food-processing sector’s expansion.

**Best Consumer-Oriented Product Prospects:** U.S.-origin powdered infant formula and other milk products remain competitive. Egypt is a major market for U.S. beef livers and offal; U.S. exports in calendar year (CY) 2018 (January-December) reached about \$62 million which represents 62 percent of total Egypt imports (\$89 million). Shipments to Egypt in CY2019 (Jan-Sep) are roughly \$55 million. U.S.-origin beef muscle cuts quality is well known, but despite the room for growth, these are restricted to affluent buyers (see [GAIN-EGYPT Food Service – Hotel Restaurant Institution Annual 2019](#)).

**Table 2: Egypt, Company Profiles and Top Retailers**

Company	Activity	Outlets	Remarks
<a href="#">Carrefour</a>	Supermarket/Hypermarket	37	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">Mansour Group</a>	Retail/Distribution	100	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">Seoudi</a>	Retail	12	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">On-the-Run</a>	Convenience Store	27	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">HyperOne</a>	Retail	2	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">Spinneys Egypt</a>	Retail	13	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">BIM</a>	Retail	300	Primarily Domestic Goods
<a href="#">Kazyon</a>	Retail	414	Primarily Domestic Goods
<a href="#">Gourmet Egypt</a>	Retail	9	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">Alfa Market</a>	Retail	7	Domestic & Imported Goods
<a href="#">Ayman Afandi</a>	Importer/Distributor		Marketing & Distribution
<a href="#">Al-Shaheen Co.</a>	Importer/Distributor		Marketing & Distribution
<a href="#">GMA</a>	Importer/Distributor		Marketing & Distribution
<a href="#">Amin Trading</a>	Importer/Distributor		Marketing & Distribution
<a href="#">AM Foods</a>	Importer/Distributor		Marketing & Distribution
<a href="#">Egyptian Group</a>	Importer/Distributor		Marketing & Distribution
<a href="#">Bassiouni Sons</a>	Importer/Distributor		Tree Nut Importer/Processor/Distributor
<a href="#">Samo Trading</a>	Importer/ Distributor		Tree Nut Importer/Processor/Distributor

**Key Competitors Situation (Consumer Oriented Products - millions of dollars) (2018)**



Source: Trade Data Monitor, FAS Cairo office research.

**Best High-Value, Consumer-Oriented Products Prospect Categories:** Egypt’s imports of food and beverage ingredients and additives are growing. Post attributes growth to the expansion of the Egyptian food processing and manufacturing industry. Expansion is aided by the government imposing low to no tariff on these imported products.

Corn (maize, other than seed corn) (Harmonized Tariff System – HS 1005.90), milk and cream (concentrated or sweetened) (HS 0402), food preparations (HS 2106), and odoriferous mixtures (HS 3302), are imported products high in demand. Other food ingredients such as frozen fish (no fish fillet or other fish meat) (HS 0303), tea (whether or not flavored) (HS 0902), black tea fermented and other partly fermented tea (HS 0902.40), and sunflower seeds (or safflower oil, crude) (HS 1512.11) although not imported in large quantities from the United States have nonetheless good potential.

The top consumer-oriented imports (all origins) in CY 2018 were beef and boneless beef (\$613 million), black tea (\$250 million), milk powder less than 1.5 percent fat (\$119 million), infant food (\$113 million), unsweetened milk powder (\$98 million), butter (\$97 million), food preparations (\$91 million), fresh apples (\$88 million), and cheese except fresh (\$87 million). Products present in the market; which have good sales potential, such as cheese, infant formula, wine, peanut, bread flour, sauces, dressings, syrups, beef liver, black tea, food preparations, concentrated milk and cream, frozen chicken, and butter, continue to represent good prospects for U.S. exporters.

U.S.-origin products not present because they face significant barriers include fresh apples due to high tariffs and poultry parts (i.e., chicken leg quarters) due to non-tariff barriers. The Egyptian government prohibits the importation and/or utilization of food ingredients and additives (oils, fats, etc.) derived from non-halal origins and/or those which contain alcohol, or pork products and its derivatives (see [GAIN EGYPT – FAIRS Egypt Country Annual 2018](#) report).

**SECTION V: AGRICULTURAL and FOOD IMPORTS**

**Table 3: Egypt, 5-Year Food and Agricultural Imports, CY 2014-19 (January-December)**

Description	United States Dollars (millions)										YTD Jan-Jul				% Change	
	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2018		2019		2018/2019	2018/2019
	World	U.S.	World	U.S.	World	U.S.	World	U.S.	World	U.S.	World	U.S.	World	U.S.	World	U.S.
Total	\$11,596	\$1,669	\$10,627	\$904	\$9,924	\$622	\$9,689	\$799	\$10,478	\$1,793	\$5,747	\$994	\$6,940	\$1,034	20.76	4.06
Oil Seeds Etc.; Misc. Grain, Seed, Fruit, Plant Etc.	\$1,353	\$411	\$1,000	\$243	\$901	\$106	\$1,162	\$396	\$1,603	\$1,111	\$1,002	\$636	\$1,074	\$623	7.14	-1.99
Meat and Edible Meat Offal	\$1,687	\$275	\$1,989	\$260	\$1,769	\$225	\$1,557	\$249	\$1,543	\$278	\$820	\$164	\$1,167	\$187	42.21	14.05
Cereals	\$5,236	\$812	\$4,315	\$324	\$4,120	\$218	\$4,415	\$107	\$4,304	\$331	\$2,233	\$137	\$2,653	\$174	18.77	27.03
Dairy Prods; Birds Eggs; Honey; Ed Animal Pr. NESOI	\$889	\$129	\$760	\$39	\$668	\$25	\$473	\$25	\$597	\$35	\$418	\$28	\$373	\$18	-10.76	-34.69
Edible Fruit & Nuts; Citrus Fruit Or Melon Peel	\$504	\$27	\$707	\$30	\$597	\$35	\$335	\$10	\$415	\$23	\$185	\$18	\$360	\$26	94.88	42.52
Fish, Crustaceans & Aquatic Invertebrates	\$568	\$8	\$557	\$3	\$501	\$3	\$565	\$6	\$694	\$5	\$380	\$4	\$497	\$1	30.98	-87.67
Edible Vegetables & Certain Roots & Tubers	\$578	\$4	\$532	\$3	\$564	\$2	\$454	\$2	\$460	\$2	\$201	\$2	\$313	\$1	55.7	-53.96
Live Animals	\$138	\$0	\$164	\$0	\$160	\$2	\$137	\$1	\$209	\$4	\$113	\$2	\$113	\$0	-0.27	-92.49
Lac; Gums, Resins & Other Vegetable Sap & Extract	\$22	\$1	\$23	\$1	\$24	\$2	\$19	\$2	\$19	\$1	\$12	\$1	\$11	\$0.98	-14.1	2
Live Trees, Plants, Bulbs Etc.; Cut Flowers Etc.	\$2	\$0	\$2	\$1	\$2	\$1	\$2	\$0	\$5	\$0	\$3	\$0.46	\$10	\$0.29	266.69	-36.69
Coffee, Tea, Mate & Spices	\$528	\$1	\$502	\$0	\$537	\$0	\$495	\$0	\$547	\$1	\$329	\$0.46	\$318	\$0.73	-3.38	-83.99
Products of Animal Origin, NESOI	\$41	\$0	\$30	\$1	\$30	\$0	\$36	\$0	\$46	\$1	\$30	\$0	\$30	\$1.88	-1.85	389.18
Milling Products; Malt; Starch; Inulin; Wht. Gluten	\$45	\$1	\$42	\$1	\$49	\$1	\$36	\$0	\$33	\$0	\$19	\$0.12	\$19	\$0.23	-0.98	98.14
Vegetable Plaiting Materials & Products Nesoi	\$4	\$0	\$4	\$0	\$3	\$1	\$3	\$0	\$3	\$0	\$2	\$0	\$2	\$0.00	54.41	-100

OBS: Import values reported in Cost-Insurance-Freight (CIF) terms.

Source: Trade Data Monitor, FAS Cairo office research.



## SECTION VI: KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

U.S. Embassy Cairo, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Office of Agricultural Affairs

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### **Egyptian Hotel Association**

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### **Egyptian Tourism Federation**

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### **Egyptian Tourist Authority**

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Phone: +20-2-2484-9399

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### **Egyptian General Co. for Tourism & Hotels**

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Email: [info@egoth.com.eg](mailto:info@egoth.com.eg) • Website: <http://egoth.com.eg/>

### **Cairo Chamber of Commerce**

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Email: [info@cairochamber.org.eg](mailto:info@cairochamber.org.eg) • Website: [www.cairochamber.org.eg](http://www.cairochamber.org.eg)

### **General Organization for Export and Import Control**

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### **Egyptian Customs Authority**

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**Attachments:**

No Attachments