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Report Highlights:

COVID-19 had a strong impact on the Russian economy that changed consumer behavior. In January -July 2020, the GDP decline is estimated at 3.4 percent year-on-year. The Russian Ministry of Economic Development forecasts the Russian economy will recover in Q3 of 2021 due to citizen and business support measures, rising prices for oil, and mass vaccination from COVID-19. Food production and processing of agricultural products remains one of the drivers of economic growth. In January-November 2020, production of food products increased by 3.9 percent and drinks by 1.3 percent year-on year. Russia's food processing industry continues to invest in new equipment and is expanding purchasing of ingredients, but looking for more competitive sources in terms of price ingredients.



Executive Summary

Russia is the world's largest country by area with a population of 144 million people. In 2019, Russia's GDP reached \$1.5 trillion, positioning the country as the world's 12th largest economy. COVID-19 impacted the Russian economy and changed consumer behavior. In January -July 2020, the GDP decline is estimated at 3.4 percent year-on-year. The Russian Ministry of Economic Development forecasts the Russian economy will recover in Q3 of 2021 due to citizen and business support measures, rising prices for oil and mass vaccination from COVID-19. In March 2014, the United States joined 30 other countries in imposing sanctions on Russia for violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Russia responded by imposing its own countersanctions on many agricultural imports. Since 2014, Russian agricultural production has increased 30 percent.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

While imports of consumer-oriented products have fallen by more than 33 percent since 2014, Russia remains a net importer and continues to rely on foreign supplies of fresh and dried fruit, nuts, vegetables, beef, cheese, wine, spirits, food ingredients, and processed foods, including condiments, snacks and juices.



Food Processing Industry

Food processing has increased by an annual average of five percent over the last three years. In January-November 2020, production of food products increased by 3.9 percent and drinks by 1.3 percent year-on year, despite COVID-19's impact on the economy. To keep pace with this growth, Russia's food processing industry continues to invest in new equipment and is expanding purchasing of ingredients.

Food Retail Industry

In 2019, retail turnover grew by 1.9 percent and reached \$460.6 billion, but in the first half of 2020 declined by 6.3 percent due to reduced income. Russia's top 10 fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) retail chains account for 38 percent of the total FMCG market. In Q3 of 2020, the situation in the consumer market began to stabilize, but remains tense.

Quick Facts CY2019

Imports of Consumer Oriented Products, total: \$20.2 billion.

List of Top 10 Growth Products in Russia (imported from the World):

1) Citrus Hybrids	6) Cherries
2) Beef fresh or chilled	7) Milk and cream, 1-6% fat
3) Avocados	8) Beer
4) Apples fresh	9) Cheese
5) Peaches	10) Dog and cat food

2019 Food Industry by Channel (USD billions):

Food Industry Output: \$101 Consumer-Oriented Products Imports: \$20.2 Consumer-Oriented Products Exports: \$4.3 Agricultural & Related Products Imports: \$31.1 Agricultural & Related Product Exports: \$32.7 Retail: \$460.6 Food Retail: \$220.8 Food Service: \$22.8

Top 10 Retailers in Russia:

- 1. X5 Retail Group
- 2. Magnit
- 3. DKBR Mega Retail Group Limited
- 4. Lenta
- 5. M. Video-Eldorado
- 6. DNS
- 7. Wildberries
- 8. Leroy Merlin
- 9. Auchan Retail
- 10. Metro Group
- <u>GDP/Population</u>:

GDP: \$1.5 trillion

Population: 144.7 million

Strengths	Weaknesses
The biggest consumer market in Europe with 143 million consumers	Strong competition from European, Chinese, and locally produced products
Opportunities	Threats
Growing Russian food processing sector is looking for quality and innovative ingredients and consumers are increasingly sophisticated, looking for healthy product	Countersanctions limit the list of American products eligible for export to Russia

Data and information Source: Russian Statistic Committee, Trade Data Monitor, industry experts

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges



SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW

Russia is the world's largest country by area with a population of 144 million people. In 2019, Russia's GDP grew by 1.3 percent versus 2018 and reached \$1.5 trillion (110 trillion rubles)¹, positioning the country as the world's 12th largest economy. The Russian economy is largely driven by the oil and gas industries; however, manufacturing has grown by an average 2.5 percent for the third consecutive year. Limited consumer purchasing power has been a significant constraint to Russia's economic growth. Disposable income has steadily decreased since 2014, with close to zero growth in 2018, and only an 0.8 percent rise in 2019 with inflation rising to 4.5 percent amidst increasing debt.

Russia's domestic agriculture and food processing industries are growing and dynamic sectors that have contributed significantly to the economy over the last five years. Following the introduction of <u>economic sanctions</u> in 2014, the Russian government accelerated import substitution policies purported to have fueled the development of the food and agricultural sectors. Within the last three years, the food processing and agricultural sectors grew by an average 5 percent per year. As of 2018, Russia nearly achieved self-sufficiency in grain production (99 percent of consumption is produced domestically), meat production (93 percent), sugar (95 percent), dairy production (84 percent), potatoes (94 percent), and vegetables (85 percent). According to Trade Data Monitor, Russia has reduced food imports by 27.5 percent, from 45.7 billion USD in 2013 to 31.2 billion USD in 2019, and in the same time period increased agricultural product exports by 42 percent to 32.7 billion USD.

COVID-19's impact on the Russian economy eased after the lifting of quarantine restrictions in June. April and May saw 12 percent and 10.7 percent GDP decline, respectively. According to the Russian Statistics Service (Rosstat), from January-July 2020, GDP declined an estimated 3.4 percent year-onyear. The main factor behind the recovery in economic activity was the ongoing lifting of quarantine restrictions², which positively affected the performance of the consumer market. In October, the dynamics of retail trade turnover significantly improved up to -2.4 compared to -7.7 percent in June year-on-year or -19.2 percent in May. Growth in consumer activity was accompanied by the recovery of

¹ Exchange rate of \$1=73 rubles

² To resist expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, President Putin announced a long, non-working paid holiday for the entire country from March 28 to April 30 and gave the order to regional governments to develop measures preventing COVID-19 expansion depending on the situation in each region. On March 30, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin issued a quarantine order calling on all residents, regardless of age, to isolate in their homes, with exceptions allowing for emergency medical aid, travel to work, shopping at the closest grocery store or pharmacy, taking out household trash, and walking a pet within a hundred meters of one's residence. Since the end of March, with the exception of grocery stores, pharmacies, medical centers, and a few key government agencies, most businesses and other enterprises were closed or operating only online. The self-isolation regime in Moscow was lifted on June 12 followed by a gradual business re-opening. Every region has introduced and lifted restrictions differently according to the COVID-19 situation in that region. Within the autumn second wave of COVID-19, such measures as teleworking were highly recommended to businesses, as well as obligatory restrictions for restaurants, theaters, museums, and other entertaining places to reduce numbers of visitors, and additional sanitizing in stores, transportation, other public places. Regional governments introduced a combination of measures according to the situations within their regions.

manufacturing industries focused on consumer demand, in particular food manufacturing, light industry, and furniture production.

Meanwhile, mineral extraction and manufacturing dropped by 6.7 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively, while the number of small and medium size businesses contracted by 4.2 percent within the first half of 2020. The unemployment rate reached 6.3 percent in November 2020. From January to September 2020, real disposable income dropped by 4.3 percent year-on-year.

COVID-19 changed consumption patterns in Russia as lifestyles adapted to the pandemic. According to Nielsen research³, 78 percent of those surveyed mentioned that their lifestyle changed fundamentally:

- During COVID-19, attention to health and healthy lifestyles increased. Even before the pandemic in 2019, 81 percent of citizens surveyed in cities with populations of one million or more recognized the importance of a healthy lifestyle, 49 percent of them name healthy eating as one of major aspects of a healthy lifestyle. Forty-eight percent commented that they have diet restrictions, including a share who exclude harmful products from their diet.
- Incomes of 44 percent of respondents declined, 11 percent had to take nonpaid leave and 9 percent lost their jobs.
- Faced with declining income, consumers became more focused on planning their cooking and spending on purchases resulting in more cautious purchase choices. The major factors influencing food purchases during COVID-19 were procurement of food for use within a week or month (25 percent), buying products necessary for cooking (21 percent), and getting necessities between big purchases (20 percent). In contrast, purchasing for every day needs and buying urgently needed products were the leading reasons for shopping before the COVID-19 pandemic. The recent emphasis on planning food purchases has reduced impulse purchases.
- To economize, 32 percent of respondents reported that they search for discount prices and promotions and 8 of 10 say private labels have attractive prices.
- Fifty-one percent of people cooked more at home consistent with increased demand for cooking and baking products like flour, eggs, and milk. In contrast, impulse purchases and consumption of products for snacking at work like gum, chocolate bars, and cold green tea declined.
- Quarantines and teleworking shifted many functions and activities online: 34 percent of respondents started working from home, 21 percent started studying online, 24 percent began consuming online entertainment, and 19 percent embarked on online fitness programs.
- As COVID-19 keeps people at homes, consumers increasingly shifted to online purchasing online. Fifty-eight percent of surveyed consumers purchased via both online and offline stores. Before COVID-19, only 11 percent had experience in buying food products via the internet.

The Russian government introduced credit holidays that decreased some obligatory payments and increased social payments to support the population. Mass vaccination of the Russian population against COVID-19 and a historically low Central Bank refinancing rate of 4.25 percent are touted as the key factors contributing to recovery of the Russian economy along with increasing prices for oil. According to the Ministry of Economic Development's forecast basic scenario, GDP growth in 2021 is

³ Nielsen is a global measurement company that provides data and analytics for consumer and market research.

expected to recover to 3.3 percent. Thus, the forecasts would see the Russian economy returning to precrisis levels by Q3 of 2021.

Table 1. Advantages and Chanenges U.S. Exponers race in the Russian Federation.			
Advantages (product strengths and market	Challenges (product weakness and		
opportunities)	competitive threats)		
The biggest consumer market in Europe with	Russian counter sanctions severely limit the		
143 million consumers	list of American products eligible for import		
Growing Russian food processing sector is	Negative perceptions of the United States		
looking for quality and innovative ingredients	influence importers and retailers		
Consumers are increasingly sophisticated,	Declining incomes drive consumers to more		
looking for healthy foods and increasingly use	affordable products		
vitamins and food additives			
	Strong competition from European, Chinese,		
	and locally produced products		

Table 1. Advantages and Challenges U.S. Exporters Face in the Russian Federation

SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

The Russian market has never been an easy place to do business; however, with the imposition of counter sanctions and COVID-19 travel restrictions travel, it is even more difficult. As a first step, U.S. exporters should confirm that the potential sale does not include products subject to Russian counter sanctions. Exporters can find full information on the banned products in the following USDA FAS GAIN Reports: Russia Announces Ban on Many US Agricultural Products (August 2014) and Russia Extended Food Import Ban through End 2021 (December 2020). After determining that the product is allowed to legally enter the Russian Federation, the exporter can initiate the regular process of selecting importers, distributors, or other buyers. The exporter is advised to conduct market research to better understand the dynamics of the market, including demand, competition, pricing, and logistics. Some information is publicly available through USDA FAS GAIN reports, but the exporter is encouraged to contact the FAS representatives in Moscow for more specific information. Information can also be provided by various U.S. industry groups, USDA Cooperators, and State Regional Trade Groups.

The Russian market is extremely competitive and establishing a personal relationship is critical. Although initial contact with importers and distributors is best done in person, virtual contact can suffice during this time of travel restrictions. There are also numerous international trade shows (in Russia and elsewhere) that can serve as an effective platform to connect with Russian buyers of food ingredients. Below are Russian trade shows that are expected to be held in 2021:

- Beviale Moscow March 16-18, 2021
- Modern Bakery Moscow March 23-26, 2021
- <u>Prodexpo</u> April 12-16, 2021
- World Food Moscow September 21-24, 2021
- <u>Agroprodmash</u> October 4-8, 2021
- <u>PIR Expo</u> October 5-8, 2021

Russian buyers also attend U.S. and international trade shows like Fancy Food, IFT, Anuga, SIAL, Gulfood, ProWein, Green Week, and BrauBeviale. More information about these events can be found at <u>https://fas-europe.org/</u>.

SECTION III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS & REGULATIONS

Despite Russia's WTO accession in August 2012, Russian import procedures are complicated and very bureaucratic. While the legal framework has been modernized, procedural implementation lacks clarity and can be easily manipulated to serve specific interests. For general information regarding customs clearance, required documentation, labeling requirements, and tariffs, please refer to <u>GAIN Report Food</u> and <u>Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report</u>. The information contained in this report serves as a general guide. USDA strongly recommends that exporters verify specific requirements with their import partners before shipping any products.

SECTION IV. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

Food Processing

Food production and processing of agricultural products remains one of the drivers of economic growth, despite COVID-19's economic impact and the associated decreased purchasing capacity of the population. In January-November 2020, production of food products increased by 3.9 percent and drinks by 1.3 percent year-on year. Under economic sanctions, the Russian Government has prioritized the development of domestic agricultural production and Russia's food processing sector is an integral part of this development. Food processing has increased by an annual average of 5 percent over the last three years. In 2019, revenues from Russia's food and drink processing sectors reached \$102.4 billion; food production grew by 4.9 percent and drink production - by 3.1 percent year-on-year.

The agro-industrial complex is coping well with the crisis in the economy because of the following factors:

- Growing domestic production of agricultural products like meats, wheat, oilseeds, and other products is stable base for further processing;
- Consumers turn to domestically produced food products versus imported products with the expectation of lower prices at time when affordability is a priority;
- Increasing exports of processed products due to the competitive ruble exchange rate. Russian exports of processed food products grew from \$7.6 billion in 2017 to \$9.8 billion in 2019, and for January October 2020 increased another 10 percent. The list of main exported products includes, but is not limited to vegetable oils, cooked and prepared shellfish, chocolate and cocoa preparations, bread, pastry and cakes, and soybean oil.
- Russian Government support of agricultural products processors with favorable credit and partial reimbursement of costs for the creation or modernization of agricultural processing facilities.

Food manufactures try to introduce more new, interesting products to attract consumers. The production of "healthy" products including gluten free, low fat, and sugar free is growing following demand. To keep pace with this growth, Russia's food processing industry continues to invest in new equipment and is expanding purchasing of ingredients, but seeking more price competitive ingredients.

Retail

In 2019, the turnover of the Russian retail industry grew by 1.9 percent and totaled \$460.6 billion (33,624.3 billion rubles), of which \$220.8 billion (16,120.8 billion rubles) reflected turnover of food at retail, according to the Russian Statistic Service (Rosstat). In January-September 2020, overall retail turnover declined by 4.8 percent and turnover of retail food decreased by 5.3 percent due to decreased incomes and the general economic downturn. The situation in the consumer market began to stabilize as quarantine restrictions were lifted thoughout the country. In Q3 of 2021, retail turnover recovered to the the level of Q3 2020⁴. According to the Ministry of Economic Development, the recovery was driven by short-term factors such as consumers acting on deferred demand formed during the period of quarantine measures, social support measures, and additional demand for goods and services caused by consumers staying home during the summer holidays because of international travel. As these short-term effects dissipate, reduced disposable income is expected to become a driving factor in restraining consumer demand. In these conditions, household consumption in the coming months is projected to remain lower than it was in 2020.

During the first 9 months of 2020, the share of the top ten fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) chains in the retail food market increased up to 38 percent⁵. The consolidation will continue in 2021. Declines in real income are projected to affect business and consumer confidence (and import demand) for as long as the COVID-19 crisis continues. According to Romir research⁶, 33 percent of respondents are looking for less expensive brands and 17 percent try to buy products when they are discounted and during promotions. The share of such consumers will most likely increase in 2021 to 38 percent and 26 percent, respectfully. To attract consumers, retail chains are introducing large-scale promotional activities, even though this negatively affects profitability and results in lower margins. This increasingly tough competition will probably lead to regional and inter-regional players going out of business, and acceleration of retail business consolidation.

In 2020, online shopping expanded because the COVID-19 pandemic kept people at home. According to the Association of Internet Trade Companies, the online retail market in the Russian Federation in the first half of 2020 amounted to 1,654 billion rubles (\$22.6 billion), and first time exceeded 10 percent of overall retail trade. Leading retail chains organized or modernized their online operations and delivery services. The major online operators reported growth in turnover, in particular Wildberries increased

⁴ Russian Statistic Service preliminary estimation

⁵ INFOLine

⁶ Romir Panel, Russia 10 thousand, May, 2020 vs May, 2019

sales by 110 percent and OZON sales grew by 152 percent year-on-year in January-July 2020. The pandemic not only brought spontaneous shoppers to online, it helped create a habit of making regular purchases on this channel, according to industry experts.

In 2020, Russian consumers shopped at venues closer to home. Convenience stores in residential areas adapted by featuring a range of products sought by such consumers. Discounters benefitted from consumers prioritizing more attractive prices, resulting in increased visits for larger purchases.

Hotel, Restaurant & Institutional (HRI) Sector

The Russian foodservice industry has grown around four percent annually for the past three years and in 2019 reached 1.665 billion rubles (\$22.8 billion). However, COVID-19 hit this sector particularly hard. It fell 20.6 percent year on year in January-November time period to 1.214 billion rubles (\$16.6 billion). However, fast-food chains and dark kitchens, i.e., restaurants with delivery only, demonstrated double digit growth in 2020. Consumers are gradually coming back to restaurants, but sector recovery will depend on disposable income growth.

The market for accommodation in Russia, which includes hotels, tourist apartments, and hostels, grew by 5.7 percent in 2019. In 2019, 1,700 hotels, hostels, and holiday homes were registered in Moscow. Growth for the year was 11 percent. The hotel market in Russia has been deeply affected by the coronavirus pandemic and it is expected to take three to five years before it fully recovers. In fact, about 80 percent of the hotels are in critical condition. The biggest loss resulted from a decrease in Chinese tourists who made up a significant portion of tourism to Russia. According to the industry experts, the industry recovery will be long and difficult.

SECTION V. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD IMPORTS

Despite increased domestic agricultural production and food manufacturing, Russia remains the sixth largest importer of food and agricultural products in the world. In 2020, imports of consumer-oriented products are expected to decline due to the COVID-19 impact, general downturn of the economy, and declining incomes.

While overall imports of consumer-oriented products have fallen by more than 30 percent because of Russian countersanctions, Russia continues to rely on foreign supplies of fresh and dried fruit, nuts, vegetables, beef, cheese, wine, spirits, and food additives. In recent years, the volatility of the Russian ruble has been one of the major factors affecting the competitiveness of imported food products. The Russian ruble lost over half of its value against the U.S. dollar, from 35 rubles per USD in 2014 to 73 rubles per USD in 2020.

In 2019, Russia's imports of agricultural and related imports totaled \$31.1 billion according to the Federal Customs Service of Russia. Consumer-oriented products accounted for two-thirds of Russia's

agricultural and related imports. Imports of agricultural products from the United States have declined from \$2.2 billion in 2014 every year and totaled \$426.5 million in 2019. Preliminary data for 2020 suggest Russia's imports from the United States may have leveled off. Russian imports of American consumer-oriented products fluctuated depending on the Ruble exchange rate and consumer demand and in 2019 grew by 11 percent to 140.8 million compared to 2018. Many imported products are now supplied by countries that are not subject to Russia's counter sanctions (Belarus, Turkey, China, Brazil, Ecuador, South Africa, Chile, and Argentina). However, products that are lower cost, better value or that are not already available locally are still potentially an opportunity for American suppliers. The table below summarizes some of the existing opportunities in the Russian market and competition with other suppliers.

Russian government policies, oriented toward import substitution, have also created a challenging environment. In 2020, Russia adopted a new Food Security Doctrine that explicitly sets the goal of food self-sufficiency. For additional details, please refer to the <u>GAIN report New Food Security Doctrine</u> <u>Adopted (February 2020)</u>. Despite the ban, stagnant purchasing power, and import substitution programs, Russia remains one of the largest food importers in the world.

Product Category,	Main suppliers,	Strengths of Key Supply Countries	Market Attractiveness
Imports in \$ million	in percentage (value)		
Food preparations Total imports: \$1,224.7 From USA: \$74.7	1. Germany – 22 2. Poland - 10 3. Italy – 7.5 USA - 6	EU suppliers benefit from the geographical proximity and established connections in Russia.	There is a growing demand for healthy food additives and sports supplements which add nutrition, as well as innovative ingredients.
Processed vegetables Total imports: \$753 From USA: \$11	 China – 24 Spain – 14 Belarus – 11 USA – 1.5 	Asian and European suppliers make price-competitive offers.	Evolving food-processing industry creates demand for sustainable, innovative and natural ingredients and additives. American tomato paste is the major American product in this category selling consistently on the Russian market.
Nuts prepared or preserved Total imports: \$52.4 From USA: \$9.4	1. Belarus – 18.7 2. USA – 18 3. Turkey – 16	Strong competition on price on processed nuts from Belarus, Turkey and Spain.	Healthy eating trends are expanding along with the demand for nut snacks and natural ingredients for confectionary and bakery. U.S. nuts have established niches on the Russian market due to quality.
Wine Total imports: \$873.3 From USA: \$9.3	 Italy - 23 Georgia - 22 France - 14 USA - 1 	European wines are well known and popular with Russian consumers. Robust European promotional efforts focusing on European wines historical presence on the Russian market are a challenge. New World wines compete with American wines on price.	A wine culture is developing in Russia. Wine professionals know about the quality of American wines. Some importers are interested in bringing new brands to the market and are educating consumers about American wines.

Table 2. Top Russian Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products and Competition, 2019

Processed fruits Total imports: \$570.2 From USA: \$8.9 Cacao and chocolate products Total imports: \$1,071.7 From USA: \$5.4	 China – 13 Belarus – 9.6 Thailand – 9 USA – 1.6 I.Germany - 20 Malaysia – 8.7 Indonesia – 7.8 USA – 0.5 	products from Asia and Europe is very strong. Price for the product and closer proximity to the Russian market	Strong position of American dried sweetened cranberry on the market due to quality and supply volumes. The growing confectionery sector
Condiments and Sauces Total Imports: \$255.1 USA: \$5.9	1. Germany – 20 2. Austria – 15 3. China – 8.3 USA – 2.3	relationships with Russian importers and enjoy high loyalty of final	Expanding knowledge and growing popularity of the international cuisine creates opportunities for American-style sauces for grill.
Dog and cat food Total imports: \$350.8 USA: \$4.4	1.France-16 2. Italy – 12 3. Canada- 10 USA 1.3	Better prices and payment terms make products from major suppliers more attractive.	The pet food market is growing in Russia.
Rice Total imports: \$101.3 From USA: \$0.9	1. India - 40 2. Thailand – 18 3. Pakistan – 12 USA – 0.9	historical supply channels from Asia make it difficult for other suppliers to enter the rice market in Russia.	Increasing demand for wholesome natural foods, including interest in specialty products. The U.S. rice industry offers a unique specialty rice assortment, which is appreciated by the health-conscious consumer audience.

Source: Trade Data Monitor

U.S. agricultural and food export data is available at: https://apps.fas.usda.gov/gats/default.aspx

SECTION VI. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

For further questions on this report or assistance exporting to Russia, please contact the Foreign Agricultural Service in Moscow. Importer listings are available from the Foreign Agricultural Service for use by U.S. exporters of U.S. food and beverage products.

For more information on FAS/USDA Market Promotion Programs and Activities in Russia, please contact:

U.S. Agricultural Trade Office

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Office of Trade Programs U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, DC 20250 https://www.fas.usda.gov/trade-programs

Attaché reports on the Russian food and agricultural market are available on the FAS Website; the search engine can be found at <u>https://gain.fas.usda.gov</u>.

Attachments:

No Attachments