

**Required Report:** Required - Public Distribution

**Date:** March 31, 2021

**Report Number:** DR2021-0004

**Report Name:** Food Processing Ingredients

**Country:** Dominican Republic

**Post:** Santo Domingo

**Report Category:** Food Processing Ingredients

**Prepared By:** Virgilio Mayol

**Approved By:** Frederick Giles

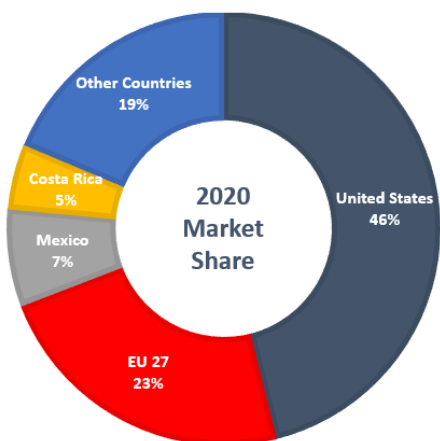
**Report Highlights:**

As of September 2020, the Dominican Republic's food processing industry was valued at \$2.5 billion, with an additional \$0.7 billion for processed beverages and other products during the same period. Meat processing, wheat milling, bakery products, and dairy processing continue to lead the domestic food processing sector. The COVID-19 pandemic did not affect the demand for most of those product categories during CY 2020. The United States continues to be a strong supplier of meats, edible oils, fats, dairy products, wheat, and other key ingredients. There is potential for increased exports of those and other U.S. ingredients, especially as CAFTA-DR moves towards full implementation by 2025.

## Market Fact Sheet: Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic (DR) is an upper middle-income country with low and stable inflation. It is the second-largest economy in the Caribbean, just behind Cuba, and the third-largest country in terms of population (behind Cuba and Haiti). As of September of 2020, due the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DR's GDP declined to approximately \$55 billion, an 8.1 percent decrease from the same period of 2019. The DR's major export growth has shifted away from its traditional products (raw sugar, green coffee, and cacao) to gold, Ferro-nickel, sugar derivatives, free trade zone products, vegetables and other agricultural products. Major imports include consumer-oriented products and livestock feed, with the United States as a primary partner.

### Dominican Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products



Source: TDM and GATS.

### Food Processing Industry

As of September 2020, the DR's food processing industry was valued at \$2.5 billion, with an additional \$0.7 billion for processed beverages and other products during the same period. The United States has a strong history of supplying meat, edible meat offal, and animal and vegetable fats for the Dominican meat processing industry; this is expected to continue. There is potential for increased exports of U.S. ingredients for the milling, dairy, and confectionary industries, especially as CAFTA-DR will be fully implemented by 2025.

### Food Retail Industry

The Dominican modern retail sector is growing rapidly and although is still dominated by locally-owned products, it offers a wide variety of U.S. products. Despite the growth of supermarkets, they only account for 20-25 percent of retail sales. The majority of sales are still in the traditional channel, which includes neighborhood stores (colmados) and warehouses, which offer largely local products.

### Quick Facts CY 2020

#### List of Top 10 Growth Products

- |                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Cheese                     | 6) Condiments and sauces |
| 2) Pork                       | 7) Pet food              |
| 3) Non-Fat Dry Milk           | 8) Snack foods           |
| 4) Poultry                    | 9) Frozen potatoes/veg   |
| 5) Fruit & vegetable products | 10) Fresh fruit          |

#### Consumer-Oriented Trade (U.S. billion) 2020

DR Imports (all sources)	1.46
DR Imports (from U.S.)	0.67
DR Exports (all destinations)	1.65
DR Exports (to U.S.)	1.06

#### Top DR Retailers

- |                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1) La Sirena             | 6) Mercatodo   |
| 2) Pola Supermarkets     | 7) Plaza Lama  |
| 3) Jumbo                 | 8) Pricesmart  |
| 4) Nacional Supermarkets | 9) Carrefour   |
| 5) Bravo                 | 10) Superfresh |

#### GDP/Population

Population: 10.6 million  
GDP: 89.0 billion in 2019  
GDP per capita: 8.30 in 2019

Source: TDM; ONE; World Bank, Central Bank of the DR

#### Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges

Strengths	Weaknesses
Implementation of CAFTA-DR, which has lowered or eliminated duties on nearly 80 percent of products.	Higher cost of some U.S. products compared to competitors.
Proximity to the United States and strong demand for U.S. products.	Import sensitivity of several products.
Opportunities	Threats
Additional trade liberalization through the full implementation of CAFTA-DR by 2025.	Competition from other CAFTA-DR signees and the DR's other free trade agreement partners.
Growth potential for U.S. consumer-oriented products, livestock feed, and ingredients for the food processing industry.	Limited cold chain capacity.

Contact: OAA Santo Domingo

[agsantodomingo@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agsantodomingo@fas.usda.gov) | +1 809-368-7654

## SECTION I. MARKET SUMMARY

### 1.1. Market Size

According to the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic, as of September 2020 local agricultural product-related food processing was valued at \$2.5 billion, with an additional \$0.7 billion for processed beverages and other products during the same period. Combined, these categories were 50 percent of the total value added for all manufacturing activities in the DR. The key products include processed meat, milling products, dairy products, oils and vegetable-origin fats, and sugar confectionary. These activities have substantially contributed to employment and growth in the Dominican Republic's (DR) economy. Since the implementation of the U.S.-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), U.S. ingredients have had an increasing role in the DR's food processing sector. For general information, please refer to [FAS/Santo Domingo's 2020 Exporter Guide](#).

#### Advantages and Challenges in the Market

Advantages	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The implementation of CAFTA-DR, which has lowered or eliminated duties on nearly 80 percent of products</li><li>• A growing food manufacturing industry, which demands new, innovative, and high performance ingredients</li><li>• Proximity between the countries and strong commercial and cultural ties</li><li>• Efficient food distribution channels</li><li>• Improved quality standards and enforcement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competition from other CAFTA-DR signees and the DR's other free trade agreement partners</li><li>• Delays for import permits and sanitary registration, which can affect the availability of imported ingredients</li><li>• Insufficient number of qualified technicians, which can limit production</li><li>• High costs and inefficient electricity service, which increase production costs</li></ul>

## SECTION II. ROAD MAP FOR MARKET ENTRY

### 2.1. Entry Strategy and Distribution Channel

While some raw materials are available locally, many processed products contain imported ingredients, with numerous ingredients from the United States. Imported products enter the DR by one of two channels: direct purchase by the food processing companies or via large importers and distributors. Final processed products are then distributed to retail, food service, and institutional channels.

### 2.2. Import Procedure

Import procedures into the DR are described in [FAS/Santo Domingo's 2020 Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) narrative report](#).

### 2.3. Market Structure. Share of Major Segments in the Food Processing Industry

An important part of the DR's food processing sector is **meat processing**. The retail value of processed meats sold in the DR in 2020 is estimated at approximately \$163 million. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a minimal impact on the demand of processed meat in the Dominican Republic. More than 67

percent of processed meats are sold through the retail distribution channel, including distributors and supermarkets; the remainder is sold in mom and pop shops and butchers. Dominican brands dominate the local market thanks to the variety of available products and competitive pricing strategies. Salami continues to lead total sales of processed meat products, and it is consumed by more than 85 percent of households in the country. The company Induveca S.A./MERCASID dominates the local market for processed meats. Other important companies include Sigma Alimentos and Productos Chef. While some international brands are present in processed meat, these products have much higher prices, which are often beyond the budgets of most Dominican households. During 2020, the United States supplied 96 percent of imported meat products to the DR, valued at \$188 million, and that value continues to grow each year. Other sources include the EU, Brazil and Australia. Key U.S. ingredient exports include pork and beef trimmings, chicken mechanically deboned meat, turkey, soy protein, and packaging materials for processed products. The meat processors are key users of the pork CAFTA-DR tariff rate quota.

Another key part of the local food processing industry is **wheat milling**. As the country does not produce wheat, it imports almost all of it from the United States and Canada. During 2020, the country imported \$122 million in wheat. The U.S. supplied 35 percent (\$44 million) of that total, and Canada supplied 64 percent (\$78 million). The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures boosted the consumption of wheat and wheat products in the country, as families stayed home and consumed more baked goods. Two companies lead the local milling industry: Molinos Modernos S.A. and Grupo Bocol. These companies combined process nearly 80 percent of all wheat imported into the country. The main product produced by the millers is wheat flour. This wheat flour is the foundation of a large and growing baked goods industry in the DR. The retail value of baked goods sold in the DR in 2020 is estimated at approximately \$261 million. The largest share of baked goods is unpackaged leavened bread, which includes the local staple breads called “*pan de agua*” and “*pan sobao*.”

Additionally, the Dominican **dairy processing industry** has expanded its processing capacity over the past several years, focusing on cheese, shelf-stable milk, and yogurt. Over 50 percent of domestic fluid milk is processed into cheese and less than 5 percent into yogurt. Most of these cheeses are produced by more than 400 small and medium-sized rural processing facilities, creating products that are not comparable to U.S. products due to differences in variety, quality, and sanitary factors. However, larger local companies, such as Sigma Alimentos and Mejia Arcalá, produce the most comparable cheeses to imports. The retail value of cheese sold in the DR in 2020 is estimated at approximately \$104 million. The COVID-19 pandemic boosted sales of imported brands while stagnating growth for locally-produced cheese brands as national milk production declined.

Shelf-stable milk dominates sales in liquid milk products in the DR. Depending on local conditions, milk processors import powdered milk from the European Union and the United States for reconstitution. The leading local company in this category is Pasteurizadora Rica. For powdered milk, Mejia Arcalá is the largest importer. The retail value of liquid milk products sold in the DR in 2020 is estimated at approximately \$127 million.

Finally, there exists a large **sugar confectionary** sector in the DR. While most sugar, cacao, and dairy products are sourced locally or from non-U.S. sources, other confectionary products, such as nuts, are of U.S. origin. The retail value of sugar confectionary sold in the DR in 2020 is estimated at approximately \$44 million.

## 2.4. Company Profiles & Company Products

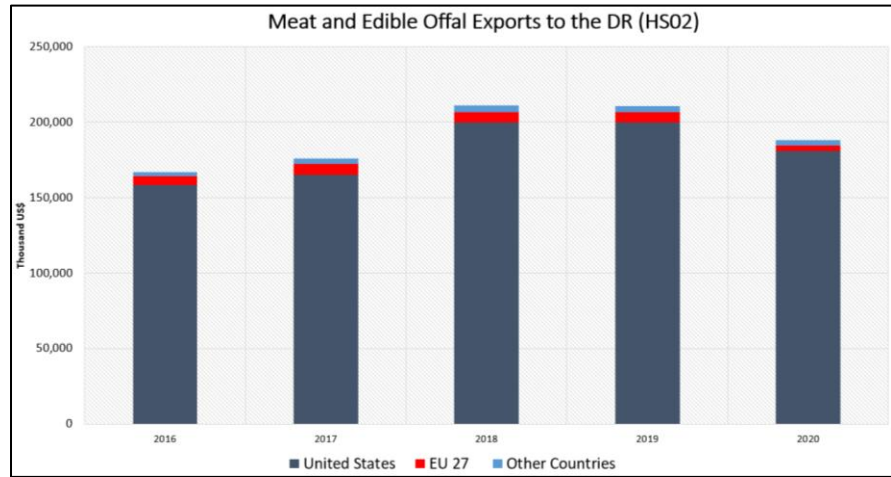
There are more than 1,000 companies classified as agro-industrials and processors in the Dominican Republic. Based on the market structure described in Section 2.3, below is a list of key processing companies:

Company	Key Products
<b>Meat Processing</b>	
Induveca S.A./ MERCASID <a href="http://www.mercasid.com.do/es/empresas/induveca">www.mercasid.com.do/es/empresas/induveca</a>	Processed meat, cheese and yogurt
Sigma Alimentos <a href="http://www.sigma-alimentos.com">www.sigma-alimentos.com</a>	Processed meat, cheese, butter, and yogurt
Productos Chef <a href="http://www.productoschef.com">www.productoschef.com</a>	Processed meat
Agrocarne (Central Romana Corporation) <a href="http://www.centralromana.com.do/estructura-corporativa/manufactura">www.centralromana.com.do/estructura-corporativa/manufactura</a>	Processed meat
<b>Wheat Milling</b>	
Molinos Modernos S.A. <a href="http://www.molinosmodernos.com">www.molinosmodernos.com</a>	Wheat flour, pasta and crackers
Grupo Bocel <a href="http://www.grupobocel.com/page/index.php">www.grupobocel.com/page/index.php</a>	Wheat flour, pasta, cookies and crackers
<b>Baked Goods</b>	
Horneados Pepin S.A. <a href="http://www.panpepin.com.do/">www.panpepin.com.do/</a>	Bread and pastry
Lumijor SRL <a href="http://www.lumijor.com.do/">www.lumijor.com.do/</a>	Bread
<b>Dairy Products</b>	
Sigma Alimentos <a href="http://www.sigma-alimentos.com">www.sigma-alimentos.com</a>	Processed meat, cheese, butter, and yogurt
Mejia Arcalá <a href="http://www.grupomejiaarcala.com/en/">www.grupomejiaarcala.com/en/</a>	Cheese and powdered milk
Grupo Rica <a href="http://www.gruporica.com/en">www.gruporica.com/en</a>	Shelf-stable milk, fruit juices
Nestlé Dominicana S.A. <a href="http://www.nestle.do">www.nestle.do</a>	Milk products, cereals, dehydrated soups, seasoning and pet food
<b>OTHERS</b>	
Frito-Lay Dominicana S.A. <a href="http://www.fritolay.com">www.fritolay.com</a>	Snacks from plantains, cassava, potatoes and spices
Quala Dominicana S.A. <a href="http://www.quala.com.do/rep-dominicana/inicio">www.quala.com.do/rep-dominicana/inicio</a>	Seasonings, powdered juice, oat products
Unilever Caribe S.A. <a href="http://www.unilever.com.mx">www.unilever.com.mx</a>	Seasoning products and corn flour

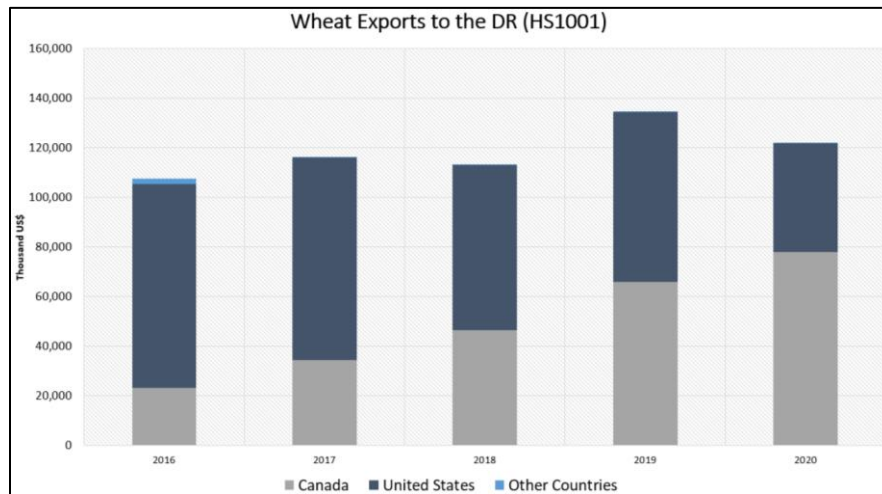
## SECTION III. COMPETITION AND MARKET SHARE

### Meat Products:

During the last five years, the U.S. supplied an average of 95 percent of total meat exports to the DR, with an annual average value of \$181 million. These numbers continue to grow each year. Other sources include the EU, Brazil and Australia.



Source: Built by Post with data from TDM and GATS/USDA.



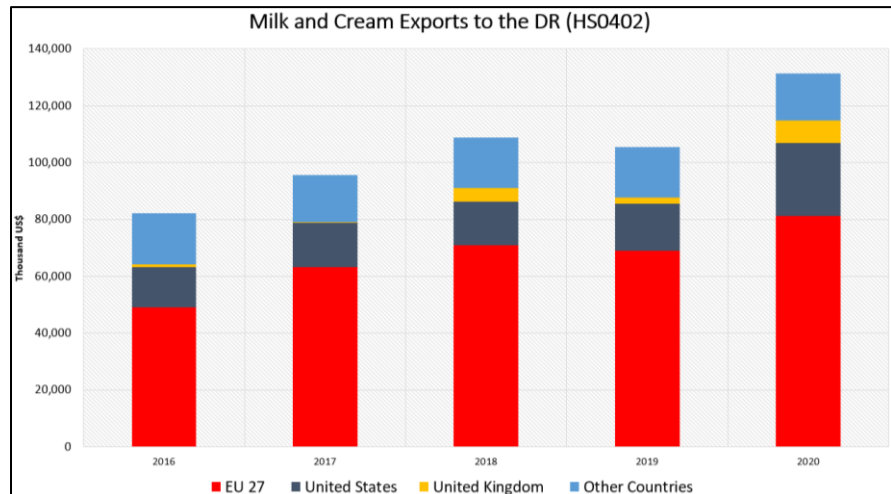
Source: Built by Post with data from TDM and GATS/USDA.

### Wheat Milling Products:

From 2016 to 2020, the United States supplied an average of 57 percent of total wheat exports to the DR, with an annual average value of \$69 million. Canada is the strongest (and growing) competitor for the United States in this market, with 64 percent of total wheat exports to the Dominican market in 2020.

### Dairy Products:

During the last five years, the United States exported an annual average of 17 percent of milk and cream (powdered milk, HS0402) to the DR, with an annual average value of \$18 million. The EU has the largest market share for this sector, exporting an annual average of 64 percent of total Dominican imports.



Source: Built by Post with data from TDM and GATS/USDA.

## SECTION IV. BEST PRODUCT PROSPECT CATEGORIES

The United States has a strong history of supplying meat, edible meat offal, and animal and vegetable fats for the Dominican meat processing industry; this is expected to continue. There is potential for increased exports of U.S. ingredients for the Dominican milling, dairy, and confectionary industries, especially since CAFTA-DR will be fully implemented by 2025. Post anticipates this growth will be seen within products already present in the market. However, growth opportunities for U.S. dairy ingredients may continue to be limited by onerous and time-consuming import requirements.

## SECTION V. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS/ USDA)

República de Colombia Av. #57, Arroyo Hondo, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo, DR.

Telephone: 809-368-7654

E-mail: [agsantodomingo@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agsantodomingo@fas.usda.gov)

Web page: [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov)

*Comment: Please contact this office for more detailed information about the Dominican food market, lists of importers, major players in the sector, questions, etc.*

### Dominican Institute for Quality Standards (INDOCAL)

(Ministry of Industry and Commerce)

Ave. Mexico esq. Leopoldo Navarro, Edificio de Oficinas Gubernamentales

Juan Pablo Duarte, Piso 11 (Edif. El Huacal), Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Contact: Sr. Lorenzo Ramirez, Executive Director

Telephone: 809-686-2205

Fax: 809-686-2235

E-mail: [servicioalcliente@claro.net.do](mailto:servicioalcliente@claro.net.do)

Web page: <http://www.digenor.gob.do>

*Comment: This bureau is part of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and issues and enforces the application of NORDOM 53, which requires Spanish labeling and the sanitary registration number on all pre-packed retail food products. In addition, Indocal is where the Standard Committees (composed of both the private and the public sector) update the industry on a regular basis.*

### General Directorate of Customs (DGA)

Av. Abraham Lincoln No. 1101, Ens. Serrallés

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Contact: Mr. Eduardo Sanz Lovaton, Director

Telephone: 809-547-7070

Fax: 809-540-5853

E-mail: [info@dga.gov.do](mailto:info@dga.gov.do)

Webpage: <http://www.dga.gov.do>

*Comment: DGA is the official entity in charge of customs and the local regulations related to it.*

**Attachments:**

No Attachments