

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: January 25,2021

Report Number: NL2021-0003

Report Name: Overview of the Dutch Beer Market

Country: Netherlands

Post: The Hague

Report Category: Beverages, Product Brief, Special Certification - Organic/Kosher/Halal

Prepared By: Marcel Pinckaers

Approved By: Christopher Riker

Report Highlights:

The number of Dutch breweries has quadrupled over the past eight years, climbing to 800 in 2020 – producing, on average, nearly 2.4 billion liters per year. Craft breweries in the Netherlands are increasingly experimenting with new beers and beer styles. Over half of Dutch beer production is destined for export markets and this makes the Netherlands, after Mexico, the second largest beer exporter in the world. The United States is the Dutch industry’s largest export market outside the European Union (EU). While craft beer from neighboring countries (e.g., Belgium and Germany) still dominate the import market, U.S. breweries are gaining popularity in the Dutch market. Overall beer consumption has been stable – the consumption of pilsners is declining while demand for alcohol-free (five percent of the market) and craft beer (10 percent of the market) continues to grow.

Production:

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

Dutch breweries produce, on average, nearly 2.4 billion liters of beer per year – a production volume which has remained relatively unchanged over the past five years. What has changed, however, is the number of craft breweries in the Netherlands. In 2012, there were 165 active breweries in the Netherlands. However, the number of craft breweries ballooned to nearly 800 in 2020. Today’s breweries range from large international companies (e.g., Heineken, Grolsch) to small breweries, centuries-old breweries, and new start-ups. This has resulted in a great diversity of beers and beer styles available in the market.

With 65,000 jobs, the entire beer supply chain is important to the Dutch economy. The brewing and selling of beer not only provides employment opportunities at the breweries, but also for its suppliers, the producers of the ingredients, the packaging industry, food retail and hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI)-foodservice industry, and online platforms.

Consumption:

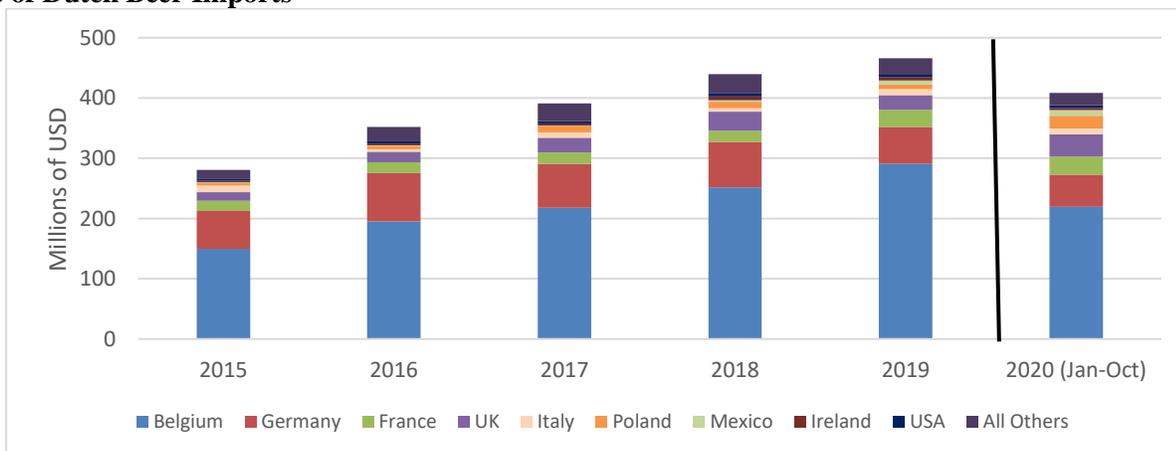
Dutch consumers are increasingly more informed and interested in the food and drinks they purchase, including craft beer. Breweries that have a great story to tell have a competitive advantage, as do products that have a distinctive taste, packaging, and even those that have a special certification (e.g., organic, gluten-free, or alcohol-free). More recently, barrel-aged craft beer is gaining popularity, as are beers brewed in popular cities due to their connection with the city’s (food) culture. Storytelling, provenance, and uniqueness drive craft beer consumption in the Netherlands.

Consumers are interested in a beer’s story, and are seeking U.S. craft beers with good ratings. They add that consumers are interested in distinctive tastes (e.g., carrot cake beer), production methods (e.g., using bourbon, whiskey, and gin barrels), and packaging (typical USA style). While there are many in the market, IPA's and Stouts continue to perform well. Moreover, beers from areas where Dutch have vacationed in the United States or that are perceived as exotic (e.g., from Alaska, Hawaii, etc.) are also likely to be of interest to Dutch consumers.

Trade – Imports Growing Year-on-Year:

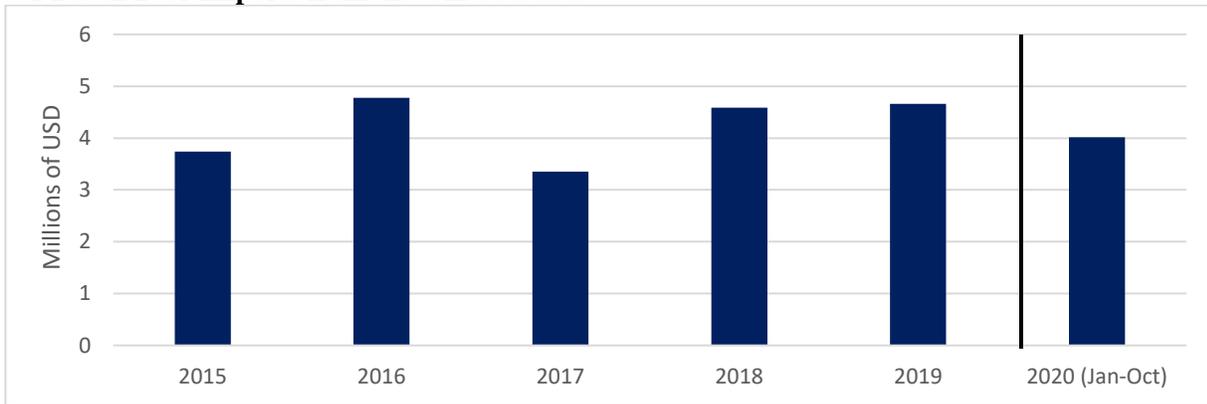
The vast majority of the beer that the Dutch drink is brewed in the Netherlands. However, an estimated 15 percent is imported -- predominantly craft beer. The imported craft beer market is lead by neighboring Belgium (61 percent), followed by nearby Germany (15 percent) and France (8 percent). The market share of U.S. craft beer on the Dutch market is still small (0.3 percent) or 2,091,465 liters (\$4.6 million), but growing. Prior to the imposition of COVID-related social distancing requirements, imports had recently been growing at a double digit rate each year.

Value of Dutch Beer Imports



Source: Trade Data Monitor, HS code 2203

Value of Dutch Beer Imports from the United States



Source: Trade Data Monitor, HS code 2203

Trade – Export Markets Are Crucial for Dutch Breweries:

More than half of the Netherlands' annual beer production is destined for export markets. In fact, the Netherlands is the second largest beer exporter in the world (after Mexico). Dutch breweries have been very successful internationally as they have managed to produce good quality beer at a competitive price (with the major breweries increasingly adding foreign breweries to their portfolio). The world's third and fourth largest exporters of beer are Belgium and Germany, respectively. While other EU Member States are important markets for Dutch beer (accounting for 38 percent of Dutch exports), important export markets outside the EU include the United States (26 percent of exports), South Africa (5 percent of exports), Taiwan (4 percent of exports), and Canada (4 percent of exports).

Alcohol-Free & Low Alcohol Beer is Gaining in Popularity:

Annual beer consumption in the Netherlands is relatively stable (i.e., 1.23 billion liters). The consumption of pilsner beer is declining while demand for alcohol-free/low alcohol beer continues to grow. Sales of alcohol-free beer have increased more than five-fold compared to 2010 and alcohol-free beer now has a market share of five percent. Additionally, the range of low alcohol (special) beers, with two to four percent alcohol content, is increasing rapidly. Despite the interest in reduced alcohol beers, the market for robust, flavorful, innovative, and tasty craft beer has also been growing for years and today has a market share of roughly ten percent.

COVID-19 Impact:

Due to the closure of bars and restaurants and the cancellation of festivals and other large events, to slow the rising number of corona virus cases, overall beer consumption in the Netherlands has recently declined. However rising sales via food retailers and online platforms have partly compensated for that decline. Social distancing measures taken by the Dutch Government to combat the spread of COVID-19 are expected to continue to negatively impact beer consumption until vaccinations become wide-spread and social distancing requirements can be reduced.

Additional Market Information:

Detailed information about the Dutch food retail and HRI-foodservice market, can be found in the following reports: [the Dutch Food Retail Market – May 27, 2020](#) and [the Dutch Foodservice Market – September 16, 2020](#). Breweries that are ready to begin exporting to the Dutch market are also advised to read the following two reports: [The Exporter Guide – December 8, 2020](#) and [The FAIRS-Country Guide – December 15, 2020](#).

Attachments:

No Attachments.