

Required Report: Required - Public Distribution **Date:** June 01, 2021

Report Number: AS2021-0010

Report Name: Retail Foods

Country: Australia

Post: Canberra

Report Category: Retail Foods

Prepared By: Lindy Crothers

Approved By: Levin Flake

Report Highlights:

Health, wellness, and the environment continue to be key purchasing factors for Australian consumers. Portion sizes are increasingly important as consumers want quality over quantity, and they expect packaging to be informative and environmentally responsible. The value of food and liquor retailing in Australia rose by five percent in 2020 to A\$191 billion (US\$133 billion). Supermarket and grocery expenditures continue to account for the bulk of food retailing purchases with a share of 66 percent. The United States accounted for US\$1.2 billion (12 percent) of Australia's total food related imports in 2020. Despite the effects of COVID-19, Australia's economy is recovering relatively quickly, and GDP growth has already returned to pre-COVID levels. The market remains an excellent opportunity for U.S. exporters.

Market Fact Sheet: Australia

Executive Summary

Australia has proven to be an appealing and profitable market for U.S. companies for many years. Underpinning Australia's strong economy is its open and transparent trade and investment environment, and strong trade and economic links with emerging economies, particularly in Asia.

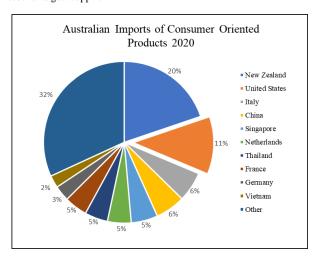
Australia is the world's 13th largest economy. Australia has one of the highest levels of per capita GDP in the world and is ranked first for median wealth per adult according to Credit Suisse's 2020 Global Wealth Report. Prior to the onset of COVID-19 the Australian economy recorded 29 years of consecutive economic growth. Australia implemented strong restrictions to COVID-19 and has had one of the lowest rates of infections globally. The economic recovery is well under way and has been stronger than expected. The recovery is expected to continue, with the Reserve Bank of Australia estimating that GDP will grow by four percent in both 2021 and 2022. GDP has already returned to its pre-COVID level.

The United States is by far the largest supplier of foreign capital to Australia. U.S. investments have risen strongly over recent years to an estimated A\$984 billion. Investment in Australia is facilitated in part by its stable macroeconomic management and ease of doing business (it is ranked 14th internationally in the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business index).

The U.S. - Australia Free Trade Agreement provides advantages for U.S. products as tariff rates for many U.S. food products exported to Australia are zero.

Imports of Consumer Oriented Products

The value of Australian consumer-oriented food imports totaled \$10.4 billion in 2020. The United States accounted for US\$1.2 billion or 12 percent of total imports. Most of Australia's imports in these sectors are sourced from New Zealand and the United States is the second largest supplier.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Food Service Industry

The Australian consumer foodservice industry is valued at A\$59 billion (US\$44 billion). By far the largest proportion of the Australia's foodservice industry is the consumer foodservice sector, which consists of more than 71,000 outlets. An ageing population is likely to fuel faster growth in the institutional foodservice sector compared to the commercial foodservice sector. For more information, please see the latest Food Service report.

Quick Facts CY 2020

Total Imports of Consumer Oriented Products – \$10.3 billion **U.S. Share** (12%) – \$1.2 billion

Food Industry by Channels (\$ billion)

Imports - Consumer Oriented Total	\$10.3
Imports – US Share	\$1.2
Exports – Consumer Oriented Total	\$18.6
Exports – to the US	\$2.6
Total Food Retailing	\$133.0
Food Manufacturing Turnover (July/June)	\$74.1

Top Australian Food Retailers

Woolworths
 Coles (Wesfarmers)
 ALDI
 Metcash/IGA

GDP/Population

Population – 25.7 million GDP (\$ trillion) – \$1.4 GDP per capita – \$57,000

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats						
Strengths	Weaknesses					
 U.S. culture well accepted and similar to Australia. No language barriers U.S. products have excellent image and acceptance. Northern hemisphere seasonal advantage for fresh foods, e.g. fruit and vegetables. 	 Australia has strict quarantine requirements for fresh products. Import permits are required for fresh produce and some products are prohibited. Australia is a significant producer of a similar variety of agricultural products. Australian labeling and advertising laws are different from the U.S., which may require some changes to food labels. 					
Opportunities	Threats					
 The U.S./Australia Free Trade Agreement enables many U.S. products to enter Australia tariff free. Australian consumers are experimental and desire new and innovative products. Opportunity to trial innovative products and capture/gain market share. Opportunity to enter private label arrangements as major players expand their private label offerings. 	 "Buy Australian" campaign is significant. A focus on fresh food presentation by the major supermarket chains provides advantages to local producers. Most categories have substantial market leaders. Country of origin labeling is compulsory, and many Australian made products bear the "Australian Made" logo. 					

Data Sources: Trade Data Monitor; Australian Bureau of Statistics; Euromonitor; IBISWorld, Trading Economics Contact: FAS Canberra, Australia; AgCanberra@fas.usda.gov

SECTION 1 – MARKET SUMMARY

- The value of Australian consumer oriented (i.e., snack foods, breakfast cereals, meat and poultry, dairy, eggs and products, fresh fruit and vegetables, processed fruit and vegetables, fruit and vegetable juices, nuts, wine, beer, nursery products, pet food, etc.), fish, and seafood imports totaled US\$10.4 billion in 2020. The U.S. accounted for US\$1.2 billion or 11 percent of Australia's total food related imports. Most of Australia's imports in these sectors are sourced from New Zealand the United States is the second largest supplier.
- The value of food and liquor retailing in Australia rose by five percent in 2020 totaling A\$191 billion (\$133 billion). Supermarket and grocery expenditures continue to account for the bulk of food retailing purchases with a share of 66 percent.
- Consumer aspirations, both personal and social, along with product developments by suppliers and retailers, continue to be important influences on shopping choices. For example **Sustainability:** Consumers support products and brands that address concerns for better environmental outcomes. Food producers and retailers have made considerable investments into sustainability platforms. **Waste reduction:** Consumers desire to reduce household food waste. **Integrity of food production systems:** Consumers have supported products positioned to resonate with them (such as free-range egg, poultry, and meat products). **Healthy eating:** The high profile given to obesity has increased the awareness of managing portion sizes.



SECTION 2 – CHECKLIST FOR MARKET ENTRY

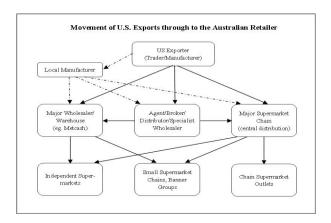
ENTRY STRATEGY

- Enter the market through a distributor, importer, agent, or broker who then targets specific food categories or merchandise managers at major wholesalers and major supermarket chains. Major chains and wholesalers have their own distribution centers and national coverage. Targeting major chains through an agent/distributor will reduce the risk of entering an inappropriate state market in Australia. Specialist distributors or wholesalers may also be approached.
- Product promotion product launches for supermarkets are popular and effective. Provide agent/distributor with promotional material and product suitable for in-store demonstrations.
- To enhance marketing activities, exporters should consider combining promotional advertising such as instore displays and store catalogues, major industry magazines (e.g. Retail World), newspapers, television, radio, and public transport.
- Exhibit at Australian food shows. Fine Food Australia, the premier international food, drink and equipment exhibition is endorsed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is held each September, alternating between Sydney and Melbourne (see http://www.finefoodaustralia.com.au/ for more information). Major buyers and

importers from all over the country and region attend. Due to Australia's large geographic size (see map above) and the high cost of internal airfares and transport, exhibiting at trade shows such as Fine Food is the most cost-effective way for U.S. companies to meet potential partners and customers for consumer-oriented food products in Australia.

MARKET STRUCTURE

Distribution Channels



- Distribution centers and wholesalers are the two main distribution channels to enter major supermarkets and smaller supermarket chains. Distribution points in Australia are centralized. All major supermarket chains and warehouse/wholesale clubs operate their own network of national and regional distribution centers.
- Food products will be stored in warehouses prior to delivery.
- Transport between distribution centers in Australia is predominantly by road.
- Product flows in a similar manner for each of the major supermarkets chains, with each operating central distribution centers.
- Independent supermarkets and smaller supermarket chains purchase their food products through the major wholesalers or direct from manufacturers. The larger chains are also direct importers.
- Banner groups, such as the Independent Grocers of Australia (IGA), are used by many independent retailers to improve the buying, advertising, and competitive power of smaller grocery and convenience stores. Under banner groups, retailers can negotiate better prices, coordinate marketing campaigns, and collaborate to establish new programs that benefit consumers.

Types of Retail Outlets

- The **traditional grocery retailers** channel has been shrinking and losing market share to modern grocery retailers such as supermarkets. Liquor retail establishments have propped up this sector.
- Australians tend to choose modern grocery retailers over traditional ones due to the more comprehensive
 range of products than traditional retailers. Modern grocery retailers such as supermarkets also compete with
 the offering of food specialists such as bakers and butchers, as well as health food stores and confectioners.
 Furthermore, the scale of these modern grocery retailers allows them to offer better prices, further
 encouraging consumers to choose this channel.
- **Independent small grocers** remain at a disadvantage to modern grocery retailers due to their lower buying power and economies of scale. They are also unable to match the marketing spend of larger modern retailers leading to them struggling to compete.
- Food/drink/tobacco specialists remained the leading distribution channel for alcoholic drinks in Australia. This channel was led by Woolworths' BWS and Dan Murphy's, Australia's biggest liquor retailer, and Wesfarmers' First Choice and Liquorland. Nine out of ten sales of alcoholic drinks by value are from food/drink/tobacco specialists.

• The **other grocery retailers** channel is comprised of small retail formats with a primary focus on selling food, beverages, and tobacco. These include outlets specializing in health food, organic products, and dietary supplements, as well as those offering direct sales from producers such as wholesale markets, vineyards, dairies, and farms.

Grocery Sales by Retailer Type: A\$m

Retailer Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Convenience Stores	2,907	2,968	3,015	3,057	3,071	2,966
Discounters	6,088	6,818	7,964	9,200	9,739	10,810
Forecourt Retailers	7,242	7,625	7,839	8,083	8,233	7,535
Hypermarkets	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supermarkets	82,793	84,562	86,887	89,928	92,618	101,978
Total Modern Grocery Retailers	99,030	101,973	105,705	110,268	113,660	123,298
Traditional Grocery Retailers	23,903	24,033	24,592	25,234	25,524	28,801
All Grocery Retailers	122,933	126,006	130,297	135,502	139,184	152,089

Source: Euromonitor International, Retailing in Australia

SECTOR TRENDS AND MAJOR PLAYERS

Key Players

- **Woolworths** is an Australian-owned company that has been trading since the 1920s. Woolworths is the number one player in the grocery sector with a 37 percent value share of the market in 2020.
- Coles supermarkets are part of Wesfarmers Limited and are the second largest player in the grocery sector with a 28 percent value share in 2020.
- **ALDI Stores Supermarkets Pty Ltd**, the German based international discount food retailer which began trading in Australia in 2001, is the only grocery discounter in Australia and continues to increase its market share (10.5 percent in 2020).
- **Metcash Trading Limited Australasia** ranks fourth in supermarkets in value terms (7 percent in 2020). Metcash is Australia's largest grocery <u>wholesaler</u> and is a leading marketing and distribution company operating in the food, and other fast-moving consumer goods, categories.
- **Hypermarkets** there are no hypermarkets in Australia, with no investment made by retailers to develop the channel since a failed attempt by Coles in the 1990s.

Trends in Retail Food and Sub-sectors

- The supermarkets industry is one of the most fiercely competitive sectors in Australia with the rapid growth of German-owned ALDI over the past five years significantly altering the industry.
- Changing consumer sentiment and shopping preferences have also influenced the industry's trading conditions. Shoppers have shifted their shopping habits over the last decade with some of the key determinants being food safety, location, and good value.
- Most grocery shopping is still done in the major supermarkets with consumers preferring the convenience over supporting local and independent outlets. However, shoppers indicated that local greengrocers and markets hold sentimental value and they would choose to go to them, if possible, for their fresh fruit and vegetable purchases.
- Supermarkets and grocery stores continue to maintain most of the retail food market share, at around 66 percent. The market share of cafés, restaurants and takeaway food outlets is around 21 percent, reflecting consumers' continued desire for convenience. Other food retailers, such as butchers and bakeries, remain relatively stable with around 5 percent market share.

- Aggressive pricing initiatives taken by the major supermarket retailers in recent years are expected to last for the longer term. Competition within grocery retailing is expected to intensify with aggressive discounting continuing to be used to appeal to value-conscious consumers.
- **Private label** in Australia tends to be more prominent in the grocery channel. ALDI's private-label strategy has been so successful in Australia that it has changed the perception that Australians had of the quality of private-label brands. Leading supermarket operators, Coles and Woolworths, are increasing their range of private-label products each year.
- Growing satisfaction with private label products has resulted in many consumers sticking with those products
 even during periods of positive consumer sentiment when they would have previously switched back to
 branded products.
- Warehouse clubs made an appearance in the Australian marketplace following the launch of Costco's first store in Melbourne in 2009 and its expansion since to all main cities across Australia. This presents a further challenge to value gains for supermarkets. Costco remains the only warehouse club in the Australian market and offers a variety of U.S. and Australian products.
- Convenience stores focus on providing a daily routine stop for consumers, with an emphasis on driving visit frequency through selling freshly prepared hot food and drinks to attract time-pressed customers. The industry only includes businesses that primarily sell convenience store goods and excludes all service (gas) stations and is therefore highly fragmented and diverse, with a significant number of owner-operated enterprises which include stores operating under banner groups and franchise agreements which are usually run as individual businesses.
- Convenience stores in Australia are facing growing competition from smaller-sized supermarkets. Best
 exemplified by the Woolworths Metro and Coles Local formats, these smaller outlets are increasingly found
 in busy inner city locations and densely populated suburban areas. Like convenience stores, they target timepressed consumers who tend to shop more frequently, but buy fewer items at a time. Crucially, however,
 smaller supermarkets generally offer lower prices, while some also serve as "click and collect" points for
 online customers.
- The **independent small grocers** channel has been struggling to differentiate itself in order to compete with modern grocery retailers, with many players exiting the channel or joining a larger banner. This channel will remain at a competitive disadvantage to supermarkets due to the weaker buying power and economies of scale of the larger businesses. Independent players are also unable to match the marketing budgets of larger retailers and will therefore struggle to compete.

Consumer Trends

- **Positive nutrition:** The drive to make food and beverages healthier continues to gain momentum in Australia. Australian consumers are looking for constructive guidance to assist their food and beverage purchases rather than being told "what not to eat." This encompasses a movement from food avoidance (such as products with reduced fat and sugar) to positive nutrition and the inclusion of healthy food and ingredients.
- **Healthy indulgence:** Australians are not really interested in strict diet plans, but there is a huge spike in people trying to control their portion sizes. They do not want to cut out certain food groups or flavors, but they are willing to control the amount they eat.
- Demand for **healthy food** is being boosted by demographic shifts. An aging population and rising birth rates have both had a positive impact on the development of the health and wellness market.
- **Freshness** is an important area of concern for packaged food sales. Foodservice players and consumers appreciate the peace of mind from knowing the offerings are in good condition. This can be achieved with single-serve pack sizes, resealable packaging, and clear on-pack communication.
- **Food priorities** a recent report on food consumption, habits, attitudes and trends determined Australia's top five food priorities are: eating more fresh fruit and vegetables; smaller portion sizes; reducing sugar intake from food; eating healthier snacks; and cutting down on fat.
- Snacking still popular two-thirds of respondents to a recent survey indicated that they eat between meals and that healthy snacks are a priority. Organic savory snacks are increasingly popular

- **Health concerns** among Australians increasingly encompass not only finished products, but also the production process. The same is true about ethical and environmental concerns, with issues like sustainable production, fair wages for farmers and animal welfare playing an increasingly influential role in consumer purchasing decisions.
- Organic packaged food is second strongest performer among the main health and wellness packaged food categories in this regard, after "free from." One factor constraining the development of this sector in Australia is the difficulty in obtaining official accreditation, a process that can take up to three years. This is among the reasons why organic packaged food products tend to have high prices as compared to standard alternatives, which limits demand. Demand for organic packaged food is expected to continue outstripping supply, which will continue to hinder the development of the category locally but presents excellent opportunities for U.S. exporters.
- Packaging has grown in importance in recent years and innovative packaging is a valuable selling point in the Australian market. Australian consumers expect that packaging will be recyclable. In 2017 Australia introduced a national Australia Packaging Covenant that sets out how governments and businesses across Australia share the responsibility for managing the environmental impacts of packaging. The Covenant applies to businesses in the supply chain that have an annual turnover of A\$5 million or more. You should expect that most importers and supermarket chains will require their suppliers to be moving towards sustainability in their packaging. The Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report contains more detail on this initiative. You can find a copy of our FAIRS report on the FAS website.
- Online shopping Australian consumers have traditionally been slow to go online for groceries, preferring to shop in-store, particularly for fresh products. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed this, with revenue from online grocery sales forecast to increase by 46 percent in 2020-21 (July-June). It is expected that usage of online shopping will be permanently affected to some degree as consumers continue to practice social distancing. This will be particularly the case for older consumers wishing to reduce exposure risks.

SECTION 3 – COMPETITION

Competitive Analysis

- Imported products will have to compete with 'Australian Made' products. Australians generally have a keen awareness and affinity for buying Australian made goods. Over two-thirds of Australian consumers indicate they believe it is important for grocery products to be sourced locally. However only one-third claims to actually buy local food and drinks regularly. Higher prices continue to be a major drawback of local offerings, with lower prices more important to some shoppers than a product being produced locally.
- Imported products need to be **competitively priced** to compete with the growing number of discount chain stores.
- Offerings to the major chains need to be different and **innovative** they are not looking for additional suppliers of basic products.
- **Food labeling** in Australia is stringent and has different requirements than in the United States. Full details of Australia's food labeling regulations can be found in the Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report, which is updated each year. The latest copy of the FAIRS report is available on the FAS website.
- Manufacturers need to consider the costs involved with changes in labeling for a relatively small market (Australia's population is just over 25 million). Sometimes the quantity required for the Australian market is not compatible with large volume U.S. production. An option that is currently used for some U.S. branded products is labeling that satisfies many different export markets. This assists in making the Australian market more accessible.

Comparative Advantage of U.S. Products

• The United States is the second largest supplier (behind New Zealand) of imported consumer-oriented foodstuffs to the Australian market, holding a 12 percent share in 2020 valued at almost \$1.2 billion.

- The U.S./Australia Free Trade Agreement signed in 2005 allows most U.S. products to enter the Australian market tariff free.
- Due to the large U.S. market, U.S. manufacturers can develop a range of products far beyond that which can be achieved by smaller manufacturers in Australia. This enables U.S. exporters to deliver innovative product lines that are otherwise not available from Australian manufacturers.
- U.S. products are well regarded as safe (regarding food safety) and a good value for money.
- The Australian market is very 'Americanized' and most food categories are compatible with Australian tastes. Many categories are already dominated by American brands, such as Kraft, Mars, Campbell's, Kellogg's, Coca-Cola, and Pepsi, who have been very successful in the Australian market.
- Most of these U.S.-owned food manufacturers also have a long-standing manufacturing presence in the Australian market, thereby making market entry easier.

Value of Overall Retail Food Sales

• The following table summarizes total food retail sales and sector shares for the past five years.

Total Turnover in Food and Liquor Retailing (A\$m)

Total Turnover in Food and Liquor Ketaning (Aşin)						
Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Total Food and Liquor Retailing (A\$m)	164,950	170,050	176,082	182,038	191,093	
Supermarkets and Grocery Stores Food Retailing	102,317	105,226	109,147	113,493	125,274	
% of Total Food and Liquor Retailing	62%	62%	62%	62%	66%	
Cafes, Restaurants & Takeaway Food Retailing	42,610	44,224	45,531	46,801	39,749	
% of Total Food and Liquor Retailing	26%	26%	26%	26%	21%	
Liquor Retailing	11,328	11,775	12,139	12,334	15,625	
% of Total Food and Liquor Retailing	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%	
Other Specialized Food Retailing	8,695	8,824	9,265	9,409	10,446	
% of Total Food and Liquor Retailing	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	

Source: ABS Cat. No. 8501.0; Retail Trade, Australia

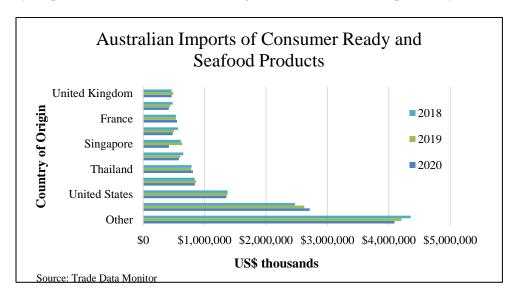
• Total turnover in **US\$m** is:

Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Food and Liquor Retailing	122,625	130,794	131,692	126,735	132,695

Value of Imported Food vs Domestic Products

- The value of total Australian imports of consumer oriented (i.e., snack foods, breakfast cereals, meat and poultry, dairy, eggs and products, fresh fruit and vegetables, processed fruit and vegetables, fruit and vegetable juices, nuts, wine, beer, nursery products, pet food, etc.), fish, and seafood imports was US\$13.1 billion in 2020.
- The United States accounted for US\$1.2 billion or 12 percent of Australia's total food related imports in 2020. Most of Australia's imports in these sectors are sourced from New Zealand.
- Although most Australians would say that they want to buy Australian-made 'whenever possible' or 'often,'
 this does not translate into behavioral change in-store, as evidenced by the meteoric rise of ALDI stores in the
 supermarket sector.

- Factors that matter most to Australian grocery buyers are high standards of food safety; location close to home; good value; convenient trading hours; and hygienically prepared food.
- International suppliers of branded products remain a vital part of the industry. Aside from lowering prices, supermarkets have broadened their product range to attract new customers. For example, products previously only sold by specialist retailers are now on the shelves in the major supermarkets. To achieve this, companies have resorted to importing the required merchandise from international suppliers and distributors themselves. Consequently, imports have increased across a range of food items over the past five years.



SECTION 4 – BEST PRODUCT PROSPECTS

- The **organic**, **healthy**, **and natural products** market in Australia continues to grow rapidly. Although Australia is a large producer of organic raw products, it does not have the manufacturing capacity to satisfy demand for processed organic products. Prospects are excellent for organic and natural ingredients as well as consumer-ready processed foods and beverages. Findings from a recent survey show that Australian consumers are adopting a back-to-basics mindset, focusing on simple ingredients and fewer artificial or processed foods. The top ingredients being avoided by Australian consumers are: Antibiotics/hormones in animal products; MSG; artificial preservatives; artificial flavors; artificial sweeteners; foods with BPA packaging; artificial colors; sugar; GM foods; and sodium. These ingredients are being avoided primarily because of their perceived impact on health rather than actual medical conditions.
- The survey showed that Australians want to eat healthier but need help to make it happen. Almost 50 percent of consumers indicated that they wished there were more 'all natural' food products on shelves. They also indicated that they would be willing to pay more for foods and beverages that do not contain unhealthy ingredients.
- The types of products consumers want to see more of are all natural; no artificial colors; low sugar/sugar free; no artificial flavors; and low fat/fat free. U.S. exporters who can provide ingredients and preparation methods that improve the nutritional profile of products will be strongly positioned to succeed in this market.

SECTION 5 – KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

POST CONTACT

Office of Agricultural Affairs U.S. Embassy Canberra, Australia

Tel: +61 2 6214 5854

E-Mail: AgCanberra@fas.usda.gov

IMPORT REGULATIONS

- See the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources biological import conditions (BICON) database to identify whether your product is prohibited entry to Australia -https://bicon.agriculture.gov.au/BiconWeb4.0/ImportConditions/Search/
- Information on Food Law and Policy in Australia can be obtained from the www.ausfoodnews.com.au website.

AUSTRALIA'S FOOD LABELING REGULATIONS

• The Foreign Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report from this office contains detailed information on the Food Standards Code and other food regulations. This report is updated each year and a copy is available on the <u>FAS website</u>.

TRADE SHOWS

<u>Fine Food</u> is the largest food, beverage and equipment show in Australia and this region and presents U.S. exporters with the most efficient and cost-effective way to enter the Australian market. Australia is a very large country and internal transportation is expensive and time consuming. Fine Food offers an opportunity for U.S. exporters to access a 'one-stop-shop' for entry to the Australian market because many the major importers, distributors, etc., exhibit at the show and at times represent other companies. This presents an ideal opportunity for U.S. exhibitors to meet with many of the big players in this market in one place. The show is held every September alternating between Melbourne and Sydney.

Fine Food is endorsed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For information on participating in the U.S. Pavilion at Fine Food, please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs listed above.

INDUSTRY INFORMATION

Australian Food and Grocery Council

Email: info@afgc.org.au Web: www.afgc.org.au

Food and Beverage Importers Association

Email: info@fbia.org.au
Web: http://www.fbia.org.au

Attachments:

No Attachments