Report Name: Retail Foods

Country: Russian Federation

Post: Moscow ATO

Report Category: Retail Foods

Prepared By: 

Approved By: Susan Phillips

Report Highlights:

Russia, a net importer of consumer-oriented products, is the largest consumer market in Europe with almost 145 million consumers. Russian consumers continue to economize, but they are also looking for healthy, natural, innovative and trendy products at affordable prices. Although economic sanctions imposed in 2014 have spurred domestic production and have reduced dependency on imported food products, Russia’s growing food processing industry and retail market present attractive niche opportunities for American suppliers.
Market Fact Sheet: Russian Federation

Executive Summary

Russia is the world’s largest country by area with a population of 144 million people. Economic sanctions imposed in 2014 have spurred domestic production and have reduced dependency on imported food products. Domestic food production now accounts for more than 80 percent of what is sold in retail outlets. Prior to 2014, the share of domestic food was approximately 60 percent. In 2018, the Russian Government announced a $51 billion plan to boost domestic agricultural production, setting the ambitious goal of increasing food exports by 70 percent by 2024 (to $45 billion). The continued weakening of the ruble and relatively stagnant consumer purchasing power generally discourage imports. However, Russia’s food processing industry is modernizing to better serve domestic consumers and a growing number of strategic trading partners. Within this context, there are attractive niche opportunities to export quality ingredients that offer good value, particularly within the healthy and natural segments of the Russian market.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

While imports of consumer-oriented products have fallen by more than 33 percent since 2013, Russia remains a net importer, and continues to rely on foreign supplies of fresh and dried fruit, nuts, vegetables, beef, dairy, wine, spirits, food ingredients, and processed foods, including condiments, snacks and juices. Since 2014, imports have shifted from European to Asian / Middle Eastern / Latin American suppliers.


Food Processing Industry

Over the last three years, Russia’s food processing has grown by an annual average of five percent. In 2019, revenues from Russia’s food and drink processing sectors reached 102.4 billion USD. Food production turnover increased 6.5 percent from 2018, while the beverage sector increased 11.9 percent. Russia’s growth is stimulating investment and innovation not only in equipment, but also in product development. Currently, there are an estimated 22,000 food processing companies in Russia, employing 2 million people.

Food Retail Industry

The Russian retail sector is developing. Market concentration is moderate. In 2018, the share of top ten largest retailers accounted for 32 percent of the food market. Nevertheless, there is strong competition as costs are high and profit margins are low. Direct sourcing and private labeling are increasingly popular ways to reduce costs. Distribution logistics remain a challenge for national retailers seeking to expand their presence in the Russian Far East.

Quick Facts CY2019

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products: 20,156 million USD


Strengths

- The biggest consumer market in Europe with almost 145 million consumers, while 56 million belong to middle-class

Weaknesses

- Strong competition from accessible ingredients and products from local, European and Chinese producers

Opportunities

- Evolving Russian food processing sector looks for quality and innovative ingredients in order to launch novelty products. Consumers are increasingly sophisticated, looking for value

Threats

- Counter sanctions limit the list of American products eligible for export to Russia
SECTION I. MARKET SUMMARY

Overall Business Climate

In 2020, incomes are expected to stagnate, or more likely decline, as the COVID-19 crisis continues and as oil revenues keep falling. According to the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia, in the second quarter of 2020 (2Q20) the GDP decline is estimated at 9.6 percent year-on-year (YoY). In June, the GDP dynamic improved, the decline decreased to 6.4 percent compared to 10.7 percent in May and 12 percent in April. The main factor behind the recovery in economic activity in June was the ongoing lifting of quarantine restrictions\(^1\), which positively affected the performance of the consumer market. In June, the dynamics of retail trade turnover significantly improved up to -7.7 percent YoY versus -19.2 percent in May. Growth in consumer activity was accompanied by the recovery of manufacturing industries focused on consumer demand, in particular light industry and furniture production. In general, retail sales in June are expected to be below the levels of 2019 (in real terms). Restraining the economic recovery is the decline in disposable incomes, which in the second quarter of 2020 amounted to an 8 percent decline from the previous year (after 1.2% YoY growth in the first quarter). Wages, income from property and business activities have all declined, but at the same time, the Russian government introduced credit holidays that decreased some obligatory payments and increased social payments to support the population.

The government has developed a plan to restore the economy and lift incomes of Russians. The draft plan contains both already announced and a number of new measures to support the economy and the population. The target performance indicators include reaching sustainable growth in real income (although the target growth rate is not provided), reducing the unemployment rate to less than 5%, as well as ensuring GDP growth rates at a level of at least 2.5% per year by the end of 2021.

In March 2014, 31 countries, including the United States, imposed financial sanctions on Russia for violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Russia responded by imposing its own counter sanctions, many on agricultural imports. As a result, since 2014, Russian domestic agricultural production has increased by 30 percent. Exporters can find information on the banned products in the GAIN Reports Russia Announces Ban on Many US Agricultural Products (August 2014) and Russia Extended Food Import Ban through End 2020 (July 2019). Following the introduction of economic sanctions in 2014, the Russian government accelerated import substitution policies which have fueled the development of the food and agricultural sector. From 2015 to 2018, the Russian government allocated more than 1.6 trillion rubles (24.9 billion USD) to agricultural projects, and a further 1.3 trillion rubles have been allocated for 2019-2020 year (Source: Interfax.ru). According to the Russian Ministry of Agriculture, Russia has reduced food imports by 31.2 percent – from 43.3 billion USD in 2013 to 29.8 billion USD in 2018.

Russia is Europe’s third largest consumer market by turnover, behind only Germany and France (Source: INFOLine). Russia’s domestic food processing industry and developing food retail sector contributed significantly to the economy over the last five years. According to the Russian State Statistic Service (RosStat), in 2019, the production of food products grew by 4.9 percent and food drinks by 3.1 compared to 2018. Retail trade turnover in the Russian Federation in

\(^1\) To prevent 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 explanation 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 situation with COVID-19 in that region.
2019 increased by 1.6% in comparable prices and reached $465.7 billion (33,532 billion rubles). Growing food production and trade support imports of food and agricultural products as ingredients for food processing, fresh produce, groceries, health and functional foods and supplement.

**Russian Food Retail**

In 2019, the turnover of Russian food retail industry grew by 1.4 percent and totaled $223.9 billion (16,120.8 billion rubles). In 2019, the share of the top ten fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) chains in the retail food market increased up to 32.9 percent. The acceleration of market consolidation is associated both with the continued high growth rates of the leader of X5 Retail Group and M&A transactions (DKBR Mega Retail Group Limited, managing the combined business of Krasnoe & Beloe Group, Bristol chain and DIXY Group). Torgservice, because they own two popular hard discount chains (Svetofor and Mayak), increased their revenue by 26 percent and moved to 9th place on the top ten list of FMCG chains. In light of slim profit margins, most industry observers predict continued consolidation in the retail sector. Falling investment and a decline in real income will undoubtedly affect business and consumer confidence (and import demand) for as long as the COVID-19 crisis continues. However, fundamentals in the food sector are generally positive. Russia’s retail chains are modernizing and expanding deeper in the regions.

In 2018, consumer behavior changed from saving to "lean" consumption. In 2019, consumers maintained this pattern of behavior amid a record high level of promotional activity from the largest FMCG chains and an accelerated transition of retailers and suppliers to an omnichannel business model, which provided customers with a seamless experience whether they are shopping online from a mobile device, a laptop or a brick-and-mortar store. In addition, convenience is becoming one of the key priorities for consumers, which has stimulated the development of e-commerce (delivery services) and negatively affected sales in large-format shopping facilities. In the retail food market, the discounter format is increasing. 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 interregional players going out of business.

**Consumer Trends**

Russian consumers continue to economize, buy rationally with minimal impulse purchases, and also look for healthy, natural, innovative and “trendy” products at affordable prices. While Russian consumers continue to be price conscious, they are also looking for high quality, new, and healthy products. According to a GfK survey, last year, 46% of Russians said they were looking for a way to save money and use special offers for this purpose, 54% of Russians say they are looking for stores with low prices.

In addition to saving money, consumers in Russia appreciate convenience. Therefore, ready-made food is gaining popularity and becoming an alternative to traditional home cooking. According to GfK, half of all consumers (46 percent) visit bakery and pastry shops, a quarter go to fast-food restaurants (27 percent) or cafes (24 percent), and 20 percent order food for delivery at least once a month. Astute retailers and manufacturers took advantage of this trend. In highly populated regions where employment is generally high, such as in Moscow, St. Petersburg and a number of other major cities, the demand for ready-made meals is growing. In 2018, ready-to-eat meals, such as frozen, precooked lasagna or soups, grew in Moscow by 18 percent, and in St. Petersburg by 12 percent.

Another significant trend in the Russian FMCG market is increasing interest in a healthy lifestyle. Russians are increasingly worried about their own health. According to Nielsen, more than 84 percent stated that they recently changed their eating habits, such as: 53 percent reduced fat intake, 65 percent reduced sugar, and 67 percent increased the share of natural and healthy foods in their diet. More often, Russian consumers are carefully calculating calories, more

---

2 Exchange rate of $1 = 72 rubles
3 INFOLine
4 GfK research. Survey data included 10 thousand households.
attentively looking over the ingredients, and purchasing products with less artificial ingredients, less fat and less sugar. A wide selection of healthy food has become an important factor when choosing a store according to 62 percent of all consumers. Almost all federal retail chains have a section for healthy products. According to GfK research, every fourth Russian is interested in farm products and every fifth – in products marked ‘bio’, ‘eco’ or ‘organic’. In 2019, sales of such products in the Russian market will exceed 900 billion rubles ($12.5 billion), according to the Euromonitor estimation.

Russian consumers are increasingly buying food and drinks via the internet. Food and drink internet retailing is mainly popular in big cities and major regional centers. The fast pace of city life and the trend towards convenience were the main factors in favor of online stores. According to Euromonitor, food and drink internet retailing grew 20 percent in 2018, to reach $736 million (46.4 billion rubles) and is forecast to reach $1.8 billion (115 billion rubles) in 2023.

Table 1. Advantages and Challenges of the Russian Food Retail Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages – Sector Strength and Market Opportunities</th>
<th>Challenges – Sector Weaknesses and Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One of the biggest consumer markets in Europe with 144 million consumers, and a growing middle class.</td>
<td>The Russian Food Ban severely limits the list of American products eligible for export to Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United States offers many products that are considered global trend leaders particularly in organics, vegan, and sports nutrition.</td>
<td>Negative perceptions of the United States can sometimes influence importers and retailers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing Russian food processing sector is looking for quality and innovative ingredients to produce convenient and trendy food products.</td>
<td>There is strong competition from European, Chinese, locally produced products, and products imported within the Eurasian Economic Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail chains, where imported products are featured, continue to expand.</td>
<td>Declining income drives consumers to more affordable products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian consumers are increasingly sophisticated and are looking for value.</td>
<td>Terms of credit and financing do not favor import business development with American exporters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAS Moscow.

SECTION II. ROAD MAP FOR MARKET ENTRY

Entry Strategy

As a first step, U.S. exporters should confirm that the potential sale does not include products that are subject to the Russian Government counter sanctions. Exporters can find the full information on the banned products in the GAIN Reports Russia Announces Ban on Many US Agricultural Products (August 2014) and Russia Extended Food Import Ban through End 2020 (July 2019). After determining that the product is allowed to legally enter the Russian Federation, the exporter can initiate the process to select importers, distributors or other customers. 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 FAS GAIN reports, but the exporter is strongly encouraged to contact the Agricultural Trade Office in Moscow. The exporter is also encouraged to contact the appropriate USDA Cooperator for more targeted information and support: https://apps.fas.usda.gov/pcd/PartnersSearch.aspx.
Initial contact with importers and distributors is best done in person. There are 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 major shows held in Moscow in the second half of 2020 and the beginning of 2021:

- World Food Moscow, September 22-25, 2020
- PIR Show, October 19-22, 2020
- Ingredients Russia, January 26-28, 2021
- ProDEXPO, February 8-12, 2021
- Beviale Moscow, March, 2021
- Modern Bakery Moscow, March 2021

Many Russian buyers also attend U.S. and international trade shows like Expo West, Fancy Food, IFT, Anuga, SIAL, Gulfood, ProWeiin, FruitLogistica, Green Week and BrauBeviale.


**Export Procedures**

Exporters are urged to research Russian regulations, tariffs, standards, labeling and other requirements as outlined in the GAIN report Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report (January 2020). The information in this report serves as a general guide. USDA strongly recommends that exporters verify specific requirements with their prospective import partners before shipping any products. Many Russian regulations have or are undergoing change as Russia continues the process of policy integration with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). For additional details, please refer to the GAIN report Eurasian Economic Union Ag Times (December 2019). Discuss plans with the relevant USDA Cooperator association or respective U.S. State Regional Trade Group (SRTG) and consider partnerships that can advance the development of market research, contacts and activities which build relationships with Russian partners.


**Distribution Channels**

Distribution channels can vary considerably from one product to the next. The chart below provides a very general schematic that applies to most food ingredients.

Notwithstanding Russia’s vast territory, there are only three commercial seaports that handle containerized perishable cargo. The ports are St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, and Novorossiysk, each have several terminals. The Port of St. Petersburg is the main port of entry for Russia. It serves the needs of Western Russia. The transatlantic shipment takes about 17 days from the U.S. east coast and 45 days from the U.S. west coast via hubs in Germany or the Netherlands. The Port of Vladivostok is the port that supplies the Russian Far East and Siberia.

Food importers’ offices and warehouses are mostly located in the port-cities of St. Petersburg and Vladivostok or in Moscow, the capital and the main center of consumption. Food-processing facilities are located in most Russian regions; however, larger factories are located in the Central/Southern and Ural parts of Russia in close proximity to urban areas. Most of the inter-regional delivery across Russia is done by truck. Railroad is used occasionally for long-distance deliveries. The eastern and western parts of Russia are 6,000 miles apart and therefore, they often operate as independent markets with separate channels of supply and distribution.
Market Structure

Retail chains increasingly purchase high-volume products, such as fruit and grains, directly from foreign producers, excluding trading companies. However, both big retailers and smaller players buy American retail-ready products like sauces, peanut butter, wine, and other specialty foods from specialized Russian importers. Some products like nuts, dried fruits, and rice are imported in bulk and then processed and packed at importers’ facilities. The products are branded or private labeled for retail stores.

Figure 1. Distribution Channel Flow Diagram

SECTION III. COMPETITION

While imports of consumer-oriented products have fallen by more than 33 percent since 2013, Russia continues to rely on foreign supplies of fresh and dried fruit, nuts, vegetables, beef, cheese, wine, spirits, 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 to per USD in 2014 to 72 rubles per USD in 2019. Russian government policies, oriented toward import substitution, have also created a very challenging environment. In 2020, Russia adopted a new Food Security Doctrine that explicitly sets the goal of food self-sufficiency, but also generally opposes the application of biotechnology in plant and animal products. For additional details, please refer to the GAIN report New Food Security Doctrine Adopted (February 2020). Despite the ban, stagnant purchasing power, and import substitution programs, Russian remains one of the largest food importers in the world.

In 2019, Russian imports of total agricultural products slightly increased to $31.2 billion. Overall imports from the United States declined by 3.5 percent to $426.5 million due mainly to lower sunflower seed imports. 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).

Russia remains the eighth largest importer of agricultural products in the world (and also the eighth largest importer of consumer-oriented products) despite the counter sanctions, stagnant consumer demand, and government import substitution programs. Overall imports of consumer-oriented products to Russia increased by two percent and are valued at $20.2 billion in 2019. Supply of consumer-oriented products from the United States grew significantly in 2019, by 11 percent since last year and totaled $140.8 million due to higher imports of tomato paste, wine, food preparations, pet food, processed nuts and some other products. In 2020, consumer-oriented product imports are expected to slow down because of declining disposal income. 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.
### Table 2: Russia’s Import of Consumer Oriented Products. U.S. Market Share Versus Main Suppliers’ Market Share, 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category, (product code)</th>
<th>Main suppliers, in percentage (value)</th>
<th>Strengths of Key Supply Countries</th>
<th>Market Attractiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wine</strong> (HS code 2204 21)</td>
<td>1. Italy - 23  2. Georgia - 22  3. France - 14  USA - 1</td>
<td>Due to the promotional companies and historical presence on the Russian market, European wines are well known and popular with Russian consumers. New World wines compete with American wines in price.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food preparations</strong> (HS 2106 90)</td>
<td>1. Germany – 26  2. USA – 11  3.Austria – 5</td>
<td>EU suppliers benefit from the geographical proximity and established connections in Russia.</td>
<td>There is a growing demand for healthy food additives and sports supplements which add nutrition, as well as innovative ingredients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dog and cat food</strong> (HS 2309 10)</td>
<td>1. France – 16  2. Italy – 12  3. Canada – 10  USA – 1.3</td>
<td>EU suppliers benefit from the geographical proximity and established connections in Russia.</td>
<td>The pet food market is growing. U.S. pet food is among the highest-priced in the market, yet recognized for its quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sauces and Preparations</strong> (HS code 2103)</td>
<td>1. Germany – 19  2. Austria – 15  3. China – 8  USA – 2</td>
<td>EU and Chinese suppliers benefit from the geographical proximity and established connections in Russia and offer a diverse assortment of condiments and seasonings.</td>
<td>Russian consumers are diversifying their diet and using more ingredients and sauces from different cuisines. Consumers was products with new tastes, including those available from the United States, e.g. BBQ sauces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cacao paste, not defatted</strong> (HS 1803 10)</td>
<td>1. Ghana – 34  2. Cote d’Ivoire – 33  3. Ukraine – 19 USA – 3</td>
<td>Major global suppliers make price-competitive offers, which is a key factor for the economical Russian market.</td>
<td>The growing confectionery sector is introducing innovative products with natural ingredients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rice</strong> (HS 1006)</td>
<td>1. India - 40  2. Thailand – 18  3. Pakistan – 12  USA – 0.9</td>
<td>Limited local rice production and historical supply channels from Asia make it difficult for other suppliers to enter the rice market in Russia.</td>
<td>Increasing demand for wholesome natural foods, including interest in specialty products, such as wild rice. U.S. rice industry offers unique specialty rice assortment, which is appreciated by the health-conscious consumer audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nuts prepared or preserved</strong> (HS code 2008 19)</td>
<td>1. Belarus – 18.7  2. USA – 18  3. Turkey – 16</td>
<td>Strong competition on price with processed nuts from Belarus, Turkey and Spain on price</td>
<td>Healthy eating trends are expanding along with the demand in nut snacks and natural ingredients for confectionary and bakery. U.S. nuts have established niches on the Russian market due to quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cranberries prepared</strong> (HS 2008 93)</td>
<td>1. USA – 62  2. Germany – 26  3. Canada – 10</td>
<td>Strong U.S. position on the market due to quality and supply volumes. Meanwhile the competition with products from Germany and Canada is growing.</td>
<td>Growing demand for healthy snacks and natural ingredients. Cranberries are known and appreciated by Russian consumers; however, dried cranberries are not available locally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Trade Data Monitor

### SECTION IV. BEST PRODUCT PROSPECTS CATEGORIES

**A. U.S. Products Present in the Market Which Have Good Sales Potential**
• Food preparations, not elsewhere specified
• Alcoholic beverages
• Tomato paste
• Dried sweetened cranberries

B. Top Consumer-Oriented Products from the World
• Bananas
• Beef
• Cheese
• Wine

C. Top Consumer-Oriented Products from the United States
• Food preparations, not elsewhere specified
• Tomato paste
• Processed nuts
• Wine

D. U.S. Products Not Present in Significant Quantities, But Which Have Good Sales Potential
• Beer
• Wild rice
• Dog and cat food
• Organic and functional products
• Sauces and condiments
• Cacao paste

E. U.S. Products Not Present Because They Face Significant Barriers
• Raw nuts: almonds, pistachios, pecans (banned for imports as a result of the implementation of economic sanctions against Russia since 2014)
• Meat and meat products: beef, pork and poultry (banned since 2014)
• Fish and seafood (banned since 2014)
• Dried fruits (banned since 2014)
• Peanuts (restricted due to cadmium levels didn’t comply Russian requirement)

SECTION V. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

For further questions on this report or assistance exporting to Russia, please contact the Foreign Agricultural Service in Moscow.

For More information on FAS/USDA Market Promotion Programs and Activities in Russia, please contact:
U.S. Agricultural Trade Office
8, Bolshoy Devyatinskiy Pereulok
121099, Moscow, Russia
Phone: +7(495) 728-5600
atomoscow@usda.gov
www.fas.usda.gov

Office of Trade Programs
U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service
1400 Independence Ave.,
S.W. Washington, DC 20250
www.fas.usda.gov/OTP_contacts.asp

Attaché reports on the Russian food and agricultural market are available on the FAS Website; the search engine can be found at www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/AttacheRep/default.asp

Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Russia) - federal organ of executive power, carrying out functions on control and supervision in the field of veterinary science. It establishes and lifts phytosanitary quarantines.
A complete selection of FAS reports can be viewed online at: www.gain.fas.usda.gov/

Attachments:

No Attachments