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Report Highlights:

In the Caribbean region, sales value in the retail grocery sector increased by 3 percent in 2023. This is due in part to the rise in tourism in many markets, which is boosting economic growth. The largest grocery retail markets are Trinidad and Tobago, Guadeloupe, and the Bahamas. As more high-income individuals move to some markets and invest in the region, more opportunities for U.S. food and beverage products are being created. U.S. agricultural exports of consumer-oriented products to the region were valued at \$1.5 billion last year. For the purposes of this report, the terms “Caribbean” and “Caribbean Basin” refer to the 25 markets covered by the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office (CBATO), with the exception of Cuba.

Caribbean Basin Market Fact Sheet

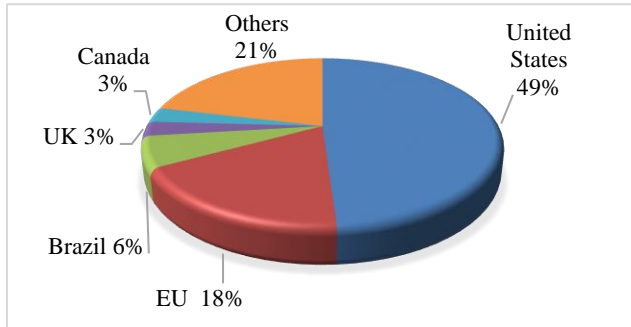
Executive Summary:

The Caribbean is an excellent market for U.S. exporters to explore. Proximity, close commercial ties with the United States, a large influx of tourists, and a trade-friendly regulatory environment all contribute to the attractiveness of the market.

Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports:

The majority of food must be imported on Caribbean islands, as domestic production is limited. Total imports of consumer-oriented agricultural products totaled \$3.1 billion in 2023, with the United States capturing 50 percent of the market.

Chart 1: Top Exporting Countries to the Caribbean Basin



Food Retail Industry:

Total grocery retail sales (excl. sales tax) were estimated at \$10.3 billion in 2023. Approximately 81 percent of imported foods and beverages are channeled through the retail sector. This sector includes traditional grocery stores as well as more modern, upscale supermarkets.

Food Processing Industry:

The food processing sector is minimal in most countries, with total production estimated at just \$168 million last year.

Food Service Industry:

Tourism is a key factor in generating demand for U.S. products in the food service sector. Sales reached \$2.19 billion in 2023, an increase of 14 percent from the previous year. The opening of new hotels and restaurants continues to pave the way for future growth opportunities.

Quick Facts CY 2023

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

\$3.1 billion

Top 10 Growth Products

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Poultry & Products | 2. Bakery/Cereals/Pasta |
| 3. Dairy Products | 4. Beef & Beef Products |
| 5. Non-Alcoholic Bev | 6. Fresh Fruits |
| 7. Food Preparations | 8. Fresh Vegetables |
| 9. Eggs & Products | 10. Pork & Products |

Food Industry by Channels (USD)

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Retail Food Industry | \$10.3 billion |
| Food Service-HRI | \$2.2 billion |
| Food and Agriculture Exports | \$731 million |

Top 10 Retailers

Massy Stores, EcoMax, Leader Price, Super Value, Carrefour, Market Place, Rite Way Food Market, Graceway Supermarket, Price Smart, and Tru Valu Supermarket

GDP/Population

Population: 4.96 million

GDP: from \$658 million (Dominica, 2023 est.) to \$28.1 billion (Trinidad and Tobago, 2023 est.)

GDP per capita (USD): Bermuda \$118,774; Guyana \$84,140; Aruba \$54,720; Trinidad and Tobago \$32,680; Dominica \$15,280

Sources: Trade Data Monitor, Euromonitor Intl., International Monetary Fund, World Bank

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|--|
| Proximity; well-established relationships between U.S. suppliers and Caribbean buyers | Fragmented market among small local grocers; limited purchasing power of consumers in some markets |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| Some companies are seeking private label products to provide better prices to consumers. | Due to weather risks, there are disruptions in the supply chain, especially in hurricane season. |

Section I: Market Summary

For the purposes of this report, the terms “Caribbean” and “Caribbean Basin” refer to the 25 markets¹ covered by the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office (CBATO), with the exception of Cuba.

The Caribbean Basin is a large and highly fragmented region of the Americas. It is a mix of independent states and overseas departments or dependencies of European countries. The region has 4.96 million inhabitants, of which two-thirds are concentrated in five markets: Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and The Bahamas. The population is incredibly diverse and is made up of descendants from indigenous groups that inhabited the region, as well as people of African, European, Indian, and Middle Eastern descent, among others.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the region ranges from \$658 million in Dominica to \$28.14 billion in Trinidad and Tobago, and per-capita GDP ranges from \$15,280 in Dominica to \$118,774 in Bermuda. With approximately 9.2 million tourists and over 17 million cruise ship passengers visiting the region in 2023, tourism is the main economic driver for the vast majority of Caribbean markets. Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana are the main exceptions, as their economies are largely based on oil and gas production.

Real GDP growth of tourism-dependent Caribbean countries increased 4.4 percent in 2023, and these economies are largely returning to an average growth rate in 2024, except Guyana's, the economy of which continued to expand rapidly. According to the IMF, in 2024 Guyana's GDP is projected to grow by 33.9 percent in real terms, owing largely to growth in its oil industry. This would mark Guyana's fifth consecutive year of growth above 20 percent. The development of Guyana's oil and gas sector has created new job opportunities, increased government revenue, and increased tourism investments, with approximately 15 hotels slated for construction in the coming years.

In general, the economy of the Caribbean Basin is reliant on foreign investment to support development, particularly in industries like energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and initiatives that can help mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. However, the degree of reliance on foreign investment varies among different Caribbean markets.

¹The CBATO's region of coverage consists of the following 25 markets: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands (BVI), Caribbean Netherlands or BES Islands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba), Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique, Montserrat, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Advantages and Challenges

| ADVANTAGES | CHALLENGES |
|--|---|
| With little arable land and food production, Caribbean markets must import most of their food needs. | Caribbean nations heavily depend on foreign investment, which affects the region’s economic growth. |
| U.S. exporters, in particular South Florida consolidators, service the market well and are better positioned to supply the Caribbean than competitors. | European influence is present in the market because of historical ties and economic dependencies established over time, making consumers prefer some products and brands from Europe. |
| The United States has a dominant market share in the vast majority of Caribbean islands (estimated at 50 percent overall). | Some products, particularly meat and poultry, may be restricted in certain markets due to EU or island-specific regulations. |
| The regulatory environment at present is generally open to U.S. products. | Caribbean buyers often prefer small quantities as they have limited resources and storage space, which can be challenging for some U.S. suppliers. |
| The local consumer values U.S. quality and food safety. However, in an inflationary economy, consumers are more price conscious. | Countries are increasingly interested in decreasing food imports, making a push instead for locally and regionally produced foods. |

Section II: Road Map for Market Entry

Entry Strategy

Many of the larger retailers in the Caribbean prefer to buy products directly from manufacturers. However, the most common method for U.S. suppliers to enter the Caribbean retail food market is through local importers/distributors. Generally speaking, local importers/distributors have broad access to food and beverage supply channels, possess adequate warehouse facilities, carry a large inventory of products, and service many accounts. Business-to-business e-commerce is another option for retailers to purchase merchandise and some suppliers offer options to purchase through a platform or a purchase order system.

Meeting Caribbean retailers and importer/distributors can be accomplished in several ways. While in-person visits to potential markets are perhaps the most effective method of establishing contacts, understanding the needs and limitations of potential customers and learning the nuances of each individual market can be time-consuming and expensive given the fragmented nature of the region. An excellent alternative is meeting buyers at U.S. trade shows such as the National Restaurant Association Show in Chicago, the Summer Fancy Food Show in New York, Natural Products Expo East, and the Americas Food and Beverage Show in Miami, where Caribbean buyers often flock to seek out new products. These events present invaluable opportunities for U.S. suppliers to meet one-on-one with Caribbean buyers.

Contact the CBATO for more information on Caribbean buying missions to these events or lists of Caribbean retail buyers. Contact information is provided in Section V of this report.

Market Structure

South Florida, which has an abundance of food exporters, brokers, and consolidators, is the main gateway for U.S. consumer-oriented exports to the Caribbean. Several shipping lines service the region from South Florida’s three seaports (Port of Miami, Port Everglades, and Port of Palm Beach).

The major exception is Bermuda which, because of its more northern location, sources most of its food imports from the northeastern United States, namely from the New York/Newark area and Philadelphia. Caribbean consumers, particularly those on islands in close proximity to the United States, will often travel to South Florida to purchase food and beverage products (and household goods) at the retail level, and then have them shipped to their respective country. This is especially true in The Bahamas, but consumers will travel to South Florida from as far away as Trinidad and Tobago to purchase U.S. goods and ship them back for their own consumption as well as resale.

According to Euromonitor, the Caribbean retail food sector is comprised of over 15,940 outlets of which traditional grocers account for over 87 percent. Large and modern supermarkets, hypermarkets and warehouse clubs account for only 13 percent of total retail outlets but make up over 73 percent of grocery retail sales compared to 27 percent from traditional grocery retailers/outlets. Discounters, convenience stores and other retailers make up the remainder of retail sales.

Caribbean retail grocery sales increased by 3.7 percent in 2023, from \$9.9 billion to \$10.28 billion.

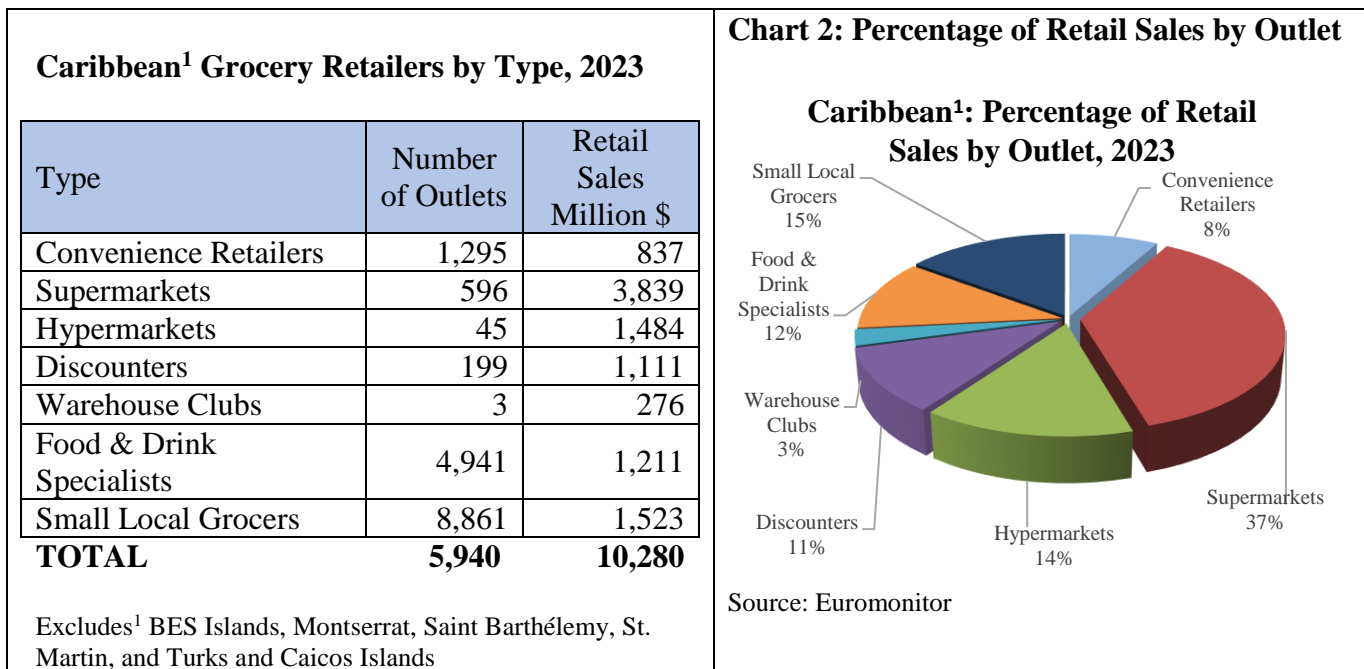
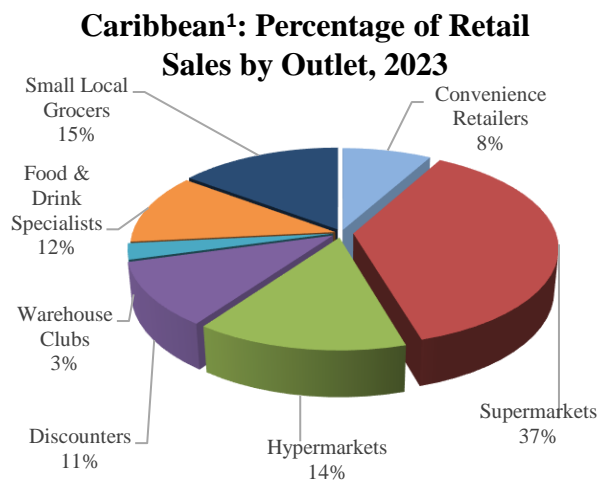


Chart 2: Percentage of Retail Sales by Outlet



Source: Euromonitor

Company Profiles and Top Host Country Retailers

Most retail grocery stores/outlets in the Caribbean are made up of one or two small outlets operating in a single country. There are also a handful of grocery outlets with multiple stores that dominate one particular market. Some of the top market retailers include:

| | Company | Markets | No. of Outlets | Link |
|----|---|---|----------------|--|
| 1 |  | Barbados, Guyana, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent | 57 | https://www.massystores.com/ |
| 2 |  | Guadeloupe, Martinique | 36 | https://www.facebook.com/EcomaxGuadeloupe |
| 3 |  | Guadeloupe, Martinique | 22 | https://www.leaderprice-martinique.com/ |
| 4 |  | The Bahamas | 13 | https://supervaluequalitymarkets.com/ |
| 5 |  | Guadeloupe, Martinique, Sint Maarten, Curacao | 12 | https://www.carrefour-martinique.com http://carrefourguadeloupe.com/baissedesprix/ http://www.cmsxm.net/ https://www.crfcuracao.com/ |
| 6 |  | Bermuda | 8 | https://www.marketplace.bm |
| 7 |  | British Virgin Islands | 8 | https://www.riteway.vg/ |
| 8 |  | Turks & Caicos | 6 | http://www.gracewaysupermarkets.com/iga |
| 9 |  | Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba | 6 | https://www.pricesmart.com/site/en/country-picker |
| 10 |  | Trinidad and Tobago | 4 | https://www.facebook.com/TruValuSupermarkets/ |

Import Procedures

In most Caribbean countries, food safety responsibilities fall under the Ministry of Public Health or its equivalent. The Ministry of Agriculture may also play a role in plant and animal products regarding both public health, and plant and animal health. Meat and poultry, dairy products, seafood, and produce typically require import approval and certification of health/country of origin. For example, phytosanitary certificates from the country of origin must accompany imported fresh produce and plants. Health certificates must accompany live animals and animal products. Certain items may be restricted if

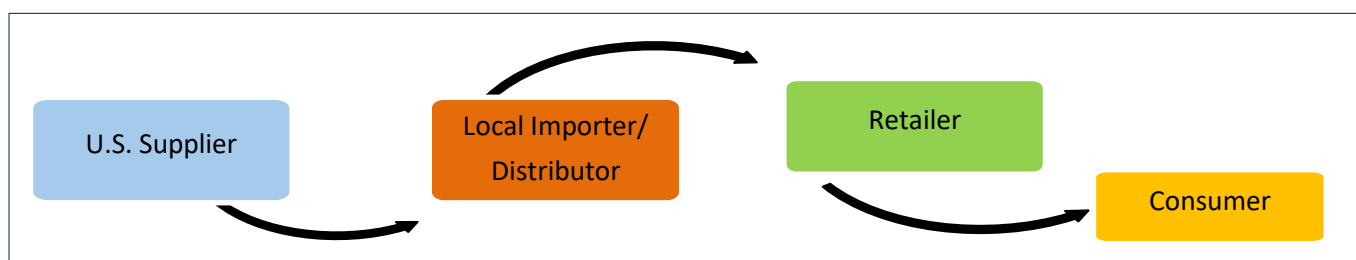
the government decides they pose a risk to food safety or plant and animal health. It is always recommended that U.S. exporters verify that their product is eligible for entry into a particular market before shipping.

Most Caribbean countries follow international standards (e.g., Codex Alimentarius standards) and fully accept U.S. standards for food and agricultural products, including the standard U.S. nutritional fact panel. However, U.S. suppliers must be aware that the EU Food Information to Consumers Regulation may apply to some EU Member State territories in the Caribbean. The French overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique are a case in point, as they require food and beverage products to be labeled in French and to comply with French and EU norms. In general, enforcement of labeling and other product standards is carried out mostly at the port of entry. Still, routine and random checks are also conducted at retail and wholesale channels. As always, good communication with local importers will help ensure proper compliance with local food laws.

More information on Caribbean Basin import requirements can be found in the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) reports available via the [USDA Global Agriculture Information Network \(GAIN\)](#) for the following countries: Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Guyana, Sint Maarten, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Distribution Channels

Distribution channels can vary in each market, depending on whether the Caribbean retailer buys directly or through other distributors. If the company buys directly, it usually has an office or an import department in its market or sometimes based in the United States. Recently, some companies have been opting to hire a buyer who makes purchases on their behalf and handles the international shipping. There are also many U.S. companies that have a local importer/distributor. Most commercially imported products flow to the Caribbean according to the chart below.

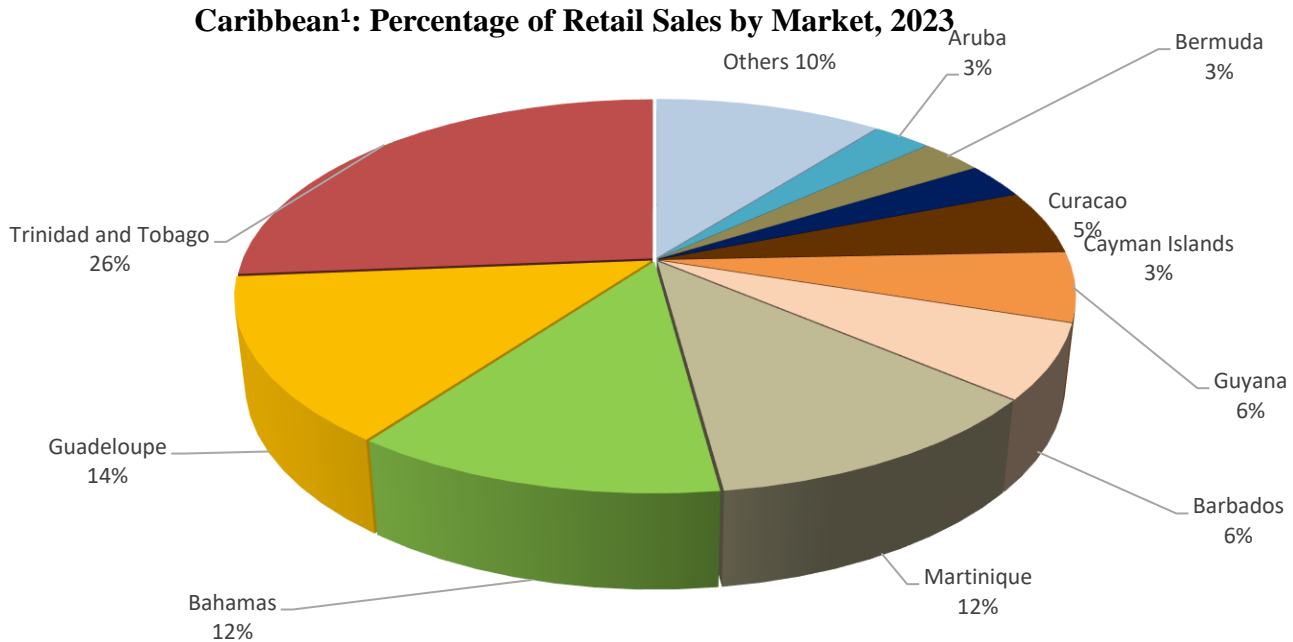


Share of Major Markets in the Food Retail Industry

Retail demand in Caribbean markets varies based on population size, the number of outlets, and the presence of national and international grocery chains. Some chains offer a variety of products, competitive prices, and promotions that persuade consumers to purchase, while other retailers are smaller or more specialized. The largest grocery market in the region is Trinidad and Tobago, with total annual revenue of \$2.7 billion, followed by Guadeloupe at \$1.4 billion, and The Bahamas at \$1.25 billion. Additionally, Guyana is expected to undergo considerable economic expansion in the coming years as a result of growing wealth from oil production and exports.

Below are the top 10 grocery markets in the Caribbean Basin region based on retail sales.

Chart 3: Percentage of Retail Sales by Market in the Caribbean Basin



¹ Excludes Turks and Caicos, St. Martin, St. Barts, and BES Islands

Sector Trends

Small grocery outlets are declining in some Caribbean markets due to less competitive prices. These grocers typically buy from a distribution chain, which leads to higher product costs for consumers. However, the region is seeing growing demand for gourmet and higher value grocery offerings, including delicatessen and health-focused products. Online grocery sales are also expanding, as many expats and higher-end consumers are looking for greater variety and U.S. products for quality and brand preferences, especially in Caribbean markets with many high-net-worth consumers who buy luxury homes and have preferences for certain food products through global e-commerce platforms with international shipping. Sometimes, luxury condominium developments provide shipping services and have small gourmet markets on site.

Private label goods are also gaining market share, particularly among international chains, while independent grocers are also purchasing private labels from their distributors. In some Caribbean markets travel retail, such as duty-free stores and hotel mini markets, are expanding as many airports are remodeling and new hotels are under construction.

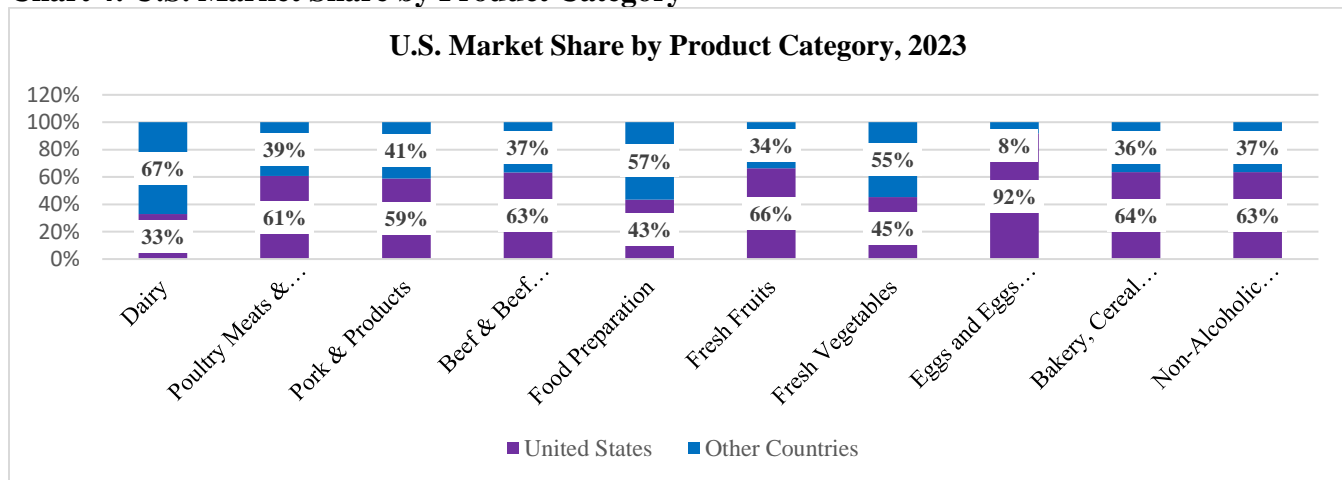
Section III: Competition

The United States accounts for half of the Caribbean’s imported consumer-oriented food and beverage products. In 2023, U.S. exports of consumer-oriented products to the region topped \$1.5 billion. The

next closest competitor is the EU with \$609 million in exports (19.76 percent), followed by Brazil with \$158 million (5.13 percent), New Zealand with \$100 million (3.24 percent), and the United Kingdom with \$97 million (3.16 percent).

The top five import categories for the Caribbean Basin are poultry and poultry products, bakery goods, dairy products, non-alcoholic beverage excluding juice, and beef and beef products. These five categories alone represent more than a third of all consumer-oriented product imports in the region. With only a few exceptions, the United States is the leading supplier in most product categories.

Chart 4: U.S. Market Share by Product Category



Source: Trade Data Monitor

IV. Best Product Prospects

Products Present in the Market that have Good Sales Potential

Given the Caribbean’s limited domestic food production, the region relies heavily on imports of all types of food and beverage products. However, continuing economic challenges, including increased prices throughout most of the region, are beginning to take their toll on retail grocery demand. The shift toward more value products and private label continues to grow. Niche products, especially in the healthy foods category, are also showing good potential.

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World, 2021-2023 (USD Thousands)

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Dairy Products | 347,203 | 381,463 | 383,945 |
| Poultry Meat & Prods. (ex. eggs) | 225,902 | 291,016 | 274,113 |
| Soup & Other Food Preparations | 189,436 | 242,882 | 222,755 |
| Bakery Goods, Cereals & Pasta | 174,877 | 205,260 | 227,989 |
| Beef & Beef Products | 168,844 | 198,637 | 199,780 |
| Fresh Vegetables | 107,038 | 141,572 | 165,958 |

| | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Non-Alcoholic Bev. (ex. juices, coffee, tea) | 116,134 | 141,830 | 160,563 |
| Processed Vegetables | 102,188 | 139,008 | 157,245 |
| Pork & Pork Products | 110,741 | 119,361 | 116,296 |
| Fresh Fruit | 102,597 | 122,309 | 129,744 |

Source: Trade Data Monitor

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States, 2021-2023 (USD Thousands)

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Poultry Meat & Prods. (ex. eggs) | 133,236 | 174,485 | 166,322 |
| Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta | 107,730 | 131,525 | 144,785 |
| Beef & Beef Products | 96,086 | 119,248 | 126,955 |
| Non-Alcoholic Bev. (ex. juices) | 70,610 | 89,441 | 101,948 |
| Food Preparations | 89,217 | 125,094 | 96,726 |
| Fresh Fruit | 64,397 | 78,148 | 86,042 |
| Fresh Vegetables | 47,316 | 73,141 | 75,177 |
| Eggs & Products | 49,941 | 77,812 | 74,694 |
| Pork & Pork Products | 54,334 | 64,749 | 68,520 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Products Not Present in Significant Quantities with Sales Potential

Most U.S. trends for consumer-oriented products are also evident in the Caribbean Basin. U.S. products have a substantial presence in most Caribbean markets, with the exception of the French overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique. These islands have traditionally sourced the majority of their imports from the EU, particularly from France. Consequently, U.S. market share in these islands is in the single digits. Breaking these traditional commercial ties in favor of U.S. products is challenging but does offer significant potential. In general, product categories with the most potential for growth include confectionary, wine and craft beers, non-alcoholic beverages, condiments and sauces, and pet food.

Products Not Present Because They Face Significant Barriers

The number of restricted products in the Caribbean region is minimal. The Importation of Milk (Prohibition) Act 1997 prohibits the importation of any of the following dairy products into Bermuda: raw milk, pasteurized milk, ultra-pasteurized milk, ultra heat-treated milk, and manufactured milk. A few Caribbean countries may also prohibit the importation of select produce items for plant quarantine purposes. These include fresh citrus originating in Florida; fresh papaya; fresh sweet potato/North American yam; fresh corn on the cob; carrots; and fresh mangoes (unless they are certified to have been hot water treated at a USDA-approved facility).

V. Key Contacts and Further Information

If you have questions or comments regarding this report, or need assistance exporting to the Caribbean Basin, please contact the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office (CBATO) in Miami, Florida. Importer listings are available from the Foreign Agricultural Service for use by U.S. exporters of U.S. food and beverage products.

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Attachments:

No Attachments