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Report Highlights:

Korea was the 5th largest country importer of the U.S. agricultural and related products in 2024. The United States is the leading supplier of imported consumer-oriented agricultural products for Korean retail industry, shipping $6.1 billion in 2024. The outlook for U.S. products in the Korean retail industry is excellent for a wide range of products, including beef, pork, food preparations under HS2106, dairy, fresh fruit, tree nuts, and processed fruit and vegetable.

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

MARKET FACT SHEET: SOUTH KOREA

Executive Summary

The Republic of Korea (ROK) had the 12th largest economy in the world with a GDP of $1.87 trillion and a per capita GNI of $36,624 in 2024. It is about the size of Indiana, with a population of 51.8 million. Over 80 percent of Koreans live in urban areas. Domestic production meets only 46 percent of food demand. The United States exported $8.9 billion in agricultural and related products to the ROK in 2024, making it our fifth largest country export market. The United States supplies around 21 percent of the ROK's agricultural imports.

Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports

In 2024, ROK imported consumer-oriented agricultural products totaling around $20.6 billion. There are many opportunities for U.S. export growth in this segment, including for beef, pork, fruits, tree nuts, dairy products, confectioneries, beverages, and further prepared foods.

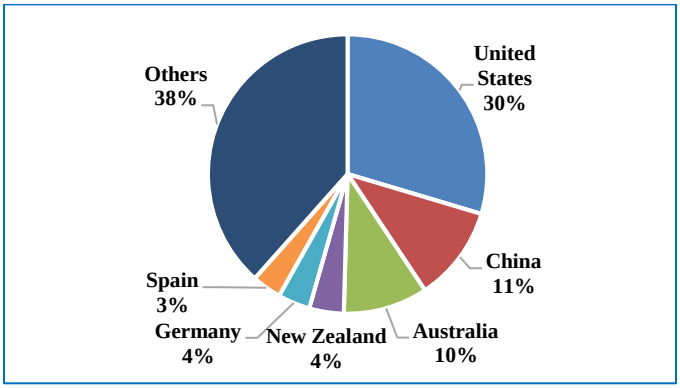


Chart 1: Top Exporting Countries to South Korea

Food Retail Industry

Korean retail food sales totaled $132 billion in 2024, accounting for 31 percent of total retail sales (excluding automobiles). Among grocery retailers, except for e-commerce sellers, convenience stores were the leading retail channel, followed by grocery supermarkets, hypermarket discount stores, and warehouse clubs.

Food Processing Industry

In 2023, Korea had over 31,075 food processing companies, which generated $65.0 billion in sales. Korean food processing companies rely heavily on imported commodities and ingredients. Imports of basic and intermediate agricultural products totaled $16.9 billion in 2024. Eighteen percent ($3.2 billion) of these imports came from the United States.

Food Service Industry

The Korean HRI sector reached $147 billion in 2023 (the latest official data available), an 8.3% increase from the previous year. The industry faced challenges due to economic uncertainties and weakening consumer confidence in 2024. However, industry is expected to see gradual growth as businesses evolve to meet growing consumer demand for convenience and new experiences.

Quick Facts CY 2024

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

$20.6 billion ($6.1 billion from the United States)*

* Based on Korean import data

Top 10 Import Growth (%) Products in the ROK, by value (BICO, 2023-2024)

1) Fruit & Vegetable Juices (25%)
2) Fresh Fruit (21%)
3) Chocolate & Cocoa Products (18%)
4) Tree Nuts (18%)
5) Processed Fruits (17%)
6) Spices (12%)
7) Condiments & Sauces (12%)
8) Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta (10%)
9) Dog & Cat Food (10%)
10) Fresh Vegetables (9%)

Food Industry by Channels ($U.S. billion)

Retail Food Industry (2024)	$132
Food Service-HRI (2023)	$147
Food Processing (2023)	$65
Food and Agriculture Exports (2024)	$11

Top 10 Korean Retailers

Coupang LLC, Shinsegae Co Ltd, Naver Corp, Lotte Group, GS Holdings Corp, SK Telecom Co Ltd, Hyundai Department Store Co Ltd, BGF Retail Co Ltd, Alphabet Inc, HomePlus Co Ltd

GDP/Population (2024)

Population: 51.8 million
GDP: US$ 1.87 trillion
GDP per capita: US$ 36,113

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
- Well established market with modern distribution channels - Consumer income level continues to increase	- High logistics cost to ship American products - Consumers have limited understanding of innovative American food products
Opportunities	***Threats***
- Strong consumer demand for value, quality, and diversity - KORUS FTA reduces tariff barriers	- Elevated competition from export-oriented competitors - Discrepancies in food safety and labeling regulations

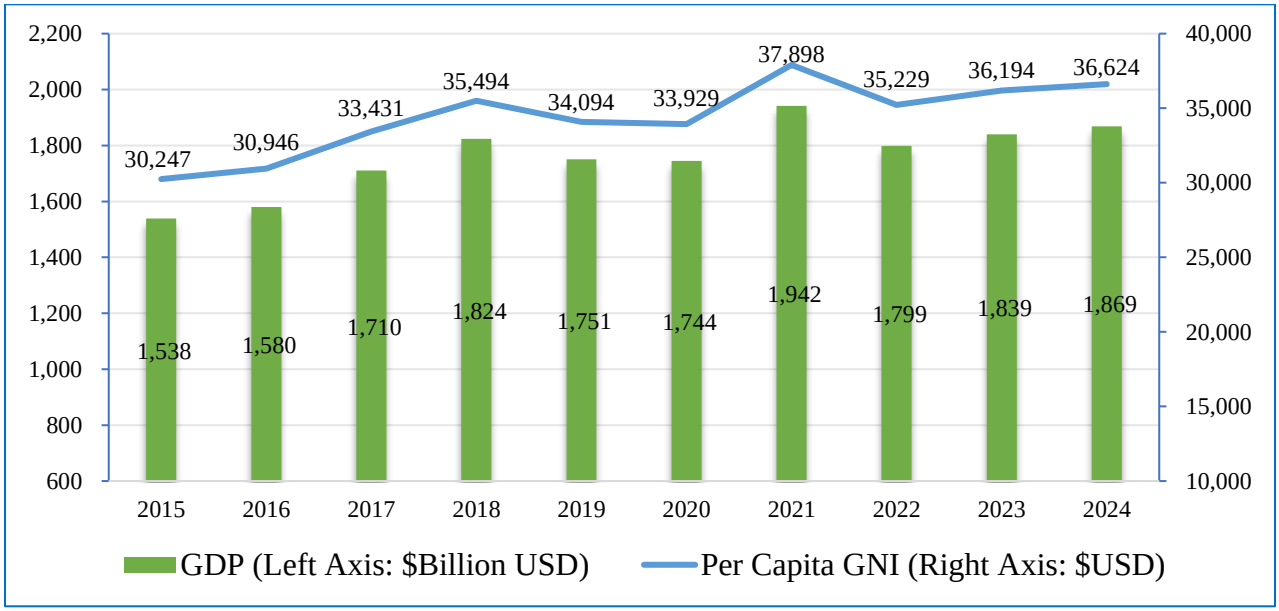
Data and Information Sources: Latest available statistics are used in this publication and will continue to be updated throughout the year as new data is available. Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS), Korea Ministry of Food & Drug Safety, Korea National Statistics Office, CIA Factbook, Int'l Monetary Fund (IMF), Korea Int'l Trade Association, Euromonitor Int'l.

Contact: U.S. Agricultural Trade Office Seoul (atoseoul@usda.gov)

Section 1: Market Summary

National Economy: Korea, the world's 12th largest economy and one of the leaders in high-tech industries, has a strong export-driven economy, with a Gross Domestic Production (GDP) of $1.87 trillion and a per capita Gross National Income (GNI) of $36,624 in 2024 (see **Figure 1**). The Korean economy showed moderate growth in 2024, fueled by a recovery in exports and investment. However, the recovery in consumption and construction investment was slow due to persistent high interest rates and weakened consumer confidence.

Figure 1. Korea: Economy Trend for 10 Years



Source: The Bank of Korea (www.ecos.bok.or.kr)

In 2025, the Korean economy is expected to maintain a low growth rate due to factors such as sluggish construction investment and reduced exports coupled with high external uncertainties such as a changing global trade environment and China's slow growth resulting from its economic maturation. Private consumption slump is likely to ease in the second half of 2025 given the expected interest rate cuts and consumption stimulus measures taken by the government[1].

Inflation will also remain well above 1.5 percent for the next year or so. The Korean Consumer Price Index (CPI) for August 2025 already increased by 1.7 percent from the same month last year[2] and the Food Price Index also showed an increase of 4.9 percent compared to that of August 2024.

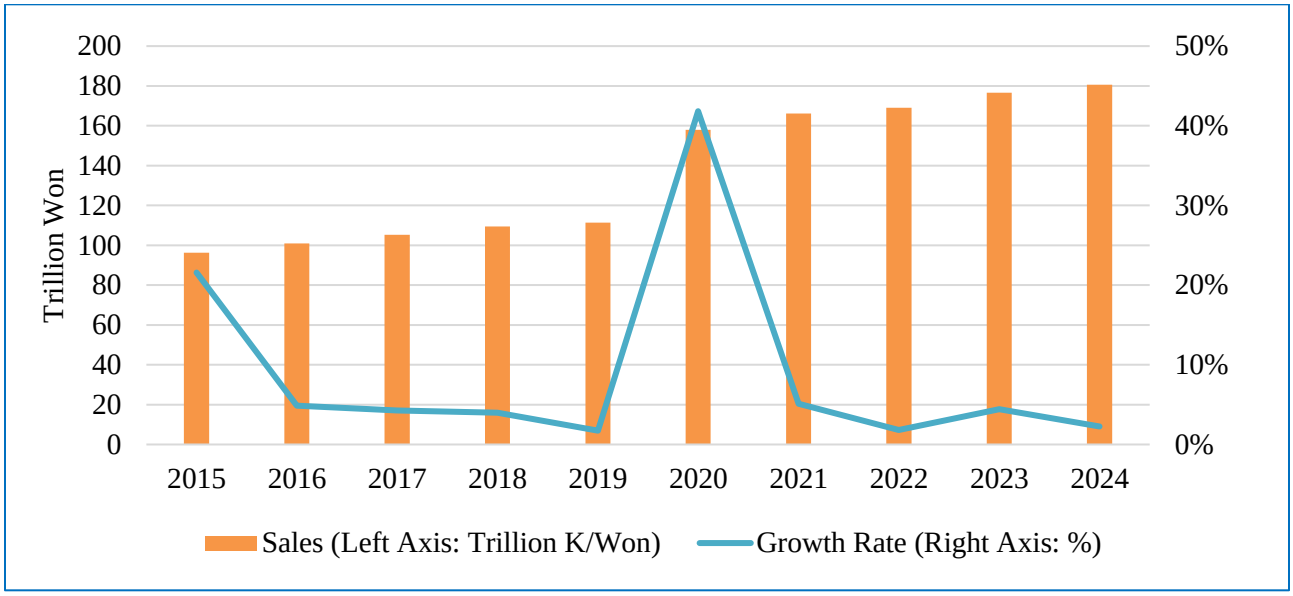
Domestic Retail Market: In 2024, the gross retail sales of Korea (excluding automobiles) was 578 trillion Korean won ($423 billion), up 0.5 percent from the previous year. Growing consumer demand for better quality, value consumption, and diverse commodities have resulted in fast growth of modernized brick-and-mortar retailers such as hypermarkets and supermarkets. In recent years, on-line only retailers showed remarkable growth at the cost of traditional street markets, small independent

[1] Bank of Korea Economic Forecast Report, August 2025 (bok.or.kr)
[2] Korea Statistics Service (kosis.kr)

grocers, and even large-scale offline retailers. Convenience stores, though at a slower pace than online, also show steady growth in recent years.

Partly due to the ongoing inflation, total sales value of grocery food through retail channels kept growing in 2024 and reached a record 181 trillion Korean won ($132 billion), up 2.2 percent from 2023 and accounting for 31 percent of the total retail sales. **Figure 2** shows the food product sales in Korean retail market for the past 10 years.

Figure 2. Korea: Grocery Food Product Sales in Retail Industry[3]



Source: Retail Industry Statistics, Korea National Statistics Office (NSO, http://kosis.kr)

Advantages and Challenges

Korea was the 5th largest country buyer of the U.S. agricultural and related products in 2024, and the United States has been the leading supplier of imported consumer-oriented agricultural products for Korean retail industry. Korean consumers recognize the United States as a trusted origin for high-quality food in-general and the Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) reduced tariffs and market access barriers for many of U.S. products. The outlook for U.S. products in the Korean retail industry is positive for a range of products including beef, pork, food preparations under HS2106, dairy, fresh fruit, tree nuts, and processed fruit and vegetable.

However, continued higher inflation in the United States has led to an increase in prices for food (either processed or fresh) due to rising materials and labor costs. These higher costs may have substantially impacted the competitiveness of exports of U.S. food products in recent years.

[3] NSO adopted new survey data in 2015 and 2020 resulting from the National Economy Census, so the sharp growths in 2015 and 2020 should be interpreted with a caution.

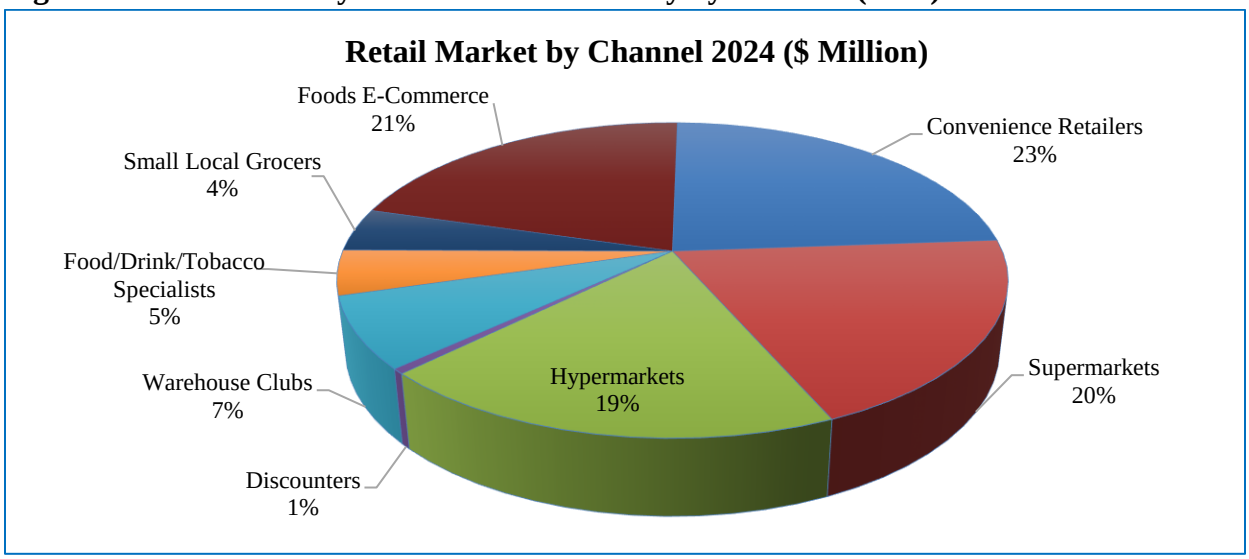
Table 1. Korea: Advantages and Challenges for U.S. Products

Advantages	Challenges
Korea is a fast-paced market where new ideas and trends are eagerly tried and accepted. Rising incomes are creating demand for diverse and high-quality food.	Many Korean consumers are biased toward locally produced agricultural products, believing they are better and safer than imported products.
Korea depends heavily on food and agricultural imports. Consumers closely follow international food and consumption trends.	Imports are subject to strict food safety regulations. Korean food safety standards change frequently and with short notice.
Modern, large-scale retailers provide a more efficient marketing environment for imported products.	The supply chain for imported products includes multiple layers of intermediaries, increasing costs and inefficiencies.
Korean consumers are very concerned about food safety. Many consumers recognize the United States as a trusted origin for quality agricultural products.	U.S. products face strong competition from other exporting countries. High inflation in the U.S. food prices substantially impacted the competitiveness of U.S. consumer-ready food products.

Retail Sales by Channel

The Korean grocery retail industry is segmented by several different categories. According to Euromonitor International's dataset, the total sales of those segments amounted to $102 billion in 2024. **Figure 3** shows the breakout of sales of Korean grocery retailers including foods e-commerce.

Figure 3. Korea: Grocery Sales of Retail Industry by Channel (2024)



Source: Euromonitor International

Section 2: Road Map for Market Entry

Entry Strategy

Any new-to-market U.S. food exporters may have several approaches to enter the Korean retail market including but not limited to:

- Developing a trade relationship with Korean importers and/or trading agents
- Selling through U.S. trading companies (also known as consolidators)
- Setting up a branch office in Korea
- Exporting directly to Korean retailers

In reality, except for a few leading retail companies trying to expand direct imports from foreign suppliers of high-volume products such as fresh fruit, beef, and seafood, Korean retailers rely heavily on independent importers or intermediary distributors (trade agents or wholesalers) for imported food products. Foreign suppliers often find it easier to work with intermediary import distributors in Korea to have their products marketed to multiple retailers instead of selling directly to one retailer exclusively.

For more information on establishing business partners in Korea and on the top imported consumer-ready food products, please refer to the 2025 Exporter Guide report published by Post.

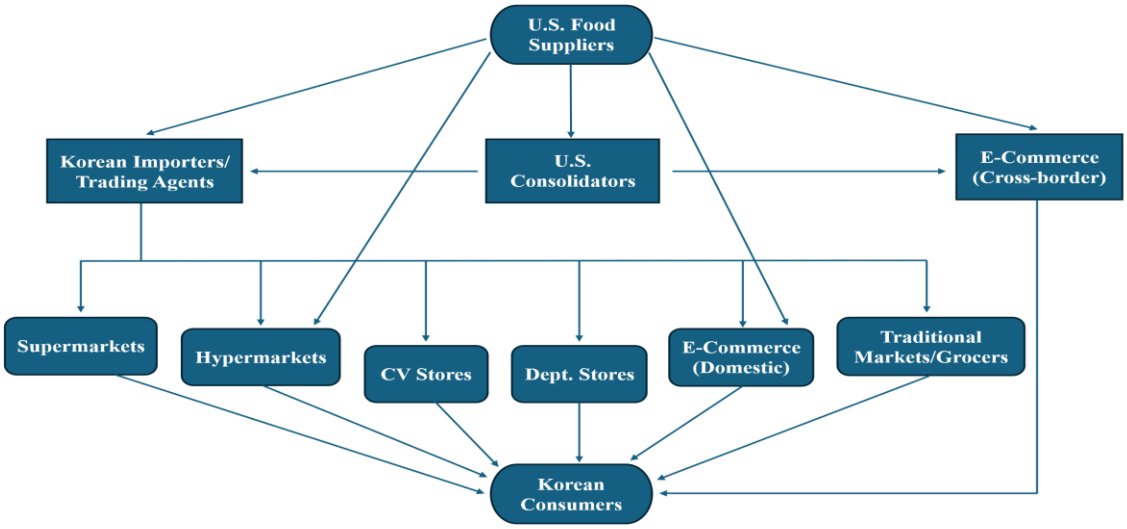
The Department of Commerce's Country Commercial Guide also contains useful information on the Korean market. Socio-economic data can be found in the CIA Factbook.

ATO Seoul also offers various marketing tools and trade facilitation help to U.S. suppliers and also offers information about the Korea market on its website (www.atoseoul.com), including:

- Annual reports and periodic briefs on key products and industries
- Korean agricultural import data by 4-digit HS product classification (monthly spreadsheets)
- Local media food news clippings and contact information for industry organizations

Suppliers should also ensure their products meet Korean food regulations and standards. For assistance in identifying or resolving regulatory issues, please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) Seoul.

Market Structure



Company Profiles and Top Korean Retailers

The following tables show major retailers under each segment of Korean food retail market.

Table 2. Korea: Top E-Commerce Retailers (2024)

Company / Site Name	Sales Value (Billion K/won)	Website
Coupang Co. / Coupang	41,290	coupang.com
Naver Co. / Naver Shopping	10,738	naver.com
Kakao Co. / Kakao Shopping	7,874	store.kakao.com
Kurly Corp.	2,196	kurly.com
Ebay Korea, Inc. / Gmarket & Auction	961	gmarket.co.kr auction.co.kr
SK Planet Co. / 11th Street	866	11st.com

Source: Company IR reports, company internet homepages, Euromonitor passports – Retail E-Commerce.

Table 3. Korea: Top TV Shopping Channels with Online Mall (2024)

Company / Channel Name	Annual Sales (Billion K/Won)	Website
CJ O Shopping Co. / CJ Onstyle	1,451	cjonstyle.com
Hyundai Home Shopping Network Corp. / Hmall	1,093	hmall.com
GS Retail Co. / GS Shop	1,052	gsshop.co.kr
Lotte Home Shopping Co. / Lotte Home Shopping	925	lotteimall.com
NS Shopping Co. / NSmall	610	nsmall.com
Home & Shopping Co. / Home & Shopping	437	hnsmall.com
Shinsegae Home Shopping Co. / Shinsegae Shopping	270	Shinsegaetvshopping.com

Source: Company IR reports, company internet homepages, media news articles.

Table 4. Korea: Top Retailers with Offline Stores (2024)

Segment	Company / Brand	Store #
Grocery Supermarkets	Nonghyup Hanaro Yutong Co. / Hanaro Mart	2,140
	GS Retail Co. / GS The Fresh	531
	Homeplus Co. / Home Plus Express	413
	Lotte Shopping Co. / Lotte Super	352
	EMART, Inc. / No Brand	250
	EMART, Inc. / EMART Everyday	242
Hypermarkets	EMART, Inc. / EMART	153
	HomePlus Co. / HomePlus	127
	Lotte Shopping Co. / Lotte Mart	111
	EMART, Inc. / Traders Wholesale Club	22
	COSTCO Wholesale / COSTCO	19
Convenience Stores	BGF Retail Co. / CU	18,458
	GS Retail Co. / GS25	18,112
	Korea Seven Co. / Seven Eleven	12,152
	EMART, Inc. / EMART24	5,938
Department Stores	Lotte Shopping Co. / Lotte Dept. Store	32
	Shinsegae Co. / Shinsegae Dept. Store	14
	Hyundai Dept. Co. / Hyundai Dept. Store	14
	E Land Retail Co. / New Core Dept. Store	12
	Hanwha Galleria / Galleria Dept. Store	5
Organic Grocery Stores	Chorocmaeul Co. / Chorocmaeul	313
	OASIS Corp. / OASIS Market	60
	Pulmuone Co. / ORGA Whole Foods	8
Health & Beauty Stores	CJ Olive Networks Co. / Olive Young	1,371
	Shinsegae Co. / CHICOR	19

Source: Company IR reports, company internet homepages, media news articles.

Import Procedures

U.S. suppliers seeking entry into Korea should first conduct preliminary research to determine if there is a potential market for their products in Korea. The research should cover key marketing and regulatory issues including consumption trends, size of the market and competition, major distribution channels, import tariffs and local taxes, and labeling and food additive restrictions.

Imported products must meet all local rules to enter the market and suppliers need to check if their products conform to the guidelines. The Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Country Report and FAIRS Export Certificate Report provide an overview of relevant standards and regulations. For assistance in identifying or resolving regulatory issues, please refer to the Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) Seoul.

For assistance in reaching out to established Korean import distributors and retail buyers, please contact the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Seoul. ATO Seoul offers various marketing tools and trade facilitation supports to U.S. suppliers on its website (www.atoseoul.com), including:

- GAIN Reports: Routine and voluntary reports on key products, industries, and regulatory issues published by FAS Seoul.
- Buyer Alerts: Your product/business offer will be announced via e-mail to pertinent Korean buyers registered in ATO Seoul's Industry Contact Database. The service is free of charge and is limited to U.S. origin food and agricultural products only.

Exporters of meat products should also check export requirements on the Food Safety Inspection Service Export Library. Sanitary and phytosanitary requirements can be found on the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) IRegs website. Exporters should also consult closely with their Korean importers to ensure they meet the latest regulations.

Distribution Channels and Major Segments

In Korea, grocery supermarkets have long been the leading retail channel, followed by online-only retailers, hypermarkets, convenience stores, department stores, and other retailers (including independent grocers, specialty retailers, traditional wet markets, duty-free stores). However, over the past couple of years, the landscape of Korean retail industry's food sales has experienced dynamic shifts, driven by socio-economic and demographic changes in the country.

Convenience Stores: The share of convenience stores continued to rise within grocery retailers. Korea's aging society and growing number of single-member households have impacted various distribution channels including convenience stores. Consumers in smaller households tended to purchase minimum quantities of grocery items from convenience stores in their vicinity and the leading companies of this channel started to expand their food offerings such as meal kits, rice, fresh produce, and even seafood in their stores over the recent couple of years. The channel saw a 5 percent annual growth in its grocery food sales in 2024.

Non-store (Online-only) Retailers: For online retailers of Korea, food related items including food, agricultural products, and food delivery services became the largest category, occupying about 33 percent of total sales in 2024, a 7 percent year-over-year growth. According to Euromonitor International's retail data, foods e-commerce was the second largest grocery retail channel following convenience stores and followed by supermarkets, and hypermarkets. As mobile grocery shopping becomes a new normal and as same-day or next-dawn delivery service operated by major companies increase, online sales of grocery items are expected to grow in the coming years.

Supermarkets: Thanks to the rapid delivery services to consumers' doorstep within an hour, grocery supermarkets just around the corner are keeping their food sales steady through satisfying consumers who have difficulty visiting the store in person and who want to purchase wide variety of grocery items in small portions. According to the Korea Statistics retail industry data, this channel showed a 5 percent growth of food sales year-over-year in 2024.

Hypermarkets: In 2024, although losing consumers to convenience stores, online shopping channels, and grocery supermarkets in the neighborhood, this channel saw an increase of 2 percent in food sales even with fewer stores after the cost-cutting closures in certain areas of the country. The increase is rather due to price inflation than an actual increase in grocery shopping at hypermarkets. Major players

of this channel carried out large-scale store renovations to improve consumers' shopping experience and focus their investment on stores with competitive locations.[4]

Department Stores: Though overall department store sales are sluggish due to the economic downturn, food sales are actually continuing to grow. According to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, the share of food sales in this channel has steadily increased over the last three years, reaching 12.7 percent in 2022, 13.2 percent in 2023, and 13.5 percent in 2024. This demonstrates how food departments have become a key driver of department store sales in general. In 2024, department stores' food sales were 4 percent up from the previous year while non-food sales remaining flat. This is the result of major department stores' efforts upgrading their food halls and creating diverse food zones with premium delis and sweet parks, on larger floor area. In addition to the large food hall, pop-up stores offering a variety of contents attract both domestic and foreign tourists to the department store food sections. This large-scale strengthening of the food sector's competitiveness has contributed to increased sales by increasing customers' desire to visit the store in-person.

Retail Sector Trends

Health and Wellness: With the rise of health awareness following the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining a healthy lifestyle has become an essential trend for Korean consumers of all generations. Also, as Korea is expected to enter a super-aging society any time soon, living a long and healthy life is emerging as a paramount value for consumers. Among younger generations, slow-aging is a trendy health management approach that aims to maintain physical and mental function for a longer span. This trend is driving the growth of foods with less refined carbohydrates, less sugar contents, and less salt to protect the consumers from lifestyle diseases. According to market research by Embrain Company, the estimated sales of food products related to slow-aging diets, such as grains, salads, and protein products sold in hypermarkets and convenience stores for the first quarter of 2025 increased 17.4 percent from the previous quarter. In a similar vein, the number of consumers seeking protein-enriched food to strengthen their immunity and improve basic physical strength has increased and related products targeting different age groups has also emerged as a hot category for food industry.

Convenience and Time Efficiency: Korean households are getting smaller. In 2024, the average number of family members per household was only 2.25. In line with the increase of small households and with most of the members in smaller households working outside, the trend of increasing time efficiency and securing more personal time is gaining momentum. In terms of food at home, convenience has become the key and demands for processed and small-portioned cooking ingredients, meal kits, and meals ready-to-eat have steadily grown for the past several years. This is shown as increased sales of grocery items from convenience stores in the neighborhood. As more and more consumers seek work-life balance and longer leisure time, it will become increasingly important for food retailers to provide solutions that enhance consumers' time efficiency, still offering a reasonable price.

Shopping as a Pleasure: As stated in the department store channel trend, growing numbers of consumers value their grocery shopping and dining hours as personalized experiences and extraordinary fun, finding little joy away from their busy life and spending generously on their tastes. Young consumers are increasingly seeking fun and enjoyment in their consumption moment and they want to

[4] Euromonitor International, Retail in South Korea, March 2025

be recognized on social media by sharing unique and fun consumer experiences. Leveraging digital trends and social network marketing tools to encourage voluntary consumer participation has become important. Consequently, distributors and manufacturers are actively interacting with consumers who share experiences and create digital contents, moving beyond simple consumption, to encourage other consumers to visit stores and expand sales.

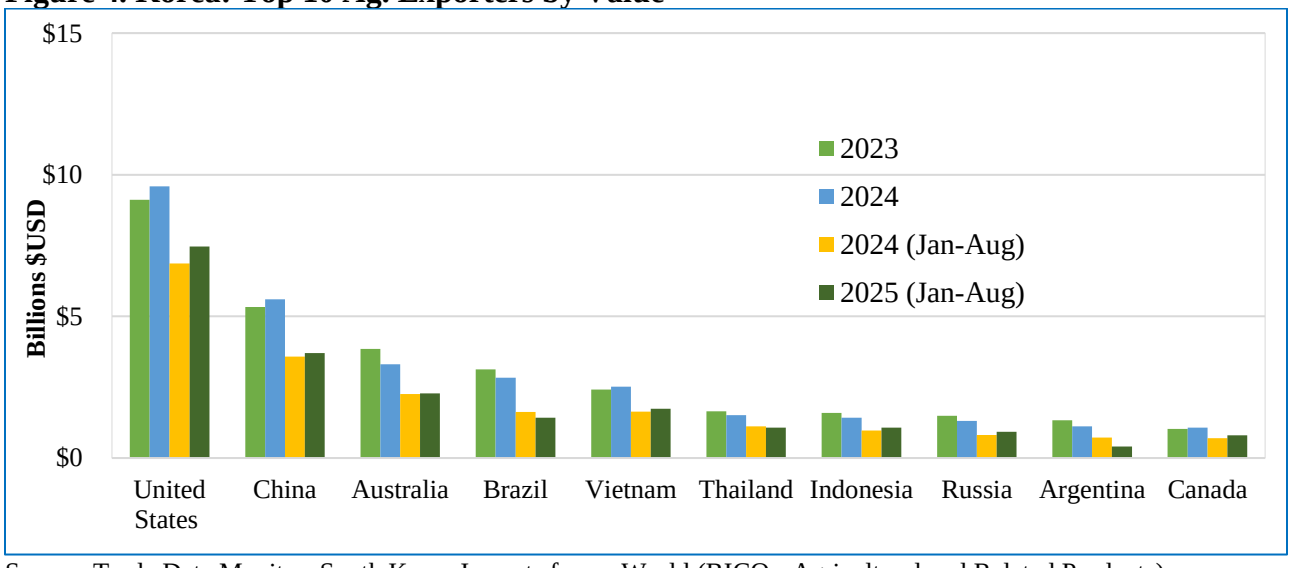
Value for Money: In an economic recession, consumers tend to spend rationally and seek practical benefits, and Korean consumers across generations began to think over products based on the value and functionality for money. According to a market analysis conducted by Nielsen IQ (NIQ) comparing retail sales from the past year (April 2024 to March 2025) with the same period a year ago (April 2023 to March 2024), 77 percent of Korean consumers responded that they 'think positively' of private brand (PB) products as a substitute for general brands, and the number of respondents who purchase PB because 'the quality is good for the price' increased compared to the previous year. The result of analysis suggests that consumers' expectations on PB products are expanding from simply-low-price to quality satisfactions. This shift in consumer perception is leading to positive market performance. While the overall offline consumer goods sales declined 1.2 percent year-over-year, private brands actually grew 1.6 percent.

Section 3: Competition

In 2024, Korea imported more than $45 billion of agricultural and related products from the world and the United States was the biggest supplier taking 21 percent of the market. Other key competing countries included China (12 percent), Australia (7 percent), Brazil (6.3 percent), and Vietnam (5.6 percent).

Figure 4 shows Korea's import of food and agricultural products for the last two years and the first 8 months of 2024 and 2025.

Figure 4. Korea: Top 10 Ag. Exporters by Value



Source: Trade Data Monitor, South Korea Imports from _World (BICO - Agricultural and Related Products)

Out of the $45 billion worth food and agricultural products that Korea imported from the world, the largest category was consumer-oriented products ($19 billion), accounting for 42 percent of all Korean agricultural imports. Most imported consumer-oriented agricultural products are selling through the grocery retail sector and about 32 percent of the total consumer-oriented agricultural imports came from the United States, the largest supplier.

ATO Seoul's website continuously provides up-to-date information about Korea's food and agricultural imports and market competition:

- Korea's Agricultural Import Statistics: monthly updates on Korean agricultural imports (four-digit HS product code level). Both U.S. export data (FOB value) and Korean import data (CIF value) are provided.
- Korea's Agricultural Import Trends Presentation: quarterly summary of competition between the U.S. and competitors in key products.

Section 4: Best Product Prospects

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World

Beef (frozen/chilled) was the number one consumer ready product Korea imported from all sources last year, followed by food preparations, pork, coffee, cheese and curd, preserved fruits and nuts, and baked products. **Table 5** shows top 10 consumer ready food products Korea imported from the world and leading suppliers as of 2024.

Table 5. Korea: Top 10 Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products and Competition

Product Category/HS Code	Gross Imports 2024 ($ million)	1st Supplier (Share)	2nd Supplier (Share)	USA Rank (Share)
Beef, Frozen/HS0202	2,450	USA (51%)	Australia (41%)	1st (51%)
Food Preparations NESOI[5]/HS2106	2,171	USA (49%)	Germany (11%)	1st (49%)
Pork, Fresh, Chilled or Frozen/HS0203	2,088	USA (32%)	Spain (17%)	1st (32%)
Beef, Fresh or Chilled/HS0201	1,266	USA (72%)	Australia (28%)	1st (72%)
Coffee/HS0901	1,243	Brazil (21%)	Colombia (13%)	3rd (11%)
Cheese and Curd/HS0406	650	USA (38%)	N.Z. (16%)	1st (38%)
Other Preserved Fruits & Nuts/HS2008	541	China (30%)	Vietnam (24%)	3rd (16%)
Bread, Pastry, Cakes/HS1905	510	China (19%)	Malaysia (15%)	3rd (11%)
Wine/HS2204	462	France (38%)	USA (17%)	2nd (17%)
Poultry Meat & Offals/HS0207	455	Brazil (78%)	Thailand (18%)	4th (1%)

Source: Korean government import data released by Korea Int'l Trade Association (www.kita.net). CIF value.

[5] NESOI: Not Elsewhere Specified or Included

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States

Beef (frozen/chilled) again was the top consumer ready product Korea imported from the United States in 2024, followed by pork, soup and food preparations (including protein concentrate, drink base, sugar syrup, coffee creamer, and flavors), cheese and curd, fresh fruit, tree nuts, processed vegetable, coffee, processed fruit, and processed meat products.

For the first half of 2025, Korean imports of dairy products, frozen fruit, frozen vegetable, tree nuts, and beer from the United States increased compared to the same period last year.

The following **Table 6** shows the top 15 U.S. consumer-ready food products exported to Korea in high value for the last three years.

Table 6. Top 15 USA Consumer-Oriented Products Exported to Korea ($1,000)

Rank	Product Description	CY 2022	CY 2023	CY 2024	Growth '24/ '23
1	**Beef & Beef Products**	2,711,480	2,102,739	**2,207,956**	5%
2	**Pork & Pork Products**	597,159	621,024	**716,292**	15%
3	**Soup & Other Food Preparations**	481,069	362,243	**512,677**	42%
4	**Dairy Products**	569,478	320,374	**385,288**	20%
5	**Fresh Fruit**	293,453	331,126	**375,359**	13%
6	**Tree Nuts**	269,435	269,453	**295,652**	10%
7	**Processed Vegetables**	182,991	170,490	**172,348**	1%
8	**Coffee, Roasted and Extracts**	146,387	119,486	**129,528**	8%
9	**Processed Fruit**	96,295	88,179	**108,034**	23%
10	**Meat Products NESOI**	58,933	85,710	**67,186**	-22%
11	**Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta**	77,689	68,775	**63,789**	-7%
12	**Wine & Related Products**	89,510	67,765	**52,850**	-22%
13	**Chocolate & Cocoa Products**	61,854	48,314	**52,023**	8%
14	**Dog & Cat Food**	61,798	42,410	**45,929**	8%
15	**Condiments & Sauces**	38,951	41,164	**41,301**	- %

Source: FAS/USDA/GATS/BICO – Standard Query, Compiled by ATO Seoul. FOB value.

Products Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

In 2024, sales of vegetables under HS0704 showed the highest annual growth due to the increased demand for cauliflower, cabbage, and kimchi cabbage. The U.S. products such as fruit juice, shelled eggs, and avocado came into Korea in high values showing strong growth from the year before. As Korean consumers look for more diverse food products serving their health and wellness needs, the U.S. fresh produce and food products with natural ingredients have a good potential in the market.

The following **Table 7** shows 10 imported products with the highest growth rates in 2024.

Table 7. Korea: Top 10 Fastest Growing Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products[6]

Product Category/HS Code (4 digits)	Gross Imports 2024 ($ million)	Growth from 2023	Imports from U.S. ($1,000)	U.S. Growth from 2023
Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kohlrabi, Kale, etc./HS0704	27	87%	382	-36%
Vinegar/HS2209	37	53%	6,163	-1%
Birds Eggs, Shelled/HS0408	20	40%	6,270	55%
Lettuce, Fresh/Chilled/HS0705	30	38%	3,690	-8%
Dates, Figs, Pineapple, Avocado, etc./HS0804	302	37%	2,370	29%
Other Fruit, Fresh/HS0810	272	33%	16,244	-6%
Prepared Foods – Roasted/Swollen/HS1904	69	29%	9,030	-17%
Carrots, Turnips, Beetroot, etc./HS0706	108	26%	0	-100%
Bananas/HS0803	382	25%	2	-50%
Fruit Juices/HS2009	283	25%	28,607	5%

Source: Korean government import data released by Korea Int'l Trade Association (www.kita.net). CIF value.

(U.S.) Products Not Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

Small Packaged Olive Oil: During the first half of 2025, olive oil products for direct consumption have become very popular among health-conscious consumers in Korea. Importers and distributors directly worked with foreign suppliers to develop individual packages of extra virgin olive oil in capsules or stick packets, marketing the products as an essential daily dose for cellular health and slow-aging. As a

[6] Listing is limited to top 10 growth products that Korean imports were $10 million or larger.

tailored product for campers or single-person households, olive oil packed in sachet is also getting popular in Korea. The following photos are some samples of products predominantly imported from Western European countries, such as Spain and Italy, being sold in Korea.

Photos (from left): Kakao Shopping, Naver Shopping, G Market Mobile Shopping

(U.S.) Products Not Present in Market due to Significant Barriers

Fresh Blueberries Not Produced in the State of Oregon: Korea still maintains restrictions on the state of origin for imported U.S. fresh blueberries. As of September 2025, only commercially produced blueberries from orchards registered for export to Korea located in Oregon are eligible for export to Korea. Korean consumers' awareness and demand on the U.S. fresh blueberries is solid but considering the Oregon blueberry's harvest season and short export window, there remains a limit for the market to grow. Export eligibility of fresh blueberries grown in other states such as California, Washington, Georgia, and Michigan will help importers and distributors extend the selling period of U.S. fresh blueberries in Korea.

Section 5: Key Contacts and Further Information

Host Country Government

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS)
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE)

USDA Cooperators, SRTG, State Offices and AMCHAM in Korea

USDA Cooperators in Korea
U.S. State Regional Trade Groups (SRTG)
U.S. State Offices in Korea
American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM)

U.S. Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service Seoul (APHIS)
Address: Room 303, Leema Building, 42 Jongro 1-gil, Jongro-gu, Seoul, Korea
Phone: +82-2 725-5495 E-mail: yunhee.kim@usda.gov

Agricultural Trade Office Seoul (ATO) Address: Room 303, Leema Building, 42 Jongro 1-gil, Jongro-gu, Seoul, Korea http://www.atoseoul.com	Phone: +82-2 6951-6848 Email: atoseoul@usda.gov
Agricultural Affairs Office, Seoul (AAO) Address: U.S. Embassy, 188 Sejong-daero Jongro-gu, Seoul, Korea https://kr.usembassy.gov/agricultural-affairs/	Phone: +82-2 397-4297 Email: agseoul@usda.gov

Attachments:

No Attachments