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Prepared By: Marcel Pinckaers

Approved By: Christopher Riker

Report Highlights:

The turnover of the Dutch retail sector was valued at €45.1 billion (\$47.4 billion) in 2021. The sector is relatively consolidated, with the two largest food retailers controlling 58 percent of the market. Consumers are increasingly looking for sustainable products, products that are healthy and nutritious, and convenience products, and, as a result, will continue to buy more plant-based foods. Sales of private label products as well as sales at discount outlets are expected to increase due to the rising prices of food products. Moreover, online shopping is expected to increase in popularity, with consumers continuing to utilize home delivery services for their groceries, and the market share of speed delivery services is expected to continue to grow as well. Finally, food retailers will continue to invest in innovative foodservice concepts at their supermarkets in order to attract customers to their physical stores.

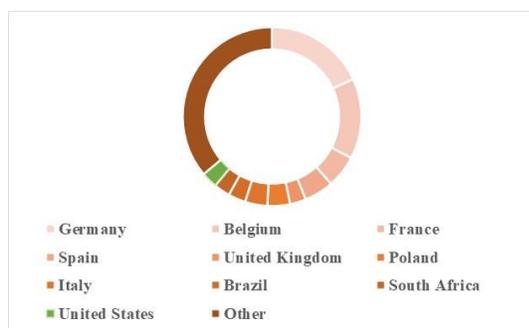
Market Fact Sheet: The Netherlands

Executive Summary:

Although the Netherlands is a small country geographically, it is the gateway for U.S. products into the European Union (EU). It is also the largest importing country within the EU and continues to be the second largest exporter of agricultural products in the world.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products:

Products from other EU Member States lead Dutch imports of consumer-oriented products. In 2021, the United States was the tenth largest supplier of these products to the Netherlands, with imports valued at almost \$1.5 billion.



Source: Trade Data Monitor

Food Processing Industry:

Over 7,340 food companies in the Netherlands generated net sales of \$88 billion in 2021. The industry supplies 146,000 jobs in the Netherlands and the number of food companies continues to grow due to the growing number of small food companies (with less than 10 employees).

Food Retail Industry:

The Dutch retail sector is consolidated, employs almost 300,000 people, and operates 4,500 stores. This industry profited from the closure of many HRI-Foodservice outlets and its turnover for 2021 is forecasted at \$47.4 billion. Consumers demand variety, fresh, and convenient products at competitive prices. The market share of on-line shopping is estimated at 7 percent in 2021.

Foodservice – HRI Industry:

After a decline of 37 percent in 2020, the foodservice industry's turnover for 2021 is forecasted to rebound to \$13.9 billion (up by 37 percent). For much of 2020 and 2021, bars, cafés, and restaurants, had to temporarily close their doors to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus (with takeout and delivery keeping some restaurants afloat).

Quick Facts CY2021

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products, total:
\$50.6 billion

List of Top 10 Growth Products in the Netherlands (imported from the World):

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Cocoa beans | 6. Bananas |
| 2. Food preparations | 7. Baked goods |
| 3. Fats and oils | 8. Ethyl alcohol |
| 4. Wines | 9. Berries |
| 5. Avocados | 10. Coffee |

Food Industry by Channels 2021, in \$ billion:

Consumer-Oriented Products Imports	\$50.6
Consumer-Oriented Products Exports	\$94.6
Agricultural & Related Products Imports	\$103.3
Agricultural & Related Products Exports	\$140.9
Food Industry	\$88.0
Food Retail	\$47.4
Food Service	\$13.9

Top 10 Food Retailers, Market Share:

1. Albert Heijn	35.9%	6. Dirk/Deka	5.1%
2. Jumbo	21.8%	7. Coop	3.9%
3. Lidl	10.7%	8. Hoogvliet	2.0%
4. Plus	6.5%	9. Deen	1.5%
5. Aldi	5.2%	10. SPAR	1.2%

GDP/Population:

Population: 17.5 million
GDP: \$812 billion
GDP per capita: \$46,411

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges:

Strengths: U.S. producers are professional, offer great variety, and deliver products with a consistent quality. U.S. farmers have a good story to tell about sustainability, farm to table supply chains, and their heritage. U.S. products more expensive. Some U.S. food products suffer from a negative perception among Dutch consumers due to misinformation.

Weakness: Shipping time & costs, import tariffs, limited access to available containers makes U.S. products more expensive. Some U.S. food products suffer from a negative perception among Dutch consumers due to misinformation.

Opportunities: There is a growing demand for food products with a special claim and sustainable production method and products that are healthy and nutritious.

Threats: There is fierce competition on price, quality, uniqueness, and innovation from other EU member states and from third countries that have negotiated lower tariff rates, such as Canada.

Data and Information Sources: Trade Data Monitor, industry experts, company websites

Contact: FAS The Hague, agthehague@fas.usda.gov

SECTION I. MARKET SUMMARY

Overall Business Climate

The fundamental strengths of the Dutch economy continue to be its stable political climate, highly developed financial sector, strategic location, well-educated and productive labor force, and high-quality physical and communications infrastructure. According to the latest economic outlook of the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), the most important economic consequence for the Netherlands, as a direct result of the crisis in the Ukraine, is higher energy prices. The additional increase in energy prices comes on top of an already high inflation rate. In its Central Economic Plan (CEP) published on March 9, 2022, the CPB projects an inflation rate of 5.2 percent for 2022. Additional information about rising energy prices, purchasing power, and unemployment can be found on the website of the CPB, <https://www.cpb.nl/en/forecasts>.

Dutch Food Retail Market

In 2021, supermarkets continued to benefit from the closure of many HRI-Foodservice outlets, as part of the government's measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The record turnover of the Dutch food retail industry of 2020 rose by another 2 percent in 2021 to €45.1 billion (\$47.4¹ billion). In 2020, the turnover of the industry grew by almost nine percent, the biggest increase in years (for more, see the [2021 Netherlands Retail Report](#)). The top two food retailers in the Netherlands, Albert Heijn and Jumbo, had a market share of almost 57.7 percent in 2021 (56.5 percent in 2020). The market share held by German discounters, Aldi and Lidl, combined at 16.5 percent last year, <https://www.distrifood.nl/food-data/marktaandeelen>.

There are an estimated 4,500 food retail outlets in the Netherlands accounting for almost 300,000 jobs. Roughly 75 percent of all food retail outlets are full-service supermarkets, operating on floor space between 500 and 1,500 square meters and located downtown in cities or residential areas. Retailers with full-service supermarkets have responded to the need of the Dutch to have these supermarkets close to their homes. The remaining 25 percent, and growing, mainly includes convenience or 'on the go' stores including *SPAR City*, *Jumbo City*, *COOP Vandaag*, and *AH To Go*, located near office buildings, schools/universities, train/metro stations, and high traffic areas in the city centers. The Netherlands traditionally has only a few superstores like *Albert Heijn XL* and *Jumbo Foodmarkt* which are often conveniently located in shopping malls or industrial parks.

Market Dynamics

Sustainable Food Products

Dutch food retailers prefer to source food products which are either produced sustainably or obtained in a sustainable manner. Wageningen University and Research (WUR) annually publishes the "[Monitor Duurzaam Voedsel](#)" report, which provides an overview of consumer spending on sustainable food in the Netherlands. The most recent figures available are for 2020. Total consumer spending on foods certified as sustainable grew by seven percent in 2020 to more than €8.2 billion (\$8.6 billion). The share of sustainable food compared to total spending on food grew to 16 percent in 2020. Sustainable food products are recognizable to consumers when they have a quality mark. Products with the 'Better Life' (Dutch: Beter Leven) quality mark were sold the most (€3.0 billion) followed by products labeled organic (€1.6 billion) and product with the 'UTZ Certified' quality mark (€1.4 billion).

¹ \$1 = €0.95

Sustainable food is expected to remain one of the fastest growth sectors in the Dutch food industry in the year to come, and the consumption of certified sustainable products is expected to continue to increase. A wider range of certified products and changing consumer preferences — paying more attention to sustainability and health — explains the growth in demand for these products. Most of the spending takes place in the supermarket, mainly due to a wider availability of sustainable products.

Private Label Products

[Nielsen](#) figures indicate that the market share for private labels was strong at 35 percent or higher in almost all European countries in 2021. In the lead were Switzerland, Belgium, the UK, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Germany -- where roughly every second product sold (based on volume) is a retailer brand. The Netherlands' market share increased to 49.8 percent. Several retailers in the Dutch market have developed two private labels: one focused on price and the other on enhanced quality. Consumers are discovering the value-for-money that private label brands are offering and that they can be an economical alternative to A-branded products.

Private labels have proved to fare well both in years of recession and in more prosperous times. The profitability of private label products has fueled retailers' interest to offer more of them (e.g., gluten-free, healthy, and organic) and move into new areas for private labels, such as bakery goods and cosmetics. The largest trade show in the world for the private label industry, the Amsterdam Private Label Manufacturers Association (PLMA) fair, is held annually in Amsterdam. The next edition is scheduled for May 23-24, 2023. Please contact agthehague@usda.gov if you are a U.S. interested party and require more information about the show.

Online Shopping

The market for shopping online (as a percentage of the total food retail) continues to grow fast and was estimated at 7 percent in 2021, or €3.2 billion. For 2025, the Central Bureau of Food Products (Centraal Bureau van Levensmiddelenhandel, CBL) expects this number to reach ten percent. Almost all supermarket chains are active online. Products ordered online can be delivered to your house or can be collected at one of the 1,000 pick-up points in the Netherlands.

[Picnic](#) is the only Dutch supermarket that exclusively operates online. Its market share was estimated at 25 percent in 2021 and its introduction in 2015 further boosted the online sales of groceries in the Netherlands. More consumers started buying their groceries online, driven by COVID-19 measures, and many have continued to do so. Of the Dutch consumers who shop online, consumers in the age group of 18-44 are most likely to do so, driven by saving time and money. Consumers are likely to continue to shop online if they have a high-quality online experience and reliable delivery of the purchased goods.

Until 2020, Albert Heijn, Jumbo, and Picnic were the leaders in the on-line shopping market. However, with the introduction of the speed delivery service (Dutch: flitsbezorgers), a significant change in the market may be on its way. Speed delivery services are online supermarkets where groceries are delivered within ten to 20 minutes. When placing an order, usually via an app, the order is prepared in a so-called dark store. The delivery person, usually a rider, picks up the order in the dark store and delivers it to the customer. The leading speed delivery services in the Netherlands are [Gorillas](#) and [Flink](#), followed by [Getir](#) and [Zapp](#). Earlier this year, the Netherlands' second largest supermarket chain, Jumbo, started a partnership with Gorillas to increase its on-line shopping and instant delivery market shares. Currently, 15 percent of Dutch consumers make use of speed delivery services. Especially young

(age group 18-34) male consumers like to order from speed delivery services because of its timeliness and convenience.

Industry Consolidation is Blurring Boundaries

Consumers are no longer shopping at traditional times and or locations, particularly in Dutch cities. Breakfast is increasingly bought on the way to work. During lunch breaks, people decide what they want to eat for lunch and buy it on the spot. Dinner is more often bought on the way home. As a result, innovative convenience stores, either small independent or part of a larger chain, are opening near metro/train stations, schools, office buildings, and shopping malls. For expansion, food retailers are now looking at other, perhaps less-conventional locations that attract a lot of foot traffic, including hospitals, schools, and office buildings, or near highways, train stations, and airports.

Price Increase

In the latter part of 2021, the food industry was confronted with a large increase in production costs, ranging from agricultural raw materials to packaging materials, transport (container), and energy. Prices increased by as much as 40 percent for some raw materials, while energy costs increased by as much as 85 percent. Packaging materials, such as paper and plastic, were six and 12 percent, respectively, more expensive than pre-COVID-19 levels, and buyers of food ingredients were confronted with rising prices for sea freight. The above-referenced factors explain why various food manufacturers have had to implement price increases for their products.

[Distrifood](#) reports that, as a direct result, food retailers in the Netherlands have increased prices by an estimated 15 percent compared to those last year. Research company [GfK](#) compared retail prices of 55 products in May 2022 with those in September last year. The conclusion was that the costs of the products in the basket totaled €100 last year compared to €115,60 in May of this year. For the research, GfK choose the most popular items such as bread, milk, and butter, from both A-brands as well as private labels in nine different supermarkets. Prices have particularly increased for the following products: butter, margarine, minced meat, fruit preserves, pasta, and pork.

The aforementioned development, combined with lower consumer trust in the economy, are expected to have an influence on consumer spending. [Distrifood](#) reported earlier this year that the market share of price-oriented food retail outlets has gone up during the first quarter of 2022. Consumers are turning to hard discount supermarkets because of the increased prices for food. At the same time, consumers are more often choosing private label products instead of A-brands for the same reason. They are also visiting more supermarkets in their search for the lowest price. The number of people using food banks has also grown by 15 percent.

Plant-Based Diets

Another growing trend in the Netherlands, according to a Euromonitor[®], is the rising interest in plant-based diets, supported not only by an increase in the number of vegetarians or vegans in the country, but also a general shift in consumer lifestyles. This health trend is encouraging an increasing number of consumers to adopt a flexitarian attitude and reduce the amount of animal-based products that they consume. Sustainability, concerns over animal welfare, and health trends are driving this movement, which continues to benefit sales of meat substitutes. Meat-free alternative diets are moving into the mainstream and retailers are placing these products on the chilled processed meat aisle, inviting consumers to try the meat-free alternative.

Meat Consumption Under Pressure

Eight in ten Dutch adults report they do not eat meat every day and 45 percent report they eat meat a maximum of four times a week, according to national statistics agency [CBS](#). Nearly one-third of adults say they reduced their meat consumption. In total, 95 percent of Dutch adults still eat meat, three percent eat fish (not meat), two percent are vegetarians, and almost half a percent avoid animal products altogether. The CBS also found that people with a university degree are more likely to be vegetarian or pescatarian – 10 percent of university graduates do not eat meat at all – and women are more likely to be vegetarian than men.

Health and Well-Being

Consumers are becoming more aware of and are more concerned about the effect foods may have on their health and well-being. There is a trend towards a healthier lifestyle in Western countries. The following U.S. industries have all benefitted from this trend: healthy food snacks, tree nuts, so-called super fruits, seafood, products with special certification, and pulses. Consumers are looking for and finding more information on healthier living, including from influencers who are rapidly gaining power in persuading consumers. Food retailers play a crucial role as well, as they market food products to create, anticipate, and meet consumers’ needs.

Nutrition Labeling



In order to make it easier for consumers to make healthier food choices, the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport announced that the Nutri-Score would become the new voluntary front-of-pack nutrition label of choice in the Netherlands. The label’s introduction, however, has faced delays as criticism has arisen. Some Dutch scientists have argued that Nutri-Score ratings do not always align with national dietary guidelines, that the label can be misleading,

and that it can undermine consumer trust, more information about Nutri-Score can be found in [NL2022-0014: Nutri-Score Labeling Takes Hold in the Netherlands](#).

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

<i>U.S. Supplier Strengths & Market Opportunities</i>	<i>U.S. Supplier Weaknesses and Competitive Threats</i>
Importers of products targeting supermarkets have had good experiences working with U.S. suppliers because they are professional and deliver products with a consistent quality. U.S. companies also have a great variety of innovative products to offer.	The Dutch are price-conscious consumers. Transatlantic transportation is costly which adds to the price. Products from the United States are subject to import tariffs. Suppliers from other EU Member States have a competitive advantage on tariffs, transportation costs, and transportation time.
Growing demand for food products with a special claim and sustainable production methods. U.S. farmers have a good story to tell (provenance) about sustainability, their supply chain (farm-to-table) and their State/regional heritage.	Growing demand for single-portion packaged food products. U.S. companies tend to manufacture packaged food in larger packages. Transatlantic transportation takes time which can negatively impact the remaining shelf life of U.S. products.
Growing demand for new products,	Some products fabricated by U.S. food

innovative food concepts, and international cuisine. U.S. producers fabricate products that are innovative, often trend setting, and known for their strong brands.	producers suffer from a negative perception among Dutch consumers due to misinformation (e.g., local and small-scale is better) or an image issue (e.g., U.S. foodstuffs are unhealthy).
The Netherlands is the most important gateway for American products to the EU.	Beef that is not hormone-free, poultry, and products containing GMO derived ingredients (that are not EU approved) cannot be exported to the Netherlands.
Growing demand for functional, fresh, and processed food products that contribute to a healthier lifestyle.	The EU has several Free Trade Agreements that may advantage other 3 rd country competitors, including Canada and Mexico.
	Fierce competition on price, quality, uniqueness, and innovation.

Source: FAS/The Hague

SECTION II. ROAD MAP FOR MARKET ENTRY

U.S. exporters seeking to enter the Dutch marketplace have many advantages, as indicated in the above table. However, there are several challenges U.S. exporters must meet before exporting to the Dutch market.

Entry Strategy

Success in introducing your product into the Dutch market will depend mainly on your knowledge of the market and your ability to build relationships with knowledgeable and established importers. An importer knows the market, the trade barriers, and the required documentation. Prior to any exporting, invest in research that analyzes the Dutch food culture (e.g., consumer trends, purchase patterns, local flavors, prices, requirements, etc.). Once the product has been chosen, be aware that the competition will be fierce. There are tariff and non-tariff trade barriers that can complicate exporting to the Dutch market. The EU also has several Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) which may advantage other third country competitors. FAS/The Hague offers guidelines on business practices and import regulations and maintains lists of Dutch buyers and stands ready to help you. Please contact our office in The Hague by email at agthehague@usda.gov for additional information.

Market Structure

Figure 1. Distribution Channel Flow Diagram



Source: FAS/The Hague

Most supermarkets and superstores buy overseas food products and beverages via specialized importers. This is especially true for retail-ready consumer-oriented products like sauces, condiments, beverages, produce, confectionary, and snack products from overseas markets. In general, convenience stores operate on a much smaller scale and, in turn, often buy smaller quantities through wholesalers. Department stores also work either through specialized importers or sometimes buy directly from U.S.

exporters. Many imported intermediate and even some consumer-oriented products are often processed, mixed, or packed before being sold to the consumer. Products like tree nuts, bulk wines, and, in most cases, seafood and beef products fall into this category.

Retailers increasingly have their stores divided into different categories. For each category they will have two or three preferred suppliers who are responsible for supplying the full range of products within that category. This way, the retailer negotiates with just a handful of suppliers for produce, meat products, seafood, groceries, beverages, bakery products, etc. For the international specialty products (covering branded retail ready U.S. products) area within supermarkets, retailers usually work with only one or two specialized importers who are responsible for selecting products and filling those shelves.

Company Profiles

As described in Section I, the Dutch retail industry is rather consolidated; however, on the purchase side, the industry is even more consolidated since several smaller food retailers have joined forces. The following figures data will give you an overview of the different buying combinations in the Netherlands.

Table 2. Leading Buying Groups in the Netherlands

Purchase Group:	Market Share, percentage:	Name of retail formats:
Albert Heijn Provincialeweg 11, 1506 MA Zaandam www.ah.nl	35.9	Albert Heijn, AH XL, Albert.nl, AH To Go
Superunie Industrieweg 22B, 4153 BW Beesd www.superunie.nl	26.4	Plus, Deen, Coop, Hoogvliet, Spar, Boni-Markten, Boon Beheer, Detailresult Groep, Jan Linders, Distributie, Poiesz, Sligro, Dirk
Jumbo Groep Holding Rijksweg 15, 5462 CE, Veghel www.jumbo.com	21.8	Jumbo
Lidl Havenstraat 71, 1271 AD Huizen www.lidl.nl	10.7	Lidl
Aldi Holding Pascalweg 21, 4104 BE Culemborg www.aldi.com	5.2	Aldi

Source: <https://www.distrifood.nl/food-data/marktaandeelen>

Most of the food retail stores are full-service supermarkets. In addition, there are some department stores (including HEMA, Big Bazaar, Xenos, and Bijenkorf), convenience stores, gas markets (On the Run/Snack & Shop Shell Station, GO shops – the fresh way, Café Bonjour, and Wild Bean Café) and wholesalers (including Hanos, De Kweker, Sligro, and Makro) that all sell food products.

SECTION III. COMPETITION

In 2021, total Dutch imports of agricultural and related products were valued at \$103.2 billion. Imports from the United States totaled \$3.3 billion, up by two percent. The United States was the eighth largest supplier of consumer-oriented products to the Netherlands, after several EU Member States and Brazil. Total Dutch imports of consumer-oriented products (\$50.5 billion) were up by 11 percent, imports from the United States (\$1.5 billion) were up by nine percent, driven by higher imports of distilled spirits, bakery goods, wines, condiments and sauces, soup and other food preparations, and confectionary. The table below summarizes the competitive situation that U.S. suppliers face in the Dutch food retail market in terms of locally produced goods and imports (and their respective market shares). In addition, the strengths of supplying countries and the advantages and disadvantages of local suppliers are discussed.

Table 3. Netherlands' U.S. Market Share Versus Main Suppliers' Market Share in Consumer Oriented (U.S. exports), Million USD, 2021

Product Category (product code) Imports in \$ million	Main Suppliers, in percentage	Strengths of Key Supply Countries	Advantages and Disadvantages of Local Suppliers
Craft beer (HS2203) Total imports: \$593 From USA: \$6	1. Belgium 56 2. Germany 11 3. The U.K. 7 4. Poland 7 9. USA 1	Competition from neighboring countries, dominated by Belgium and Germany.	Strong demand for new flavors, funky labels, and innovative tastes.
Sweet potatoes (HS071420) Total imports: \$179 From USA: \$84	1. USA 47 2. Egypt 18 3. Belgium 6 4. The U.K. 4	Competition from Egypt, Spain, Honduras, South Africa, and China.	Supermarkets are increasingly selling fresh and processed sweet potatoes.
Condiments and sauces (Product group) Total imports: \$672 From USA: \$21	1. Germany 18 2. Belgium 14 3. The U.K. 9 4. Italy 8 11. USA 3	First four suppliers benefit from proximity and being in the EU market.	Demand for good quality and unique products.
Walnuts (HS080231) Total imports: \$13 From USA: \$5	1. Chile 45 2. USA 36 3. Germany 7 4. France 6	Competition from Chile, Germany, and France.	Growing demand from the snack industry. Walnuts benefit from their healthy reputation.
Ice cream (HS210500) Total imports: \$262 From USA: \$1	1. Belgium 38 2. Germany 21 3. France 9 12. USA 0.4	1, 2, 3, and 4 are close to the market and offer good quality products.	Demand for good quality and unique products.
Pistachios (HS080251) Total Imports: \$49 million	1. USA 83 2. Germany 16 3. Turkey 1	The U.S. dominates the international pistachios trade.	Growing demand from the snack industry. Pistachios benefit from their healthy image.

Snack food (Product group) Total imports: \$2,160 From USA: \$44	1. Belgium 2. Germany 3. France 4. The U.K. 10. USA	29 28 7 5 2	1, 2, and 3 are close to the market and offer good quality products.	Demand for branded, good quality, and unique products that have a story to tell.
Spices (Product group) Total imports: \$591 From USA: \$4	1. China 2. Indonesia 3. Madagascar 4. Germany 20. USA	20 9 9 8 1	Competition from countries in Asia.	Demand for new and good quality spices, including vanilla, anise, and cardamoms.

Source: Trade Data Monitor

SECTION IV. BEST PRODUCT PROSPECTS

A. U.S. Products Present in The Market That Have Good Sales Potential

- Nuts and dried fruits
- Fresh produce
- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
- (Super) Fruits containing high levels of antioxidants

B. Top Consumer-Oriented Products from the World

- Wine
- Beef
- Food preparations
- Grapes

C. Top Consumer-Oriented Products from the United States

- Food preparations
- Beef
- Almonds
- Pistachios

D. U.S. Products Not Present in Significant Quantities but Which Have Good Sales Potential

- Functional/free-from foods
- High value organic products
- Innovative sauces, condiments, and confectionary products

E. U.S. Products Not Present Because They Face Significant Barriers

- Poultry (sanitary procedures)
- Products with GMO ingredients, bleached flour etc.

SECTION V. POST CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

USDA - Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)/The Hague, the Netherlands

Contact: Marcel Pinckaers

John Adams Park 1, 2244 BZ Wassenaar, the Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0)70 310 2305 | E-mail: agthehague@usda.gov

Attachments:

No Attachments