

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** The 2020 Norwegian SMAK HOLDBAR Food and Beverage Show

**Country:** Norway

**Post:** The Hague

**Report Category:** Beverages, Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional, Snack Foods, Trade Show Evaluation, Special Certification - Organic/Kosher/Halal, Wine

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**Report Highlights:**

In March 2020, FAS/The Hague visited Norway's leading food and beverage show, SMAK/HOLDBAR, in Lillestrøm, Norway. SMAK is a truly Norwegian trade show predominantly focusing on foodservice-HRI buyers and, to a much lesser extent, retail buyers.

## General and Background Information:

The [SMAK/HOLDBAR](#) trade show, organized by U.S. based organizer Diversified, is the largest trade show in Norway that focuses on food and alcoholic beverages. Roughly a third of all exhibitors showcased non-food products, including machinery, equipment, interior fixtures, and design elements. The show is held every three years and the 2020 edition took place on March 3-6, 2020 at the [Norges Varemesse](#) (Norway Convention Center) in Lillestrøm, Norway. The event was visited by an estimated 30,000 visitors (predominantly from Norway) and attracted roughly 400 Norwegian exhibitors. The majority of visitors were from the HRI, or Horeca, industry. In many ways the show can be compared to shows like [Horecava](#) in the Netherlands and [Horeca Expo](#) in Belgium. Many of the visitors were Nordic buyers from smaller retail outlets, food processors, and E-commerce traders.

Picture 1: Norway Convention Center



Source: visitnorway.com

Picture 2: Branding SMAK 2020



Source: Smakmessen.no

## Overview:

Although a small market (with a population of 5.4 million), Norway has one of the highest per-capita GDPs in the world, an estimated \$75,000. This, in combination with the fact that Norway is highly dependent on imported food and beverages, makes it an interesting export market for U.S. exporters.

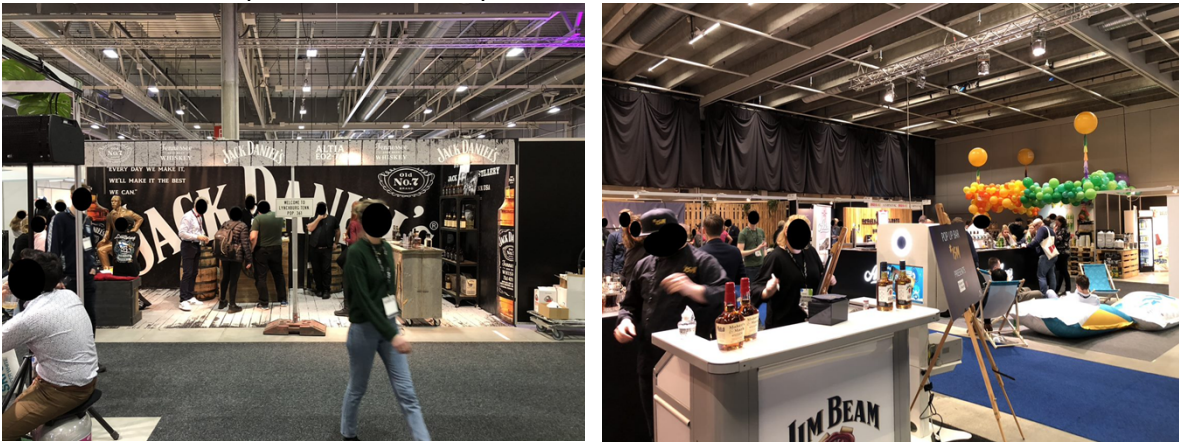
In 2019, U.S. exports of consumer-oriented products to Norway totaled \$83 million, led by exports of tree nuts (\$27 million) and processed fruit (\$12.9 million). Other important product groups included alcoholic beverages (\$12.2 million), prepared foods (\$9.9 million), and condiments & sauces (\$6.6 million). In 2019, U.S. exports of wine & beer and condiments & sauces to Norway reached their highest levels to date.

SMAK/HOLDBAR is the only trade show in Norway that targets processed products and alcoholic beverages. By visiting this show, FAS/The Hague was able to learn, first-hand, the ins and outs of this market segment.

## Observations:

The [Norway Convention Center](#) totals 10,000 square meters and almost all space was dedicated to the show. FAS/The Hague observed, when entering the SMAK show, that it was not very busy.<sup>1</sup> When talking to the exhibitors, however, reports were that they were quite pleased with the quality of the visitors, a mix of Horeca buyers, restauranters, and wine & beer connoisseurs. Many concluded that it was preferable for them to exhibit at a more intimate show, compared to some of the larger European food shows (e.g., [Anuga](#) and [SIAL](#)) that tend to be heavily attended.

Pictures 3/4: U.S. spirits were well represented



Source: FAS/The Hague

At HOLDBAR, FAS/The Hague spoke with several distributors of U.S. wines, spirits, and beer, including Cask and Edrington Norway. There is a 4.7 percent alcohol limit for supermarkets that wish to sell alcoholic beverages. Most of the alcoholic beverages showcased at HOLDBAR had a higher alcohol content and are sold via the stores of the Norwegian monopoly, [Vinmonopolet](#) (which has exclusive rights to sell beer, wine, and spirits with an alcohol content of 4.7 percent or higher). Needless to say, Vinmonopolet's buyers are in close contact with Norwegian importers and distributors of alcoholic beverages. Tastings are organized and producers of alcoholic beverages are visited to stay up-to-date on the latest developments on new tastes, packaging, and flavors. The general trends for beer seem to be lower alcohol percentages, cans, and innovative and funky labels. In Norway especially red wines, bag-in-box, and organic varieties are popular. Spirits, beer, and wines from the United States have an excellent reputation and were widely displayed at the show.

## Recommendations:

SMAK/HOLDBAR is the leading trade show for food and alcoholic beverages in Norway. Since the show is only held once every three years, FAS/The Hague plans to attend the next edition in 2023. Should a U.S. agricultural exporter be interested in expanding business in Norway, FAS/The Hague believes it could be beneficial to attend this show. A visit to the show can be timed with visits to some Norwegian

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<sup>1</sup> The show was held at the outset of the coronavirus outbreak in Europe which undoubtedly had an impact on attendance.

supermarkets and retail outlets, as well as meeting with specialized importers in nearby Oslo (which is less than 30 minutes away, by train, from Lillestrøm). Should a U.S. food/agriculture exporter wish to exhibit at the show, FAS/The Hague encourages them to reach out to FAS/The Hague via email at [agthehague@usda.gov](mailto:agthehague@usda.gov).

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.