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Report Highlights:

Bite size local news, Post reports and activity summaries wrapped by ATO Hong Kong. In this issue: ATO Hong Kong showcases U.S. wine and spirits and draws a crowd at the Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair; ATO Hong Kong takes to the sea to promote U.S. artisanal cheese and New York wine; Delicious USA 2024 Restaurant Promotion promotional video released; Wisconsin Ag Delegation visits Hong Kong to promote ginseng and dairy; Retail sales decline narrows in September; Macau's gaming industry continues to boom; and lab-grown meat lands in Hong Kong.

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wrapped by ATO Hong Kong

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U.S. Products Shine at the Hong Kong International Wine And Spirits Fair



From November 7 to 9, ATO Hong Kong exhibited at the 16th edition of the Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair. The three-day trade show attracted over 8,200 buyers from Hong Kong, Macau, and international markets. To promote U.S. wines and spirits, ATO partnered with seven local distributors to showcase their products at the ATO booth, including wines from California, Washington, and Oregon, mead from Wyoming, and bourbon from Utah. To highlight U.S. wine-pairing possibilities, ATO also partnered with U.S. Dairy Export Council to feature an array of U.S. cheese as wine's best companion. On November 8, ATO hosted an exclusive wine masterclass with Reeze Choi, second runner-up of ASI Best Sommelier of the World 2023. The masterclass attracted over 60 industry professionals, including sommeliers, restaurant managers, and buyers. Entitled *The Geographic Diversity of U.S. Wine*, the class featured a selection of outstanding wines from California, Oregon, Washington, and New York. Make sure to check the event highlights video [on our LinkedIn page](#).

A big thank you to participating vintners at the masterclass, including St. Supéry Estate Vineyards & Winery (distributed by EMW Wines), L'Ecole No 41 and Sokol Blosser Winery (distributed by Golden Gate Wine), Ca' Del Grevino Estate Winery, Phelps Creek Vineyards (distributed by Ponti Trading), Seghesio Family Vineyards (distributed by Amorosso Fine Wines), Columbia Crest Winery (distributed by Telford International Company Limited) and Wölffer Estate from New York. ATO Booth was

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supported by State of Wyoming - Asia Pacific Trade Office, Legendary Trading and Design Company Ltd (Distributor of Wyoming Mead), Drinks99 (Distributor of High West Whiskey), and wine distributors Golden Gate Wine, Ca' Del Grevino, EMW Wines and Amorosso Fine Wines.

ATO Promotes U.S. Artisanal Cheese and New York Wine



With support from the Consulate's Office of Liaison Administration, ATO Hong Kong launched a new initiative “*Sea You There*” by hosting a cozy cruise for local buyers to explore emerging food and beverage offerings from the United States. On November 21, in collaboration with U.S. Dairy Export Council and New York Wine & Grape Foundation, ATO organized a pilot sail to showcase U.S. artisanal cheese and New York wine. Guests appreciated the small group networking format where they were able to sample artisan cheese from Vermont,

California, Utah, Oregon and Wisconsin, as well as wines from New York's Finger Lakes, Long Island and Lake Erie regions. Do you have a new-to-market U.S. food or beverage that you'd like to partner with ATO Hong Kong to promote in 2025? Send us a message at ATOHongkong@usda.gov.

Delicious USA 2024 Restaurant Promotion Going Strong!



The Delicious USA 2024 restaurant promotion is going strong with ATO Hong Kong receiving initial positive feedback from a record 51 restaurants across Hong Kong and Macau. The promotion, which runs from November 11 to December 12, invites gourmards to “Taste the Finest” from the United States by enjoying special dishes featuring U.S. ingredients. Check out the promotional video [on our LinkedIn page](#). For more information and a complete list of participating restaurants, please visit www.delicioususa.com.hk.

Local Food Manufacturing In Hong Kong

ATO Hong Kong is actively reaching out to local food manufacturers to explore opportunities for U.S. ingredients. We recently met with the leadership of Calbee Four Seas Limited, a major snack food producer and global buyer of potatoes. Calbee sources potatoes from China, India, the EU, Egypt, and the U.S., based on seasonal availability. Recently, higher prices and freight costs reduced their purchases of U.S. potatoes, but the company continues to work with Washington and Oregon producers and praised the quality of U.S. potatoes.



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Wisconsin Agriculture Delegation Visits Hong Kong



On November 14, ATO Hong Kong welcomed representatives from a Wisconsin trade mission, including members of the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin (GBW) and several Wisconsin dairy exporters. ATO provided the delegation with a briefing on market dynamics in Hong Kong and Macau and shared information on opportunities and challenges for U.S. cheese and ginseng. Hong Kong is the largest overseas market for American ginseng and a promising market for U.S. cheese. Are you planning a visit to Hong Kong or Macau to promote a U.S. agricultural product? If so, drop us a line at ATOHongkong@usda.gov and we'd be happy to arrange a market briefing.

ECONOMY



Consumer Price Indices Increased for October 2024 [[HKSAR Press Release](#), Nov.21]

According to the Composite CPI released by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), overall consumer prices rose by 1.4 percent year-on-year in October 2024, lower than the corresponding increase (2.2 percent) in September 2024. The smaller increase in October 2024 was mainly due to the dissipation of the low base effect arising from the rates concession and the waiver of the extra public housing rent payable in the third quarter of 2024. **ATO Notes:** Among various components, alcoholic drinks and tobacco saw the largest increase year-on-year increase at 21.8 percent, while takeaway food increased 1.7 percent and basic foodstuffs declined 0.5 percent.

Hong Kong Ranks First in Finance, Trade And Culture [[The Standard](#), Nov.6]

From a survey conducted by Our Hong Kong Foundation and Dah Sing Bank, comparing 11 cities in the Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong topped the charts for financial services, trade and logistics, as well as culture, sports and tourism. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's relative openness compared with mainland cities in the Greater Bay area will likely help it retain its top position as the area seeks deeper economic and social integration.

Hong Kong Cross-Border Low-Altitude Economy will have Rules And Regulations, I&T Chief Says [[SCMP](#), Oct.29]

Hong Kong's Secretary for Innovation and Technology emphasized the need for protocols and customs clearance for developing a cross-border low-altitude economy. This involves regulated drone flights along fixed routes and specific application venues. The Lok Ma Chau Loop is considered an ideal location for this economy. Chief Executive John Lee announced a working group to strategize these projects, focusing on regulations and infrastructure. **ATO Notes:** Seeing the success of the delivery

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economy in mainland China, Hong Kong is actively considering the expansion of the cross-border low-altitude economy, which will allow deliveries to be done by drones under 1,000-meter in altitude. If successful, the low-altitude economy could help stem the number of HKSAR citizens who frequently cross the border for cheaper retail and dining.

Hong Kong's Economic Growth Expected Near Lower End of Forecast Range: Paul Chan [[The Standard](#), Nov.10]

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po announced that the Hong Kong's economic growth is expected to reach the lower end of the forecast range, with a 2.6 percent growth rate for the first three quarters. Following the U.S. Federal Reserve's interest rate cut, further cuts are anticipated, boosting investor confidence. Despite slower third-quarter growth, Chan predicts the economy will maintain momentum. Additionally, agreements with 17 strategic enterprises will bring \$5.4 billion (HK\$42 billion) in investment and create over 17,000 jobs in Hong Kong. **ATO Notes:** While stabilizing growth is good news, Hong Kong continues to struggle to attract tourists, with 2024 levels expected to reach about 45 million, well below the 65 million visitors that arrived in 2018.

HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, AND INSTITUTIONS



Jollibee Parent Fully Acquires Hong Kong's Michelin-Rated Tim Ho Wan Dim Sum Chain [[SCMP](#), Nov.7]

Jollibee Food Corporation will fully acquire Hong Kong's Michelin-rated restaurant chain Tim Ho Wan by purchasing the remaining 8 percent stake. Known for its affordable Michelin-starred dim sum, Tim Ho Wan was founded in 2009 and now operates about 80 stores in 11 markets. Jollibee, which previously owned 92 percent of the company, will make Tim Ho Wan its flagship Chinese cuisine brand. The acquisition occurs amid challenges in Hong Kong's food industry and economic slowdowns in mainland China. **ATO Notes:** Jollibee Foods Corporation (JFC), headquartered in the Philippines, is one of the world's fastest-growing Asian restaurant chains. The Company's principal business is the development, operation, and franchising of quick service restaurants (QSRs). JFC and U.S. based Cargill have been working together since 2017 through a joint venture, C-Joy, to develop and supply various poultry products.

Yung Kee Comes of Age with Soft Meals [[The Standard](#), Nov.8]

Yung Kee, a renowned Cantonese restaurant, has launched a new line of soft meals designed for individuals with chewing or swallowing difficulties. This initiative allows the elderly or individuals in need to enjoy the pleasure of dining alongside their families. **ATO Notes:** The "silver economy" is a rising priority in Hong Kong, according to [a recent analysis by HKTDC](#). It signals a potential opportunity for products like soft-textured packaged foods.

Hong Kong's E-Bike Crackdown Could Spark Food Delivery Crisis as Regulation Meets Reality [[Dimsum Daily](#), Nov.11]

Hong Kong's crackdown on Electric Mobility Devices (EMDs) threatens the food delivery sector, where 76 percent of riders in areas like Tsim Sha Tsui use e-bikes despite their illegal status. The government's proposed regulations limit EMDs to cycling tracks, excluding them from roads, which could disrupt delivery platforms like Deliveroo and Foodpanda that rely on rapid delivery times. The lack of cycling infrastructure in key urban areas exacerbates the issue. While the government aims to enhance safety, the regulations could force riders back to traditional bicycles, impacting their earnings and delivery efficiency. **ATO Notes:** [There are three food delivery platforms in Hong Kong, namely Foodpanda, Keeta and Deliveroo. According to Statista, the meal delivery market in Hong Kong is booming with the local user penetration rate projected to reach 43.3 percent in 2024.](#)

Lab-grown Meat Lands on Hong Kong Plates as Australian Start-up Vow Begins Sales [\[SCMP, Nov.20\]](#)

Lab-grown meat is now available in Hong Kong, as Australian start-up Vow begins sales through food-service channels in the city. The Aubrey at the Mandarin Oriental offers dishes featuring Vow's cultured Japanese quail. Vow's products, Forged Parfait and Forged Gras, are made from quail cells. Hong Kong is the second market for Vow's product, following Singapore. The launch highlights the potential of cultured meat, with significant investment in Asia-Pacific's alternative-protein market. **ATO Notes:** [A survey conducted by Rakuten Insight in February 2024 indicated that around 28 percent of nearly 3,000 respondents in Hong Kong would consume cultured meat. Currently, there is no standard for cultured meat in Hong Kong's Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance \(Cap. 132\).](#)

Meituan Aims to Launch Drone Deliveries in Hong Kong's Low-Altitude Economy [\[SCMP, Nov.21\]](#)

Food delivery giant Meituan plans to launch drone delivery services in Hong Kong, joining other Chinese tech firms seeking growth amid mainland competition. Meituan aims to be among the first to operate a drone fleet in the city, leveraging Hong Kong's low-altitude economy. The company, already offering drone deliveries in major Chinese cities, will apply to join Hong Kong's regulatory sandbox. Meituan's drones can deliver meals in 15-20 minutes, half the time of manual deliveries. The service will debut at Cyberport and Hong Kong Science Park, pending government approval. **ATO Notes:** [The Hong Kong government announced plans to develop a low-altitude economy \(LAE\) in the 2024 Policy Address. If it enters the market, Meituan will have competition. Delivery service platform Keeta has been pushing a subsidy-heavy strategy since its entrance into local market and has obtained significant market share over the past year.](#)

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RETAIL



Hong Kong Retail Sales Fall for Seventh Straight Month but Decline Narrows [[SCMP](#), Nov.1]

Retail sales in Hong Kong dropped for the seventh straight month on a year-on-year basis in September, falling by 6.9 percent as a growing trend of Hongkongers going to mainland China for shopping and entertainment continued to affect business. However, the decline in retail sales narrowed in September. As mentioned in this year's policy address, the government plans to take various measures to benefit the retail sector, such as developing new tourist hotspots, relaxing visa application criteria for some ASEAN countries, boosting "silver consumption," relaunching the principal moratorium under the SME Financing Scheme, expanding the coverage of E-commerce Easy to more Southeast Asian nations, and relaunching the Hong Kong Shopping Festival. **ATO Notes:** [The Hong Kong government anticipates an improved outlook for the mainland economy following recent stimulus measures, which may help increase spending by mainlanders visiting the region.](#)

Macau Tourism to Stoke GGR in New Year [[iGB](#) Nov26]

Authorities in Macau estimate the total gross gaming revenue (GGR) throughout the city is expected to hit \$30 billion (240 billion MOP) in 2025, an 11 percent increase over the 2024. Macau's uptick in tourism, with nearly 36 million visitors projected, is largely driven by enhancement to the Individual Visitor Scheme (IVS) by the Chinese government. In May, the central government added eight additional mainland cities into the IVS program. Preparing for the influx of visitors, casino resorts have increased their capacity, focusing particularly on high-end suite accommodations. **ATO Notes:** [Macau's tourism industry relies heavily on mainland Chinese tourists, who comprise 70 percent of total visitors. Growth in tourism is closely tied to consumer confidence in China's still uncertain economy. To attract more tourists, casinos are focusing on enhancing both gaming and non-gaming facilities.](#)

TRADE



CFS Urges Public Not to Consume Imported U.S. Carrots with Possible Shiga Toxin-Producing E. Coli O121 Contamination [[HKSAR Press Release](#), Nov.20]

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department urged the public not to consume certain brands of prepackaged carrots imported from the U.S. due to possible

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contamination with Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) O121. **ATO Notes:** ATO Hong Kong is actively following this issue and has worked with FDA and the U.S. exporter to provide relevant information to CFS. Hong Kong imports limited fresh vegetables from the U.S. In 2023 total fresh vegetable imports from the United States reached \$2.2 million, of which \$ 3,000 were fresh carrots.

Big Savings Nudge Hong Kong Shoppers to Ignore Ban on Meat, Eggs from Mainland China [SCMP, Nov.3]

The Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department reported a significant increase in illegal food imports, such as raw meats and eggs, from mainland China. The main reason is that shoppers find the lower grocery prices in Shenzhen more attractive. A lawmaker urged better public education about food safety and the legal consequences of such actions. Local butchers remain largely unaffected by this trend. **ATO Notes:** The article refers to hand carry transport of meat and egg products from the mainland to Hong Kong. Due to lower prices in the mainland for such items and the ease of travel between Hong Kong and major cities such as Shenzhen, there has been a surge in travelers attempting to bring restricted products into Hong Kong. The Customs and Excise Department reports that illegal imports of food items at land border checkpoints reached 1,324 cases up to the date of report, surpassing the total of 1,019 cases for the whole of last year.

Police And Customs Bust Smuggling Of Lobsters and Hair Worth \$231,000 (HK\$1.8 million) [The Standard, Nov.12]

Hong Kong Police and customs disrupted a smuggling operation in Tai O involving lobsters and human hair. Officers observed a suspicious speedboat and eight men transferring goods from electric tricycles to the boat. The suspects fled by speedboat, but authorities seized the tricycles, 46 boxes of lobsters (980 kg), and 18 boxes of human hair (470 kg). The hair was likely intended for wig manufacturing. **ATO Notes:** In the first three quarters of 2024, U.S. lobster exports to Hong Kong reached \$20 million and the U.S. is the third largest supplier behind Australia and Canada.

Hong Kong Suspends Imports of Poultry Meat and Products from Four U.S. Counties [CFS – Press Release, Nov. 25; CFS – Press Release, Nov. 18; CFS – Press Release, Nov. 11]

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has suspended poultry imports from Henry County, State of Illinois, and Stanislaus County, Kern County, and Fresno County, State of California following a notification from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). **ATO Notes:** In the first nine months of 2024, U.S. poultry meat exports to Hong Kong grew 61 percent to \$108 million. In contrast, U.S. egg exports contracted 78 percent to \$1.4 million.

Hong Kong Resumes Imports of Poultry Meat and Products from 46 U.S. Counties [ATO Update]

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has resumed imports from 20 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) affected counties in the United States. **ATO Notes:** As of this report, only 18 U.S. counties in 8 States are currently restricted from exporting poultry meat and eggs to Hong Kong due to HPAI. Timely reinstatement of imports from other U.S. counties has facilitated the recovery of U.S. poultry exports to the region in 2023 and the first half of 2024. U.S. exporters of poultry meat and products are encouraged to check the FSIS export library for the latest on eligible U.S. locations for export to Hong Kong.

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The ATO events calendar informs our readers of activities and events that ATO Hong Kong is hosting, sponsoring, or otherwise participating in. Updates will be added as new events are confirmed. If you have questions about any of the upcoming events, please contact us at ATOHongKong@usda.gov.

ATO LOOK AHEAD CALENDAR



**USDA**
United States
Department of
Agriculture

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Dec
2024**

- 11/11 – 12/12** Delicious USA 2024 Restaurant Promotion in Hong Kong and Macau - Taste the Finest (ATO HK)
- 11/28-12/10** APITA Retail In-store Promotion (Food Export)
- 12/4** China Cotton Day (CCI)
- 12/11** U.S. Wine Tasting (ATO HK)

2025

- 2/6-9** Pet Show Hong Kong
- 2/21-23** Vegetarian Food Asia
- 3/12-14** APLF Leather
- 5/14-16** HOFEX / ProWine

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Attachments:

No Attachments.