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Report Highlights:

Bite size local news, Post reports and activity summaries wrapped by ATO Hong Kong. In this issue: American agriculture front and center at Consulate's Fourth of July celebration; Hong Kong culinary students develop a taste for California Cheese; retail sales reverse a 14-month decline with an uptick in May; Hong Kong and Macau remain cautious on reversing Japanese seafood ban; Spirits imports surpass wine for the first time since 2007; HPAI related ban on poultry and egg products from 36 U.S. counties lifted.



American Agriculture Front and Center at Consulate's Fourth of July Celebration



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On June 26, 2025, the U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong and Macau celebrated the 249th Independence Day of the United States with friends and partners at the Murray Hotel in Central Hong Kong. Throughout the event, American agricultural products were on full display through a wide array of tailor-made canapés and hors d'oeuvres featuring U.S. ingredients. Guests were also invited to sample over a dozen U.S. wines and three specialty cocktails crafted by local mixologists from the ATO's American Whiskey Trail Hong Kong promotion. We can't think of a better way to celebrate the friendship between the American people and the people of Hong Kong and Macau!

Our heartfelt thanks to the sponsors whose in-kind donations and support helped make this a memorable event: Angliss, Budweiser, Ca' Del Grevino Winery, Certified Angus Beef LLC, Drinks99, E&J Gallo Hong Kong Ltd., Eastern Zone Co Ltd., Etak, Golden Gate Wine Company Ltd., Hormel Foods, Macau Beer Company Limited, Metabev, Northwest Cherry Growers, Oriental Pearl HK Ltd., Sunkist.

Hong Kong Culinary Students Get a Taste of California Cheese



With support from the California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) and U.S. Dairy Export Council, ATO Hong Kong helped introduce over 50 Hong Kong culinary students to the history, taste, and versatility of U.S. cheese. At the International Culinary Institute, California cheese and wine took centerstage as part of the USA Cheese Specialist Certification Program. Meanwhile, students at the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at Hong Kong Polytechnic University learned about pairing California cheese and

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U.S. wines as part of their training at one of Asia's top hospitality universities. A very big thank you to the CMAB team for donating a great selection of cheese originally delivered to Hong Kong as part of the HOFEX trade show!

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ECONOMY



Hong Kong Proves Doomsayers Wrong, Says The Financial Secretary [[The Standard](#), June 5]

Days after U.S. economist Stephen Roach revised his "Hong Kong is over" conclusion and admitted that the city's financial market has been reinvigorated and will benefit from the Sino-U.S. tensions, Financial Secretary Paul Chan said that the doomsayers of Hong Kong have been proven wrong again. While noting the headwinds, Chan remained confident that with the support of mainland China and Hong Kong's openness, connectivity, and resilience, the city will strengthen amid challenges. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's real GDP increased by 3.1 percent in Q1 2025 and the HKG expects growth for the rest of the year to be between 2 to 3 percent. The increase was driven in part by an 8.7% year-on-year increase in goods exports and continued growth in visitors. However, the city is still struggling to boost local consumption, which declined 1.2 percent in the first quarter.

HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, AND INSTITUTIONS



Restaurant Closures Surge as Hong Kong Faces Spending Slump [[The Standard](#), June 28]

Simon Wong Ka-wo, president of the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants & Related Trades, voiced concerns that consumers' weakening spending in the city and the increasing northbound consumption in mainland China are posing severe challenges to Hong Kong's foodservice industry, which has led to numerous closures. The wave of restaurant closures also poses a direct threat to the livelihoods of low-income employees. **ATO Notes:** Q1 2025 restaurant receipts dropped 0.6 percent year-over-year to \$3.59 billion. Compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019, sales remain down 11 percent.

HK's Catering Sector Sees 20pc Surge in Business During Handover Anniversary Celebrations [[The Standard](#), July 2] Hong Kong's catering sector reported a significant boost in business during this year's handover anniversary celebrations, with popular districts like Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok, as well as major shopping malls, seeing approximately 20 percent growth in revenue compared to last year's July 1 holiday. Thousands of restaurants across the city offered special promotions to mark the occasion, despite slim profit margins, with operators saying they prioritized creating a festive atmosphere during the holiday period. **ATO Notes:** Quick service restaurants, bakery chains, and Chinese restaurants comprised the majority of those participating in the holiday promotion. Despite the

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holiday uptick, Hong Kong's food service industry continues to face significant challenges, including high rents, reduced consumer spending, and higher menu prices.

RETAIL



Hong Kong's May Retail Sales up 2.4 Percent, Ending 14-month Contraction [[SCMP](#), Jul 2]

Hong Kong's retail sales in May rose 2.4 percent year-on-year, reversing a 14-month contraction with the uptick boosted by a surge in visitors during mainland China's Labor Day' golden week' holiday.

ATO Notes: Hong Kong's GDP grew 3.1 percent in Q1 2025, yet retail sales through April declined 5.6 percent from the previous year. However, the declining retail trend has not uniformly applied across all sectors. Retail sales of food products (including alcoholic beverages) increased 4 percent in March and 1.7 percent in May compared to 2024 sales.

Hong Kong Bakery Chain Taipan Shuts After 41 Years, Owing Salaries and Rent [[SCMP](#), Jun 26]

Hong Kong bakery chain Taipan Bread & Cakes, which created the famous snowy mooncakes, has shut down all its stores after 41 years in operation, reportedly owing salaries and rent. **ATO Notes:** The closure of Taipan generated significant commentary on Hong Kong social media sites as consumers took note of another long-running restaurant chain unable to regain its footing following the pandemic.

Hong Kong High-end Supermarket Chain City' Super to Shut its Last Food Court [[MSN](#), June 26]

City' Super food court in Times Square has closed its doors after almost 30 years in business following changes in consumer patterns, according to the supermarket group. **ATO Notes:** This closure comes after City' Super's Cooked Deli Food Hall in Harbour City ceased operations in Feb 2024. Retail outlets continue to adapt their offerings to account for changing consumer preferences that have shifted toward "value" items in recent years.

TRADE AND POLICY



Hong Kong Spirits Import Value Surpasses Wine for First Time Since 2007 [[The Standard](#), Jun. 3, 2025]

Hong Kong's spirits import value skyrocketed by 46 percent between 2016 and 2024 to reach \$831 million (HK\$6.48 billion), surpassing the city's wine import value for the first time since 2007. The latest statistics showed that the value of duty-paid imported spirits surged by nearly 60 percent after the government reduced the liquor tax on spirits.

ATO Notes: Q1 2025 sales at Hong Kong bars were up 6 percent. Retail sales have also seen increases with May 2025 sales of alcoholic drinks and tobacco up 25 percent. In the first five months of 2025 exports of U.S. wine increased 51 percent to \$14 million and U.S. spirits exports surged 111 percent to \$4 million.

Hong Kong Maintains ban on Japanese Seafood from ten Prefectures as China Eases Restrictions [[The Standard](#), Jun. 30]

Mainland China has conditionally resumed imports of seafood from some Japanese regions, while Hong Kong continues to enforce its ban on aquatic products from ten Japanese prefectures, including Tokyo, Fukushima, and Chiba. The HKSAR government emphasized that the discharge of treated nuclear wastewater from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station is unprecedented in both duration and scale, necessitating a cautious approach. Authorities have maintained communication with Japan on the issue, requesting up-to-date scientific data and developments regarding the water release to assess whether current food safety measures could be relaxed. **ATO Notes:** From January to May 2025, Hong Kong's global import of seafood dropped 6 percent year-over-year to \$1.2 billion. The Hong Kong government has banned imports of seafood from 10 prefectures of Japan since August 2023, yet the restriction has had minimal impact with Hong Kong's 2024 imports of seafood from Japan on par with the same period in 2023 at \$149.8 million. However, for the same period, Hong Kong's seafood imports from the United States rose 16.6 percent to \$42.6 million.

IAM Maintains Import ban from 10 Japanese Prefectures [[Macau Daily Times](#), Jul. 1]

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) announced yesterday that Macau will continue its ban, imposed in August 2023, on the import of fresh food, animal-derived products, sea salt, and seaweed from several Japanese prefectures, including Fukushima, Chiba, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Gunma, Miyagi, Niigata, Nagano, Saitama, and Tokyo. This includes vegetables, fruits, dairy, aquatic products, meat, and poultry eggs. Such a decision remains in place despite the recent announcement by China's General Administration of Customs, which has resumed imports of certain Japanese aquatic products. **ATO Notes:** Like Hong Kong, Macau has maintained its ban on seafood imports from the 10 Japan prefectures. Of its \$561

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million global import of seafood only \$47 million originated from Japan in 2024. Overall seafood imports dropped 4 percent in the first five months of 2025 with Japanese imports declining 24 percent to \$17 million.

Over 70 Percent of top Restaurant Chains Commit to Cage-free Eggs [[Hong Kong Business](#), Jul. 8]

More than 70 percent of Hong Kong's leading restaurant groups have pledged to transition to 100 percent cage-free eggs, according to a new report released by Lever Foundation. The 2025 Hong Kong Restaurant Cage-Free Egg Scorecard reveals that over 60 percent of the city's top chains have already adopted firm timelines for ending the use of caged eggs. **ATO Notes:** U.S. egg exports to Hong Kong have dropped significantly since 2021 due to HPAI and shifting supply chains. From \$50 million of annual exports in 2021, U.S. exports of egg and egg products reached only \$1.6 million in 2024.

Hong Kong Resumes Imports of Poultry Meat and Products from 36 U.S. Counties [ATO Update]

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has removed import restrictions on 36 counties due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). **ATO Notes:** As of this report, 53 U.S. counties in 10 States are currently restricted from exporting poultry meat and eggs to Hong Kong due to HPAI. The high number of HPAI affected counties in the U.S. has contributed to a 47 percent decline in U.S. poultry exports to Hong Kong in 2025. U.S. exporters of poultry meat and eggs 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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ATO EVENTS CALENDAR



UPCOMING EVENTS

Jul 2025	Jul 1 - 31	<u>California Wine Month (CWI)</u>
	Jul 14 - 18	Sustainable Aviation Fuels, State Department Speaker Series, Chris Tindal
	Jul 4 - 27	PARKnSHOP Retail Promotion (Northwest Cherry Growers)
Aug 2025	Jul 29 – Aug 3	USMEF Hong Kong Chef's Tour (Texas/California)
Sep 2025	Sep 2 - 4	Restaurant, Bar, and Café Hong Kong (ASMI)
	Sep 3 – 5	Asia Fruit Logistica (ATO HK)
	TBC	U.S. Beef and Wine Promotion – Ruby Tuesday (ATO HK, USMEF)
	TBC	FAS / FCS Macau Reception
Nov 2025	TBC	The Great American Texas Barbeque (USMEF, ATO HK)
	Nov 6 - 8	Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair (ATO HK)

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Attachments:

No Attachments.