

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Singapore

### Exporter Guide

### Annual 2018

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**Report Highlights:**

Singapore's highly import dependent, multi-billion-dollar food industry is driven by robust consumer spending, high disposable incomes, and intense urbanization. The country's trade and regulatory policies are focused on ensuring consistent foreign supply of high-quality food and agricultural products. Singapore's total agricultural product imports in 2017 reached \$9.7 billion USD, roughly ten percent of which was sourced from the United States.

**Post:**

Singapore

## Market Fact Sheet: Singapore

### Executive Summary

Singapore's highly import dependent, multi-billion-dollar food industry is driven by robust consumer spending, high disposable incomes, and intense urbanization. The country's trade and regulatory policies are focused on ensuring consistent foreign supply of high-quality food and agricultural products. Singapore's total agricultural product imports in 2017 reached \$9.7 billion USD, roughly ten percent of which was sourced from the United States.

### Imports of U.S. Consumer-Oriented Products

In 2017, the United States was Singapore's third largest supplier of consumer-oriented food and beverage products, with total sales reaching \$590 million USD for the year. Top U.S. products in the market include dairy, fresh fruit, potatoes, poultry and beef.



Source: Global Trade Atlas

### Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional

Singapore has a highly developed and competitive hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI) sector. Singaporeans are some of Asia's top spenders on dining out. In 2017, the country's tourist receipts topped \$20 billion USD, of which \$2 billion was derived from food and beverage sales.

### Retail Foods

Singapore's retail sector is also highly developed and very competitive, with total sales in 2017 reaching \$6.2 billion USD. The sector is dominated by three key players: NTUC Fair Price Cooperative, Dairy Farm International Holdings and Sheng Siong Supermarket Chain.

### Food Processing Ingredients

The Singaporean food processing industry is relatively small. However, almost all raw materials or ingredients used in the processing industry are imported. Total industry output value in 2017 was \$8 billion USD.

### Opportunities and Challenges for U.S. Exporters

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-U.S. food and agricultural products are trusted and perceived to be of high quality.</li> <li>-Top U.S. brands are popular and in strong demand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Many U.S. exporters are unfamiliar with the market and are therefore sometimes unable to meet specific requirements and order sizes.</li> <li>-Time commitment for brand building can be significant.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The growing Singaporean HRI, Retail Foods and Food Processing sectors are highly dependent on a broad range of imported food products and ingredients.</li> <li>-High disposable incomes drive demand for premium products.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The Singapore market is highly competitive and can be very price sensitive.</li> <li>-China and other regional suppliers have gained significant market share in recent years.</li> </ul>

## Table of Contents

SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW.....	4
SECTION II. NATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS & TRADE PROCEDURES.....	4
SECTION III. MARKET DYNAMICS AND TRENDS.....	4
SECTION IV. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION.....	9

## **SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW**

The city-state of Singapore, with a population of 5.6 million, is a wealthy, developed, and highly urbanized country. As there is virtually no local agricultural production, Singapore is almost entirely dependent upon imports for all of its food requirements. The country's economy is mainly driven by financial services, manufacturing and tourism. As the country is highly dependent on imports for its food requirements, Singapore's food laws, policies and enforcement practices are focused on ensuring consistent foreign supply of safe food and agricultural products. While trade contacts report Singapore can be very strict on sanitary and phytosanitary issues, the country maintains a generally liberal and open trade system. Singapore does not impose quotas and tariffs on imported food and agricultural products (except tobacco and alcoholic beverages). Singapore's total agricultural product imports in 2017 reached \$9.7 billion USD, roughly ten percent of which was sourced from the United States.

## **SECTION II. NATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS & TRADE PROCEDURES**

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is currently the national authority responsible for food and agriculture matters in Singapore but it will cease to exist in April 2019. A new government agency called the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) is scheduled to take over all food-related regulatory responsibilities from AVA directly after its closure. Trade contacts report they are optimistic SFA will adopt AVA's science-based risk analysis and management approach based on international standards such as Codex Alimentarius and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Several food/food products entering Singapore must originate from establishments approved by AVA. Also, multiple food/food products, including meat and meat products, processed eggs, fresh table eggs and live poultry, require proper accreditation and approved procedures with AVA. Overseas establishments that supply these products are required to apply for accreditation with AVA through the supplying country's competent authorities. While other imported foods such as processed food products and fresh fruit/vegetables do not require facility registration, they are required to be sourced from suppliers that are under proper supervision of approved overseas regulatory authorities.

For further details on food export requirements in the Singapore market, please refer to the [USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service Export Library](#) and the FAS/Singapore Food and Agricultural Import Regulations & Standards Country Report at the following web portal: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>.

## **SECTION III. MARKET DYNAMICS AND TRENDS**

### **Food Industry Breakdown**

Singapore's retail food sector is highly developed and competitive. Total sales for the sector in 2017 reached \$6.2 billion USD. Retail food sales in the country are dominated by three key players: the NTUC FairPrice Cooperative, Dairy Farm International Holdings and Sheng Siong Supermarket. Please refer to the [Singapore Retail Food Annual 2018 GAIN Report](#) for more details on the sector.

The country's hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI) sector is also highly developed and competitive. The industry is fueled by robust tourism, business travel and consumer spending. In 2017, the country's tourist receipts topped \$20 billion USD, of which \$2 billion was derived from food and beverage sales.

For more details on the HRI sector, please refer to the [Singapore HRI Annual 2018 GAIN Report](#).

Although Singapore's food processing sector is relatively small, almost all raw materials or ingredients for further processing are imported. According to the Singapore Department of Statistics, the country's food processing sector had a total value of \$8 billion USD in 2017. Local food manufacturing spans over 17 sub-sectors, including flavors, local sauces and condiments, ready-to-eat meals, noodles, deli items, confectionary, chocolates, snack products, beverages and seafood processing. For more details on the food processing sector, please refer to the [Singapore Food Processing Industry Annual 2017 GAIN Report](#).

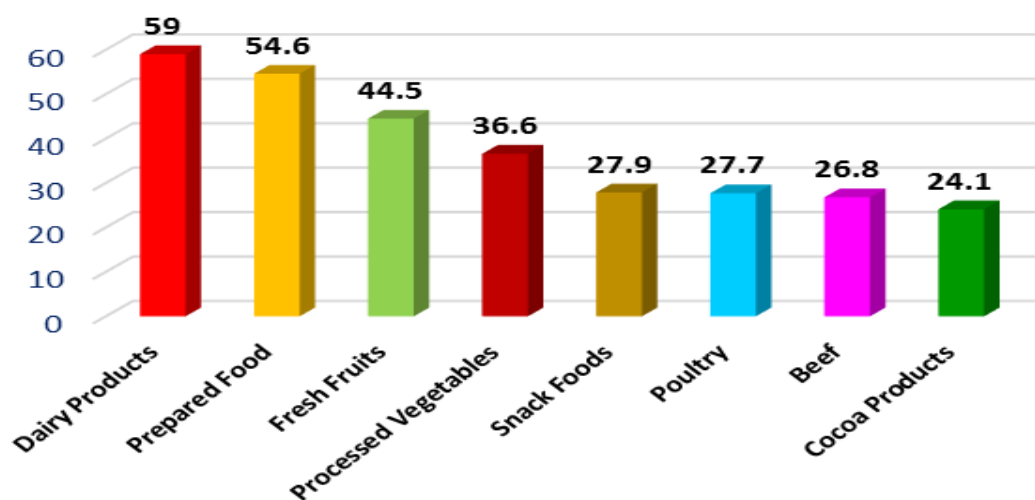
### **Trends and Practices**

- Singapore is a cosmopolitan country and follows most international standards of business. Singapore's laws are patterned after the British legal system and English is the main working language. Business etiquette is largely relationship-based.
- Relatively high disposable incomes drive Singaporean demand for high quality food and beverage products. Also, Singaporeans are some of Asia's biggest spenders on eating out.
- Singapore's food service industry is highly diverse with a broad range of Asian and Western cuisines widely available in dining formats ranging from food stalls to full service restaurants.
- Fast and convenient food options are increasingly popular. Additionally, healthy and organic products are becoming very popular.
- Major retailers and department stores are investing more in foodservice in order to provide shoppers with a combined shopping/dining experience.
- International franchise dining chains are highly prevalent and popular in Singapore.
- Third-party food delivery services are heavily used in Singapore and had a market value of \$61.7 million USD in 2017.

### **U.S. Food and Beverage Products in the Singapore Market**

According to Global Trade Atlas data, the United States was Singapore's third largest supplier of consumer-oriented food and beverage products in 2017. Total sales for the year reached \$590 million USD. Top U.S. consumer-oriented food and beverage products in the market include dairy, fresh fruit, potatoes, poultry and beef.

**Top Consumer-Oriented U.S. Products Exports to Singapore  
in 2017 (in million USD)**



Source:  
Global  
Trade

Atlas

**Competition**

Product Category (2017)	Major Supply Sources (2017)	Foreign Supplier Situation	Local Supplier Situation
<b>Beef and Beef Products</b> Net Imports: \$252 million	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Australia: 32%</li> <li>2. Brazil: 31%</li> <li>3. United States: 10%</li> <li>4. New Zealand: 10%</li> </ol>	<p>Australia &amp; New Zealand are traditional suppliers.</p> <p>Brazil competes in the frozen beef segment.</p>	Singapore does not produce beef.
<b>Pork and Pork Products</b> Net Imports: \$327 million	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brazil: 30%</li> <li>2. Australia: 19%</li> <li>3. Netherlands: 14%</li> <li>4. Spain: 9%</li> <li>5. China: 7%</li> <li>6. United States: 5%</li> </ol>	<p>Brazil dominates the frozen segment.</p> <p>Australian pork dominates the fresh/chilled market due to close proximity.</p> <p>U.S. processed pork is growing in popularity.</p>	Live pigs from Indonesia are imported and slaughtered. The majority of this locally slaughtered meat is sold at wet/traditional markets and supermarkets.
<b>Poultry Meat and Products</b> Net Imports: \$334	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brazil: 53%</li> <li>2. Thailand: 22%</li> <li>3. United States: 10%</li> <li>4. Malaysia: 5%</li> </ol>	Brazilian poultry is currently price competitive in the Singaporean market.	Malaysian live chickens are imported and slaughtered.

<b>million</b>			
<b>Fish Products Net Imports: \$1.05 billion</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. China: 13%</li> <li>2. Malaysia: 13%</li> <li>3. Vietnam: 10%</li> <li>4. Indonesia: 10%</li> <li>5. Norway: 7%</li> <li>14. United States: 2%</li> </ol>	ASEAN countries and China dominate the market. Fresh/chilled/ prawns, live crabs, frozen cuttlefish, and squid are key products.	90% of seafood is imported. The remainder is supplied by sea-based Singaporean aquaculture operations.
<b>Fresh Fruit Net Imports: \$504 million</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. United States: 14%</li> <li>2. Malaysia: 12%</li> <li>3. Australia: 11%</li> <li>4. China: 11%</li> </ol>	Top U.S. fresh fruits in the Singapore market include grapes, oranges, strawberries and apples; United States dominates sales of these fruits when in season.	Fruit production in Singapore is minimal.
<b>Dried Fruit Net Imports: \$16 million</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. United States: 48%</li> <li>2. China: 19%</li> <li>3. Turkey: 7%</li> <li>4. Thailand: 6%</li> </ol>	U.S. dried fruits are highly popular; some are repacked and sold as private local brands.	Singapore is not a significant producer of dried fruit.
<b>Edible Nuts Net Imports: \$134 million</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Indonesia: 40%</li> <li>2. United States: 16%</li> <li>3. India: 10%</li> <li>4. Malaysia: 10%</li> </ol>	Along with cashews from neighboring countries, U.S. nuts are very popular. Some U.S. nuts are repacked and sold under local brands.	Singapore is not a major producer of edible nuts.
<b>Wine and Beer Net Imports: \$746 million</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. France: 58%</li> <li>2. Australia: 8%</li> <li>3. Malaysia: 4%</li> <li>4. United States: 4%</li> </ol>	France dominates the premium wine market. U.S. wines are growing in popularity.	Singapore does not produce wine. Asia Pacific Breweries (APB), Singapore's largest beer manufacturer, dominates the beer market.

Source: *Global Trade Atlas*

### Opportunities and Challenges for U.S. Exporters

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
U.S. food and agricultural products are trusted and perceived to be of high quality.	Many U.S. exporters are unfamiliar with the market and are therefore sometimes unable to meet specific requirements and order sizes.
Top U.S. brands are popular and in strong demand.	Time commitment for brand building can be significant.

The growing Singaporean HRI, Retail Foods and Food Processing sectors are highly dependent on a broad range of imported food products and ingredients.	The Singapore market is highly competitive and can be very price sensitive.
High disposable incomes drive demand for premium products.	China and other regional suppliers have gained significant market share in recent years.

### Best Prospective U.S. Products for the Singaporean Market

U.S. Products	2012 Import Value (million USD)	2017 Import Value (million USD)	Growth in %
Potatoes, Fresh & Frozen	\$35.6	\$38.3	8 percent
Seafood	\$21.8	\$29.6	36 percent
Dried Fruits & Nuts	\$16.5	\$27.0	64 percent
Beef Products	\$12.9	\$26.8	108 percent
Wine & Beer	\$13.2	\$18.8	42 percent

Source: *Global Trade Atlas*

### Road Map for Market Entry

U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products should consider the following when planning to enter the Singapore market:

- Analyze Singapore food laws, packaging & labeling requirements and importer criteria for entry into the Singapore market. Detailed information on Singapore regulations and requirements can be found by accessing the FAS/Singapore Food and Agricultural Import Regulations & Standards Country Report at the following web portal: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>
- Review the types of U.S. products that can be readily targeted in the market. Consider the price competitiveness of U.S. products compared to similar products available in Singapore.
- Participate in regional trade shows and trade missions by tapping into the resources offered by [State and Regional Trade Associations](#).
- Develop links with local importers that target the major retailers, hotels, restaurants and processors. U.S. exporters are advised to appoint local distributors or at least a local representative to help guide them through the requirements of Singapore food regulations and local trading practices.
- After establishing links with importers, strive to educate them (in person if possible) on the qualities of your product/s and supply chain.



- After establishing trade agreements with local importers, conduct product promotions with end-users. This type of marketing event is particularly effective during festivals and peak seasons (Chinese New Year, Christmas, etc.).
- Provide technical assistance (e.g. handling techniques, chef trainings and product formulations) to end-users.
- Maintain strong communication with your local importer to ensure all certificates and import permits are valid and up-to-date.

#### **SECTION IV. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

##### A) USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Singapore

Office of Agricultural Affairs  
 American Embassy Singapore  
 27 Napier Road  
 Singapore 258508  
 Tel: (65) 6476-9120  
 Fax: (65) 6476-9517  
 Email: [AgSingapore@fas.usda.gov](mailto:AgSingapore@fas.usda.gov)

##### B) U.S. Dairy Export Council

1 North Bridge Road, #06-10  
 High Street Centre,  
 Singapore 179094  
 Tel: (65) 6334 7030  
 Fax: (65) 6223 2010  
 Contacts: Dalilah Ghazalay, Regional Director, SEA Marketing & Operations  
 Email: [dali@dairyconnect.biz](mailto:dali@dairyconnect.biz);

##### C) U.S. Grains Council

50 Jalan Dungun Damansara Heights  
 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Tel: (60) 3 2093 6826  
 Fax: (60) 3 2273 2052  
 Contact: Manuel Sanchez, Regional Director—South & Southeast Asia  
 Email: [usgckl@usgc.com.my](mailto:usgckl@usgc.com.my)

##### D) U.S. Meat Export Federation

627 A Aljunied Road  
 #04-04 Biztech Centre

Singapore  
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Contact: Sabrina Yin, Regional Director  
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E) USA Poultry and Egg Export Council

541 Orchard Road, #15-04 Liat Towers  
Singapore  
Tel: (65) 6737 1726  
Fax: (65) 6737 1727  
Contact: Margaret Say, Regional Director  
Email: [usapeec\\_sing@pacific.net.sg](mailto:usapeec_sing@pacific.net.sg)

F) Raisin Administrative Committee, Food Export-Midwest, Food Export-Northeast and the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association

48 Toh Guan Road East  
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Fax: (65) 6278 4372  
Contact: Richard Lieu and Chuah Siew Keat  
Emails: [richardlieu@lieumktg.com.sg](mailto:richardlieu@lieumktg.com.sg); [siewkeat@lieumktg.com.sg](mailto:siewkeat@lieumktg.com.sg)

G) U.S. Soybean Export Council

541 Orchard Road, #11-03 Liat Towers  
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Fax: (65) 67375849  
Contact: Timothy Loh, Director  
Email: [TLoh@ct.ussec.org](mailto:TLoh@ct.ussec.org)

H) U.S. Wheat Associates

541 Orchard Road, #15-02 Liat Towers  
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Fax: (65) 6733 9359  
Contact: Matt Weimar, Regional Vice President for South Asia  
Email: [InfoSingapore@uswheat.org](mailto:InfoSingapore@uswheat.org)

I) Singapore Government Websites:

Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore: [www.ava.gov.sg](http://www.ava.gov.sg)

Department of Statistics: [www.singstat.gov.sg](http://www.singstat.gov.sg)

Singapore Government: [www.gov.sg](http://www.gov.sg)