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## **Philippines**

### **Retail Foods**

#### **2017 Food Retail Sectoral Report**

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**Report Highlights:**

The growing expansion and increase in sales of food retailers in the Philippines creates opportunities for more exports of U.S. high-value, consumer-oriented food and beverage products.

Driven by a growing population, strong domestic consumption, and a buoyant economy, the food retail sector reached a growth of \$45.3B in sales in 2016, a 4% increase from \$43.5 in 2015.

**Post:**  
Manila

**General Information:**  
**I. Overview of the Philippine Market**

The Philippines is the largest market in Southeast Asia for U.S. consumer-oriented food beverage (f&b) products and one of the fastest markets in the world, importing \$923.4 billion in f&b products in 2016.

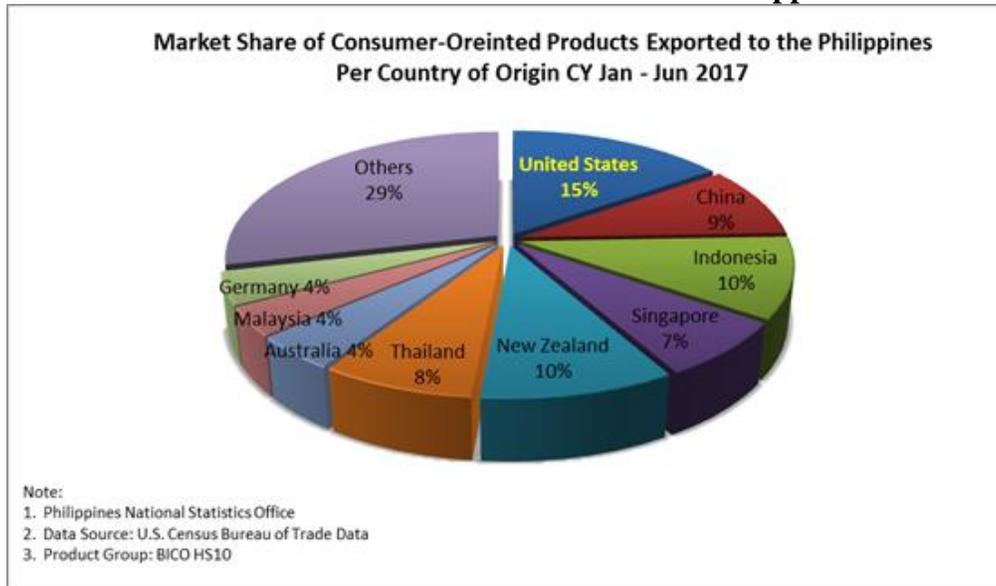
A mature market with growing demand for consumer-oriented products, the United States the Philippines' largest supplier for food, beverage and ingredient products.

Ranked as the 11th largest export market for high-value, consumer-oriented products, the Philippines imported \$716.1 million from through September 2017. Based on the chart the United States remains the largest supplier with fifteen percent (15%) market share, followed by China (9%), Indonesia and New Zealand (10%), and Thailand (8%). Total imports of consumer-oriented food grew annually by an average of 10%.

<u>Table 1 – Philippine Market Profile</u>
<b>Population:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 104.2 Million (July 2017 est.), annual growth rate of 1.6%</li><li>• 19.17% below 24 years old</li><li>• 52% living in urban areas</li></ul>
<b>Land Area:</b> 298,170 sq.km.
<b>2016 GDP Growth:</b> 6.8%
<b>GDP Per Capita:</b> \$7,700 (2016 est.)
Source: CIA World Fact Book

and growing U.S. remains U.S. January below,

**Chart 1 – Market Share of Consumer-Oriented Products in the Philippines Per Country**



The Philippines has a strong preference for U.S. brands and is always looking for new American products to taste and enjoy. As incomes grow, more American brands are likely to find a market here.

Post expects demand for U.S. consumer-oriented products will continue to grow for the following reasons:

- Increasing urbanization of the local population (almost 105 million)
- Growing upper and middle class (18-20 million)
- Rising number of supermarkets, hypermarkets and convenience stores
- Strong interest in western brands among Philippine consumers
- Growing awareness of the quality and health benefits of U.S. food, beverage and ingredient products

**II. Overview of the Philippine Food Retail Market**

Driven by a growing population, strong domestic consumption, and a buoyant economy, the food retail sector in the Philippines continues to grow. Sales in the food retail business increased by 4% in 2016 with \$45.3 billion in value.

The largest grocery retailers (i.e. SM, Robinsons, and Puregold) still dominate the food retail business that contributed to the robust growth of the industry in the last five years. In 2016, these retail giants focused on expanding its mid-sized supermarkets and small format stores (i.e. convenience stores and minimarts) into smaller towns across the country.

**Chart 2 – Food Retail Sales in the Philippines (in US \$ billion)**



**Table 2 – Sales by Channels in the Philippines (in US \$ billion)\***

Outlet/ Channel	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Growth (15 vs 16)	% Share
Supermarkets	7.53	8.05	8.57	9.53	10.21	7%	22.5%
Hypermarkets	1.68	2.01	2.28	2.53	2.61	5%	6%
Convenience stores	0.44	0.55	0.68	0.84	0.91	8%	2%
Other Specialty Retailers (incl. food/ drink/tobacco specialist)	3.62	3.94	4.23	4.44	4.63	2%	10%
'Mom & Pop'	24.39	25.10	25.59	26.23	26.94	3%	59.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.66</b>	<b>39.65</b>	<b>41.36</b>	<b>43.57</b>	<b>45.31</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Euromonitor International from official statistics, trade associations, trade press, company research, trade interviews, trade sources  
Note: US Dollar Value converted from Actual Philippine Peso Amount based on a 5-year Annual Weighted Average Interbank Rates of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

**Table 3 – Type of Channels by Definition**

Type	Definition
Supermarket	A selling area of between 400 square meters and 2,500 square meters, at least 70% of which is devoted to food and everyday commodities. Mostly located inside shopping malls, department stores or within a commercial complex.
Hyper Markets/ Warehouse Stores	A hybrid of a department store and supermarket with a sales area of at least 2,500 square meters, 35% of which is allocated for non-food products. Non-food items offered include: furniture, appliances, clothes, etc.
'Mini-marts' (new category)	A new retail format in-between the convenience store and the supermarket. It is a type of neighborhood grocery store that offers basic goods, fresh meat, poultry and vegetables as well as food-to-go products.
Convenience stores (including gas marts)	A store with sales area of 150- 300 square meters and operates for longer hours (usually on a 24 hr. basis) that serve for impulse purchases. Mostly found in a condominium building, beside gasoline stations, near intersections or corner streets or near a BPO office. Offers ready-to-eat meals and have limited line of f&b and non-food/household items.
"Mom & Pop"/Sari-Sari Stores	Small neighborhood stores owned and managed by a household in the community, selling a variety of essential items such as rice, cooking oil, sugar, etc. Much smaller than convenience stores, they are usually built within or beside operator/owner's own house.
Wet Markets	Usually sell "fresh" meat, fish, vegetables, fruits and other domestically-produced items. Mostly local products but offer some imported items, especially fresh fruits.

### A. Modern Retailers

Passage of the retail trade liberalization law in the early 2000 caused local supermarket chains to undergo several changes to modernize, expand, consolidate, stream-line operations, and broaden their

line of imported brands, often via direct importation. The legislation, which allows foreign retailers to operate independently in the Philippines, has fostered growth in large-scale modern stores that offer a wider range of imported foods and purchase directly, eliminating the 20-40 percent mark-up charged by importers/distributors. Over the past 20 years, modern and large-scale food retail formats such as hypermarkets, supermarkets, and convenience stores have increased rapidly in numbers and are visible at almost all corners of every city.



Supermarkets posted the second biggest sales growth next to convenience stores with 7% growth in 2016. Supermarkets continue to be the most frequently visited modern retailer since they are usually located near residential areas or in shopping malls which consumers regularly visit to shop and recreate. Supermarket sales reached \$10.21 billion in retail value sales.

Hypermarkets recorded a slower sales performance in 2016 at 3% growth, due to a smaller number of stores being opened during

the year. Hypermarkets however, still remain popular among consumers, serving as a one-stop store carrying a wide range of products from food to general merchandise, which allows consumers to save time and effort.

**Chart 3 – Market Share of Food Retail Sales in the Philippines**



Filipino consumers increasingly prefer to purchase groceries from modern retail outlets, which provide a convenient format for one-stop shopping. This preference has led to the continuous expansion of both supermarkets and hypermarkets.

Below is the summary profile of major retail grocery outlets:

- Super Value Inc. or SM Supermarket, the food retail arm of SM Investments, is the dominant player in the food retail industry in the Philippines. Having established its first store in 1985, SM Supermarket operates 44 branches across the Philippines. SM Supermarkets are primarily located inside SM Malls.

SaveMore Market is a chain of neighborhood grocery stores under the SM Food Retail Group (other food retail formats under SM are SM Supermarket and SM Hypermarket). SaveMore stores are located outside an [SM Mall](#) in either stand-alone outlets or as an anchor tenant of a commercial center/commercial building or non-SM mall. It has a total of 152 stores nationwide.

SM Hypermarket is a superstore combining a supermarket and a department store, offering more than 150,000 brands of merchandise or SKUs with the aim to allow customers to satisfy all their routine shopping needs in one trip. SM Hypermarkets are usually located within a mall and have 46 branches nationwide.

- Puregold Price Club Inc. (PPCI) is a chain of supermarkets that was established in 1998 when the one-stop shopping philosophy was an emerging idea. PPCI, the second largest food retailer in the country has three store formats: Puregold Price Club (a hypermarket), Puregold Jr. (a neighborhood store), and Puregold Extra (discounter supermarket). Ranked as number two in food retail, Puregold Price Club Inc. has grown into a giant retail chain with 281 stores nationwide. Puregold Price Club Inc. also owns S&R Membership Shopping which used to be PriceSmart- the first U.S.-based chain to enter the Philippines in 2001 after the passage of the 2000 Philippine Retail Trade Liberalization Law. S&R Membership Shopping opened in 2006 and now has 13 stores nationwide, including their newest store in Cagayan De Oro which opened late last year.
- Robinsons Supermarket, the third largest supermarket chain in the Philippines, is a subsidiary of Robinsons Retail Holdings Inc. Established in 1985, Robinson Supermarket is the first major retailer to promote health and wellness. Robinsons Supermarket has recently launched two new subformats: Robinsons Easymart and Robinsons Selections. Robinsons Easymart is a network of compact neighborhood grocery stores, brings the grocery experience closer to communities in order to provide households ease of accessibility and convenience of shopping for their everyday needs while Robinsons Selections cater to the premium market and carry more imported merchandise than the usual Robinsons Supermarket. In addition to the essential supermarket sections, Robinsons Selections is also complete with a food-to-go section, a gourmet deli section, a health and wellness section, and a pharmacy.
- Rustan Supercenters Inc. (RSI) is the retail arm of Rustan Commercial Corporation, the premier chain of upscale department stores, operating in the Philippines for almost 50 years. RSI is a pioneer in modern grocery



retailing and is the operator of Rustan's Supermarkets, the Shopwise chain of hypermarkets, Wellcome Supermarket and Family Mart convenience stores. Rustan Supercenters Inc. is now a member of the Dairy Farm International Group -- a multinational company that brought Mannings, Giant, Jason's Guardian, Ikea, Cold Storage, and many more retail superstores worldwide. Aside from its conventional supermarket chains and high-end Marketplace stores, Rustan's has recently launched its neighborhood supermarket format called Shopwise Express, now with 7 branches in Metro Manila.

- Metro (Gaisano), formerly White Gold Department Store with supermarket business was a family-owned business way back in 1949 in Cebu. Incorporated and established in 1981, the first Metro department store and supermarket outlet opened in 1982. Through the years, Metro (both a department store and supermarket) expanded from Cebu to Manila and other nearby provinces in the region of Visayas and Mindanao, now with 40 branches nationwide.
- Walter Mart Supermarket signed a joint venture with SM Investment Corporation in 2013 and is the only member supermarket of International Grocers Alliance (IGA) in the Philippines. It is located in strategic places scattered all over Luzon (Metro Manila, Laguna, Cavite, and Pampanga). It is one of the youngest and fastest growing supermarket chains with 28 branches nationwide.
- Landers Superstore, a relatively new player on the modern food retail market launched its stores in Manila in 2015. Now with five stores nationwide, Landers Superstore is a membership shopping store that offers a wide variety of imported products (food and non-food) that are not usually found in other major supermarkets such as SM, Robinsons and Puregold.
- Super8 Grocery Warehouse is a subsidiary of Super8 Retail Systems, Inc. that operates a chain of big grocery warehouses all over Manila, and parts of Central, Northern and Southern Luzon. Known for its wide range of grocery products for wholesale, Super8 Grocery Warehouse is a member of the Suy Sing Commercial Corporation, a diversified conglomerate, and the Philippines's leading wholesale distribution company.
- Hi-Top Supermart is one of the oldest grocery stores that sell a lot of imported packaged food and beverage items. It has two branches located in Quezon City.
- Parco Supermarket, a family-owned supermarket that has been operating for more than 30 years was acquired by Puregold Price Club Inc. in 2012. With 19 stores located in the outskirts of Manila, Parco Supermarket retained its brand and continues to serve its loyal customers.
- Cherry Foodarama was acquired by SM Investments Corp. in 2014. Owned by the Ong family and considered as one of the pioneers in the grocery business, Cherry Foodarama has been in the retail business since the early 1950's. Despite the acquisition, Cherry Foodarama will retain its name for its 3 stores.
- Merkado Supermarket, a joint venture between Ayala Land Inc. and Puregold Price Club Inc., opened its first branch in Quezon City in July 2015. Merkado Supermarket caters to the middle

income segment, and offers a wide range of fresh and grocery items, local and imported goods, and product lines from its own bakery and rotisserie.

Convenience stores continue to expand due to the bullish Business Process Outsourcing (BPO – call centers) sector and the increasing number of outlets opening in condominiums and areas outside Manila. These stores cover the business centers and BPO hubs and operate on a 24- hour basis, making them an ideal place for midnight shifters to grab food to eat during break time.

Aside from well-stocked shelves of packaged food, beverages, and other basic household necessities, convenience stores also offer other services such as bill payment and mobile phone reloading transactions. Convenience Stores and Gas Marts which are mainly location-oriented are thus able to sell products at a premium in exchange for convenience.

Convenience stores led the growth of modern grocery retailers in 2016 with almost 17% growth the number of outlets and 8% in terms of sales.

This was driven by both the expansion of existing players such as 7-Eleven, Mercury Drug, Ministop, and Alfamart coupled with the gaining popularity of various foreign brands such as Lawson and Family Mart.



on

Below is the summary profile of key convenience stores:

- Seven-Eleven is the country's biggest convenience store chain in the Philippines with almost 2,000 stores nationwide. Acquired by Philippine Seven Corporation in 1982 and established in 1998, 7-Eleven is the first franchisor in convenience retailing. Aside from grocery /food retailing, 7-Eleven also offers telecom, bills payment and banking kiosk services.
- Ministop Philippines is a subsidiary of Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc. that operates as a grocery and fast food diner combined. Established in 2000, Ministop now has almost 500 stores in Metro Manila and nearby provinces in Luzon.
- FamilyMart was launched in the Philippines in 2013 in partnership with the Ayala and Rustan's Group. Currently with 58 stores in Metro Manila, FamilyMart aims to increase its presence by opening more through franchising.
- Lawson, a convenience store giant in Japan, was launched in the Philippines last June 2015 through a joint venture by Puregold Price Club Inc. with Lawson Asia Pacific Inc. Now, with 25 stores, Lawson targets to roll out 500 branches in the next five years.
- Alfamart, an Indonesian-based convenience store operator is expanding its business to the Philippines through a joint venture with SM Investment Corp. It opened its first three stores in

the Philippines last year and now has more than 80 branches. Unlike the usual convenience stores that offer basic goods, Alfamart offers fresh meat, poultry and vegetables as well as food-to-go products.

- Mercury Drug Corporation is the leading chain of drugstores in the Philippines established in 1945, which eventually evolved into a combination of drugstore and convenience store. Now with more than 1,000 branches nationwide, Mercury Drug serves as a one-stop shop for customers who want to buy medicines and convenience food at the same time. Mercury Drug stores are commonly seen near hospitals, commercial buildings, residences, or inside malls.
- All Day Convenience Store is a Filipino-owned convenience and neighborhood store established in 2008. Owned by Manny Villar, the owner and developer of various residential properties such as Camella, Crown Asia and Vista Land, All Day Convenience Stores are primarily located near these residential developments.
- Circle K is an international chain of convenience stores franchised and managed by Suy Sing Group of Companies and Super 8 Retail Systems. Circle K convenience stores are primarily located in the outskirts of Manila.

**Table 4 - Key Food Retailers in the Philippines (as of October 2017)**

<b>Store Name / Company</b>	<b>No. of Outlets</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<b>Supermarket:</b>			
Robinsons Supermarket	123	Nationwide	Agents Importers
SM Supermarket	44	Nationwide	Importers
Puregold Extra	29	Nationwide	Exporters Importers
WalterMart	28	Metro Manila and Luzon	Agents Importers
Rustan's Supermarket	20	Nationwide	Exporters Agents Importers
Metro Supermarket (by Gaisano)	26	Nationwide	Exporters Importers
South Supermarket	10	Metro Manila and Luzon	Importers
CVC Supermarket Inc.	7	Central Luzon and Metro Manila	Importers
Cherry Fooderama	3	Manila	Importers
Landmark	3	Metro Manila	Importers
Makati Supermart (Unimart and Cash n' Carry)	3	Manila	Importers

Hi-Top Supermarket	2	Manila	Importers
Merkado (by Puregold and Ayala)*	1	Manila	Exporters Importers
Marketplace (by Rustans)*	7	Manila	Exporters Agents Importers
Robinsons Selections*	3	Manila	Agents Importers
<b>Neighborhood Supermarket:</b>			
SM Save More (by SM Supermarket)	152	Nationwide	Importers
Pure Gold Jr.	100	Nationwide	Exporters Importers
Wellcome Supermarket	21	Manila	Exporters Agents Importers
Shopwise Express (by Rustan's)	7	Nationwide	Exporters Agents Importers
Robinsons Easymart	17	Central Luzon and Manila	Agents Importers
<b>Hypermarket/ Warehouse:</b>			
Puregold Price Club	147	Nationwide	Exporters Agents Importers
SM Hypermarket	46	Nationwide	Importers
Super8 Grocery Warehouse	58	Metro Manila and Luzon	Importers
Super Metro (by Metro Gaisano)	14	Metro Manila, Luzon and Visayas	Exporters Importers
Shopwise (by Rustan's)	13	Metro Manila, Laguna and Cebu	Exporters Importers
S&R Membership Shopping	13	Nationwide	Exporters Agents Importers
Metro Hypermarket	12	Nationwide	Exporters Importers
Landers Superstore	5	Metro Manila & Cebu	Exporters Agents Importers
Jaynith's Supermarket (by Robinsons)	3	Nationwide	Agents Importers
<b>Convenience Stores:</b>			
Phil. Seven Corp (7-Eleven)	2,027	Nationwide	Importers
Mercury Drug Corporation	1,100	Nationwide	Importers
Mini Stop (by Robinsons)	500+	Metro Manila and Luzon	Importers
Alfamart (by SM)	255	Metro Manila and Cavite	Importers
San Miguel Food Avenue	149	Nationwide	Importers
Shell Select (in Shell Gas	111	Nationwide	Importers

Stations)			
Family Mart (by Rustan's)	68	Metro Manila	Exporters Agents Importers
All Day Convenience Store	67	Metro Manila	Importers
Bonjour (in Total Oil Stations)	39	Metro Manila	Importers
Circle K (by Super 8)	27	Luzon	Importers
Lawson (by Puregold)	25	Metro Manila	Exporters Agents Importers
Petron Treats (in Petron Gas Stations)	18	Metro Manila	Importers

\* A supermarket that offers more premium and more exclusive products than a regular supermarket

## B. Traditional Retailers



In the Philippines, “sari-sari” stores (a.k.a. “mom & pop” stores) still dominate the retail market. “Sari-sari” which means “variety”, indicates the wide variety of basic food and grocery products that are essential to the household. Sari-sari stores are usually constructed as an extension of the owners’ house. The absence of chain supermarkets and convenience stores in some provincial areas highlights the importance of mom & pop stores which are the primary source of packaged food products, home care, and beauty and personal products. Their dominance in rural areas is due to geographical convenience, intimate customer service and payment flexibility that allows short-term credit to regular neighborhood patrons.

Mom & pop stores are important in serving the needs of lower and middle-income consumers. With a huge proportion of buyers who are still living on or below the minimum wage, mom & pop stores are the most convenient for customers with seasonal or daily income to buy in small quantities and purchase on credit.

In 2016, sales of sari-sari stores were estimated to reach more than \$26.94 billion, accounting for almost 60% of total food retail country.

Another type of a traditional food retailer is market. Wet markets are located in every



in the

the wet town or

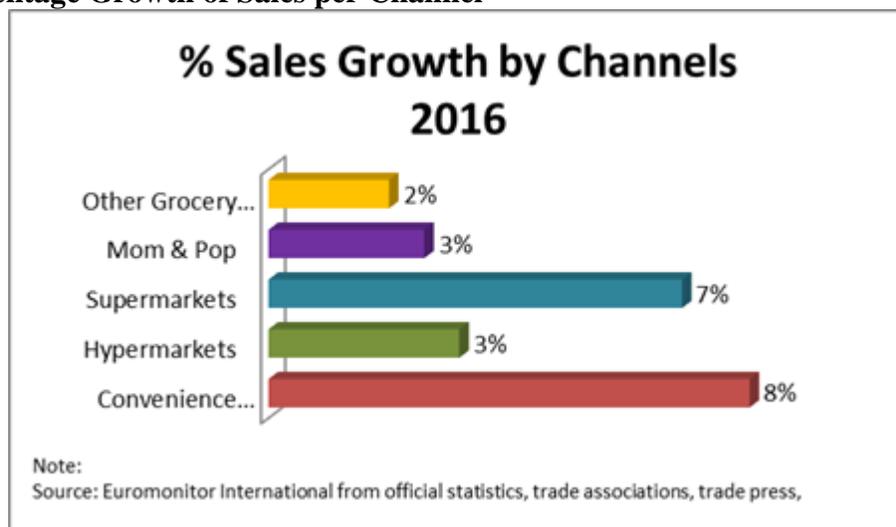
municipality. Items offered in wet markets are grains, fresh produce such as meat, fish, chicken, and fruits and vegetables which are comparatively lower in price than those in supermarkets or groceries.

While many Filipino consumers still shop at wet markets for fresh vegetables and meat, many are shifting to supermarkets because of convenience, cleanliness and food safety factors.

### C. Other Retailers

Other retailers include shops which specialize in selling drinks and tobacco. These specialty retailers are very few and often cater to upscale patrons. Low-priced and mid-priced drinks and tobacco are often sold in sari-sari stores, supermarkets and hypermarkets.

**Chart 4 – Percentage Growth of Sales per Channel**



With new entrants in supermarkets and convenience store chains and increasing numbers of outlets, the food retail industry in the Philippines is expected to steadily grow every year according to the Philippine Association of Supermarkets, Inc.

### Trends in Distribution Channels

Importer/distributors are in direct contact with big supermarkets, hyper-marts and wholesale clubs. Smaller stores, such as "mom and pop" or sari-sari stores are handled by agents or middle men. It may also be noted that there are big distributors which employ sub-distributors particularly for the rural areas or provinces. While this practice reduces the distributor's mark-up, it increases their sales volume.

Although infrastructure has improved, there is a long way to go for improvement. Traffic in urban areas, particularly in Metro Manila increases distribution cost. Communication between supplier and retailer has also improved. Major retail supermarket chains have already computerized their operations from front to back-end operations.

**Trends in Services Offered by Food Retailers**

Retailers are now responding to the demands of increasingly busy consumers. Some supermarkets offer food-to-go counters and salad bars, while other supermarkets integrate a pharmacy inside their store, making it a one-stop shop for busy customers.

Some convenience stores have incorporated fast-food services where customers can enjoy the convenience of eating freshly prepared fast food in the store’s dine-in area. This was introduced by Robinson’s Retail Group when they opened Mini-Stop. Now, 7-Eleven, Family Mart, and Lawson provide dine-in facilities as part of their fast-food services.

Online retailing of grocery is still unpopular in the Philippines. While some consumers started to explore online alternatives due to lack of time and poor traffic conditions, especially in Manila, majority of the consumers still prefer doing their own grocery shopping at physical stores to ensure quality and affordability of the products they purchase.

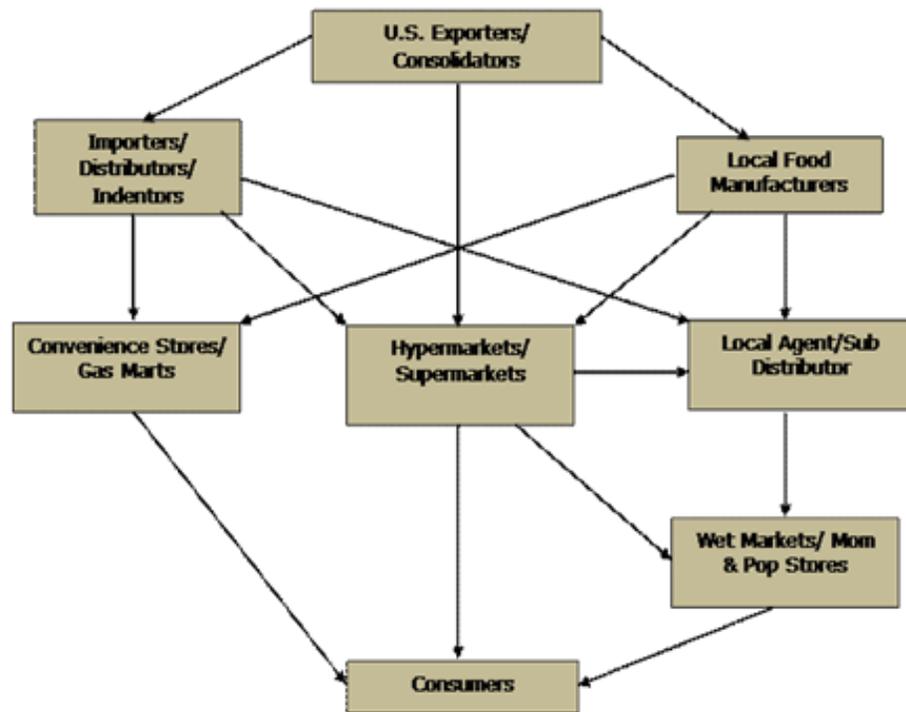
**Table 5 - Advantages & Challenges of the Food Retail Sector**

Advantages (Sector Strengths)	Challenges
The Philippines is a mature and growing market for U.S. food, beverage and ingredient products with export sales of \$926.2 million in 2016.	Stiff competition with other countries including New Zealand, China and Australia
Filipinos have strong preference on U.S. food, beverage and ingredients products.	U.S. products are not always price-competitive as compared to imports from other countries especially those products from ASEAN countries.
Philippine consumers perceive U.S. brands to be safe and of high quality.	Delivery/Availability of products requires large inventories
Proliferation of malls encourages further expansion of food retail establishments leading to more demand of imported food items	Food retail markets demand high slotting fees per SKU of products and year-round marketing support which place a big burden for the new-to-market U.S. exporter.

Opening of modern retail markets provides customers with more alternatives of local and imported products	Local markets prefer smaller retail packs due to affordability
Modern retail markets are expanding allowing more Philippine consumers to have access to new imported products.	Availability of most imported products are concentrated in Metro Manila and major key cities only.
Growing middle class means more disposable income spent on high-value products	Value-for-money remains the most significant influence of Filipino's purchase decisions.
Demand for healthy and gourmet food is increasing.	Gourmet and healthy foods are more expensive.
Fast pace of modern living leads to more demand of convenience foods	Food and beverage products at convenience stores are sold at a premium price, 10-20% higher than those sold in the supermarkets

### III. Road Map for Market Entry

#### A. Market Structure



#### B. Entry Strategy

1. Supermarkets, Hypermarkets and Warehouse Stores

U.S. exporters who wish to supply food products to local food retailers may prefer to have an exclusive importer/distributor or engage the services of a trading firm in order to enter the market instead of putting up a local company in the Philippines. These importers or trading firms usually have their own distributors and sometimes act as distributors themselves. This strategy eliminates the inconvenience of having to register a local company and hire personnel which could be expensive in the long run.

Importer/Distributors are also typically well-versed on local customs and import paperwork issues, freeing the exporter from having to deal with these.

Large retail stores usually have many suppliers which include local manufacturing companies or their distributors, trading firms or importer/distributors. There are, however, retailers who direct import some products themselves, although sourcing from importers/distributors is the most common and preferred practice in the industry. These retailers normally have a central receiving, warehousing and distribution center.

## 2. Convenience Stores

Convenience stores in the Philippines are usually a chain of stores operated by one parent company. Exporters who would like to supply to convenience stores are advised to appoint an importer/distributor. Importers/distributors who distribute to big retail stores also distribute to convenience stores or gas marts. However, products for distribution in convenience stores and gas marts are basic necessities to consumers; otherwise, fast turnover of the product is not guaranteed.

Distributors must contact the head offices of the convenience stores and offer to be a supplier. These distributors may be distributors of Importers/Distributors or distributors of big manufacturing firms.

## 3. Traditional Retail Markets (i.e. Mom & Pop" and Wet Markets)

Exporters have difficulty entering the "Mom & Pop" stores since these markets mainly concentrate on selling small packaged food items and essential household items on low margins. "Mom & Pop" stores usually source their products from Supermarkets, Hypermarkets or Warehouse Stores. Distributors of local food manufacturers also supply to "Mom and Pop" stores.

Similar with the "Mom and Pop stores", penetrating the wet market is challenging for exporters since most imported products available in wet markets only include fresh fruits such as apples, table grapes and oranges that are sourced from local wholesalers and distributors. Limited varieties of imported canned fruits and vegetables are occasionally available, as during Christmas and Chinese New Year. It is to be noted that retailers in wet markets occupy stalls that average to 4-6 square meters. Wet market retailers are not expected to become a significant retailer of imported food products, other than for fresh fruits and vegetables. Traditionally, wet markets are the main source of fresh produce and meat.

## C. Regulatory Systems and Import Requirements

For detailed information regarding standards and regulations for importing food and agricultural products into the Philippines, please refer to the report entitled "**Philippines: Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards – Narrative**" also available on-line through the FAS homepage at [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov).

## **D. Exporter Business Tips**

- Filipino businessmen value trust and personal relations. U.S. exporters are encouraged to maintain close contact with their Philippine importers. Regular market visits are favored by Philippine importers and regarded as a show of support.
- Some Philippine importers maintain buying offices in the United States and consolidate their shipments through third-party consolidators on the West Coast.
- Exclusive distributorship agreements are preferred by Philippine importers. U.S. exporters can work with one or several importers provided the market coverage of each importer is properly identified.
- Only a few retail supermarkets have the capacity to import directly.
- Philippine food regulations and standards generally follow the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. All food products must be registered with the Philippine Food and Drug Administration. Imported products may be registered only by a Filipino entity (importers). Products from the United States do not require special labeling and may be sold in the Philippines in the same commercial packaging.
- U.S. exporters are advised to require payment of goods via letter of credit, especially for initial transactions. Credit terms may be extended to the importer after conducting a thorough background and credit investigation, and after payment habits have been established.
- There are no distribution hubs. It is essential to identify importers that can distribute to the three major cities (Manila, Cebu and Davao). Most importers distribute while some appoint distributors.
- General Pricing Structure From Landed Cost (CIF + Duties & Taxes)
  - Add 30 percent to arrive at the wholesale price for food service customers
  - Add 20-40 percent to arrive at the price for retail supermarkets
  - Supermarkets add a 6-15 percent mark-up to arrive at the price sold to end-consumers
- Credit Terms
  - For retail, products are mostly on a consignment basis. Importers collect payment after 30 days. For products purchased on an outright basis, retailers demand 60-90 days credit terms from importers.
  - The foodservice industry, hotels and restaurants request for 30-60 days credit.
  - The food manufacturing industry requests 30 days credit.
- Retailers demand high slotting fees (about \$120 per stock keeping unit or SKU) + year-round marketing support (\$1,000-\$2,000 per annum). U.S. exporters should, as much as possible, support marketing and promotional efforts.

- Filipino consumers generally prefer smaller packaging sizes.
- Due to insufficient cold chain infrastructure in the Philippines, products should be packed to withstand extreme heat and humidity.
- The high cost of inter-island shipping makes imported products more expensive in areas outside Manila.
- The release of imported goods from Philippine Customs sometimes poses a challenge.

#### IV. Food Retail Sector Best F&B Prospects

The potential for greater exports of U.S. consumer-oriented food and beverage products to the Philippine retail sector is high for a wide diversity of products, including beef, pork, poultry, seafood, processed vegetables, fresh and processed fruits, nuts, dairy products, juices, alcohol beverages, condiments and sauces, processed organic foods, bakery goods, snacks, and confectioneries.

While domestically produced items only account for about 80 percent of the total food supply with the balance being imported, food retailers remain very optimistic with regards to the competitiveness of imported products. Though most of the imported items cost more than locally-produced ones, U.S. products still remain very popular and have great appeal to Philippine consumers. U.S. products are perceived to have superior quality compared to imports from other countries.

**Table 6 – U.S. Consumer Oriented F&B Exports to the Philippines**

U.S. Food & Beverage Exports to the Philippines								
CY 2012-2017								
(in Millions of Dollars)								
	Calendar Years (Jan-Dec)					Jan-Aug Comparisons		
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% Change	
<b>Food &amp; Beverage Total</b>	<b>866.1</b>	<b>997.8</b>	<b>1,110.9</b>	<b>898.5</b>	<b>923.4</b>	<b>568.3</b>	<b>631.4</b>	<b>11</b>
Dairy Products	317.4	363.9	421.5	251.3	226.9	134.8	172.8	28
Prepared Food	58.5	69.3	88.5	84.5	88.6	58.4	60.2	3
Pork & Pork Products	88.2	112.3	103.5	79.5	78.9	46.3	63.4	37
Poultry Meat & Prods.	89.2	83.2	92.8	67.7	77.3	52.2	60.1	15
Processed Vegetables	48.1	56.0	70.6	72.8	71.9	47.8	51.9	9
Fresh Fruit	50.9	60.5	62.6	51.0	64.7	26.2	18.2	-30
Snack Foods NESOI	38.2	43.7	51.2	47.9	63.0	41.7	36.0	-14
Beef & Beef Products	44.9	54.5	59.3	63.7	54.5	32.7	42.9	31
Chocolate & Cocoa	34.8	40.0	40.8	41.5	47.2	30.1	30.6	2

Prods.									
Condiments & Sauces	14.2	17.3	20.4	24.8	33.6	22.2	16.6	-25	
Dog & Cat Food	22.4	25.7	26.0	23.6	26.2	16.6	20.5	24	
Non-Alcoholic Bev.	13.2	15.6	13.6	17.8	19.4	14.3	13.9	-3	
Processed Fruit	12.0	13.3	13.0	16.4	13.8	8.4	9.6	13	
Wine & Beer	8.0	9.5	9.0	12.1	13.6	10.6	9.6	-10	
Fruit & Vegetable Juices	8.3	9.7	11.6	13.6	11.5	7.3	7.9	7	
Tree Nuts	5.5	5.0	7.1	7.8	9.4	5.5	5.5		
Meat Products NESOI	5.6	9.4	9.5	11.6	9.4	5.1	5.1	1	
Fresh Vegetables	3.4	5.4	5.6	7.6	6.7	4.5	2.5	-45	
Eggs & Products	2.2	2.3	2.3	1.1	3.7	1.4	1.9	36	
Breakfast Cereals	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.3	2.6	1.6	1.8	10	
Other Consumer Oriented	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.4	21	
Notes:									
1. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau Trade Data									
2. Product Group : BICO-HS10									

### Top U.S. Product Prospects

The established reputation of U.S. food and beverage products in the food retail sector in terms of quality, availability and versatility represent an advantage for U.S. exporters seeking to develop and expand their market in the Philippines.

### Healthy, Natural & Organic Products:

Although U.S. Customs does not track these products as a separate category, retail stores have been increasing shelf-space to accommodate the growing number of new-to-market healthy, natural & organic products because of the rise in disposable income, and the strong consumer trend towards health, wellness and beauty.

### Gourmet Products:

Most retailers maintain a gourmet section including products such as meats, seafood, fruits & vegetables, specialty cheeses, sauces & condiments, herbs & spices, wines, craft beers and other beverages, dried fruits & nuts, specialty biscuits, snack foods, and chocolate & confectionery. There are several independent operators of gourmet shops within high-end neighborhoods.

### Instant or “Convenience” Foods:

Because of the country’s bullish business process outsourcing (BPO) industry that operates around the clock and the rise in the number of women joining the workforce, traders report strong demand in products that can be classified as “convenient” including snack foods, meal-replacements and ready-to-drink beverages. The Philippines is the 8th largest market in the world and the largest market in Southeast Asia for U.S. snack foods, consisting mainly of corn chips, chocolates, potato chips, sweet biscuits, popcorn and confectionery.

**“Double” Products:**

In addition to being consumed directly, many U.S. F&B products (e.g. dairy, meat, poultry, dried fruits and tree nuts) are being used by the Philippines’ booming food processing industry.

**Dairy Products:**

The Philippines is the 5th largest export market in the world for U.S. dairy products with \$226.9 million export sales in 2016. The largest U.S. dairy product export to the Philippines is non-fat dry milk (NFDM). Consumers and the Philippine food processing industry are the major purchasers of NFDM. The Philippines is a key market in Southeast Asia for standard and gourmet U.S. cheese products. Traders are optimistic about the growing market potential of gourmet cheese products due to the booming Philippine economy. Standard cheeses dominate total sales, but gourmet cheeses are gaining popularity and command very high prices (e.g \$20-30/lb).

**Beef Products:**

In 2016, The Philippines is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest export market for beef and beef products, with \$54.5 million in exports. U.S. beef exports have been robust as U.S. prime rib and other high-value cuts have become standard menu offerings. The growth is expected to continue as incomes rise, and the number of finer dining options proliferate throughout the country. Strong growth in exports of high-value beef cuts to supermarkets, hotels and restaurants are expected to continue.

**Poultry Meat:**

Poultry consumption (particularly chicken) per capita in the Philippines is expected to amount to about 12 kilograms per person annually in 2017. Second to pork, demand for chicken is expected to continue to grow in the coming years. About 70 percent of imported chicken meat is comprised of frozen chicken legs and wings.

**Prepared Food:**

Traders report growth in sales of baking ingredients such as cocoa products, pie fillings, pre-mixes, jams and jellies, and flavorings due to the proliferation of small bakeshops that sell premium-quality artisanal baked goods.

**Processed Vegetables:**

The Philippines is the 7th largest export market in the world for U.S. frozen potatoes. This category also includes dehydrated potatoes, canned tomatoes, olives, vegetables, garlic and onion powder, etc.

**Fresh Fruits:**

The Philippines is the 12th largest export market in the world for fresh fruits, and a key market for other U.S. fresh fruits such as apples, oranges, lemons, pears and cherries. There is a growing demand for melons, pears, berries and stone fruits.

**Fresh Vegetables:**

The Philippines formally opened its market to U.S. fresh celery, lettuce, and cruciferous vegetables (e.g. broccoli and cauliflower) in 2014. As the only country with official access to the entire Philippine market for these temperate climate vegetables (which are in limited supply domestically), U.S. exporters are poised to take advantage of opportunities in the booming Philippine food service and retail sectors.

Further, the Philippines allowed the importation of U.S. fresh table stock potatoes for consumption. In the past, U.S. fresh potatoes entering the Philippine market were restricted to chipping and processing purposes.

#### **V. Further Information & Assistance**

USDA-FAS in Manila is ready to help exporters of U.S. food and beverage products achieve their objectives in the Philippines. For further information or assistance please contact:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
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Embassy of the United States of America  
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Manila, Philippines  
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