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Report Highlights:

In 2025, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was the fifth-largest market for U.S. agricultural and related product exports. The Korean retail food market continues to evolve as consumers seek both value and premium quality, while demand for convenient, health-oriented, and value-added foods remains strong. Korea has one of the most diverse sets of marketing channels in the world, including a highly developed e-commerce sector. Consumers increasingly expect a seamless shopping experience across physical stores, websites, and mobile apps. The continued expansion of e-commerce and omnichannel retailing creates new sales opportunities for imported food products. The United States remained the leading supplier of consumer-oriented agricultural products to Korea's retail sector, with import value reaching \$6.0 billion. Demand for premium and high-quality imported foods is expected to continue supporting market opportunities for a broad range of U.S. agricultural products.

MARKET FACT SHEET: REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Executive Summary

In 2025, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was ranked as the 13th largest economy in the world with a GDP of \$1.88 trillion and a per capita GNI of \$36,963. The ROK is about the size of Indiana, with a population of 51.7 million. Over 80 percent of Koreans live in urban areas. Domestic production meets only 46 percent of food demand. The United States exported \$10.2 billion in agricultural and related products to the ROK in 2025, making it United States' fifth largest country export market. The United States supplies around 22 percent of the ROK's agricultural and related products imports.

Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports

In 2025, the ROK imported consumer-oriented agricultural products totaling around \$21 billion. In this segment, U.S. exports can address many growth opportunities, including beef, pork, fruits, tree nuts, dairy products, confectioneries, beverages, and further prepared foods.

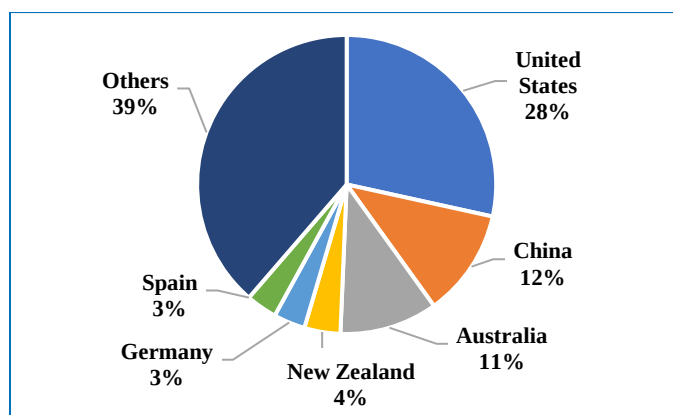


Chart 1: Top Exporting Countries to South Korea

Food Retail Industry

Korean retail food sales totaled \$130 billion in 2025, accounting for 32 percent of total retail sales (excluding automobiles). Among grocery retailers except e-commerce, convenience stores were the leading retail channel, followed by hypermarket discount stores, super supermarkets, neighborhood grocery stores, and traditional markets.

Food Processing Industry

In 2024, Korea had over 31,771 food processing companies, generating \$66.6 billion in sales. Korean food processing companies rely heavily on imported commodities and ingredients. Imports of basic and intermediate agricultural products totaled \$16.9 billion in 2024. Eighteen percent (\$3.2 billion) of these imports came from the United States.

Food Service Industry

Korea's HRI sector reached \$145.8 billion in 2024, up 3.73 percent from the previous year. Despite rising labor and ingredient costs, and weak consumer confidence, the sector remained relatively stable. As consumer demand for affordable dining options and delivery services continues, HRI growth will also expand; meanwhile business operators will continue to manage costs.

Quick Facts CY 2025

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

US \$21 billion (\$6.0 billion from USA)

Top 10 Import Growth (%) Products in the ROK, by value (BICO, 2024-2025)

- 1) Dairy Products (23%)
- 2) Chocolate & Cocoa Products (13%)
- 3) Tree Nuts (12%)
- 4) Coffee, Roasted and Extracts (10%)
- 5) Spices (8%)
- 6) Condiments & Sauces (6%)
- 7) Meat Products (5%)
- 8) Beer (5%)
- 9) Poultry Meat & Prods. (ex. eggs) (4%)
- 10) Chewing Gum & Candy (4%)

Food Industry by Channels (\$U.S. billion)

Retail Food Industry (2025)	\$130
Food Service-HRI (2024)	\$145.8
Food Processing (2024)	\$66.6
Food and Agriculture Exports (2025)	\$13

Top 10 Korean Retailers

Coupang LLC, Shinsegae Co Ltd, Naver Corp, Lotte Group, GS Holdings Corp, Alphabet Inc, BGF Retail Co Ltd, Hyundai Department Store Co Ltd, SK Telecom Co Ltd, Costco Wholesale Corp

GDP/Population (2025)

Population: 51.7 million

GDP: US\$ 1.88 trillion

GDP per capita: US\$ 36,414

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Well established market with modern distribution channels - Consumer income level continues to increase	- High logistics cost to ship American products - Complex import regulations including food safety and labeling standards.
Opportunities	Threats
- Strong consumer demand for value, quality, and diversity - KORUS FTA reduces tariff barriers for American products.	- Elevated competition from export-oriented competitors - Discrepancies in food safety and labeling regulations

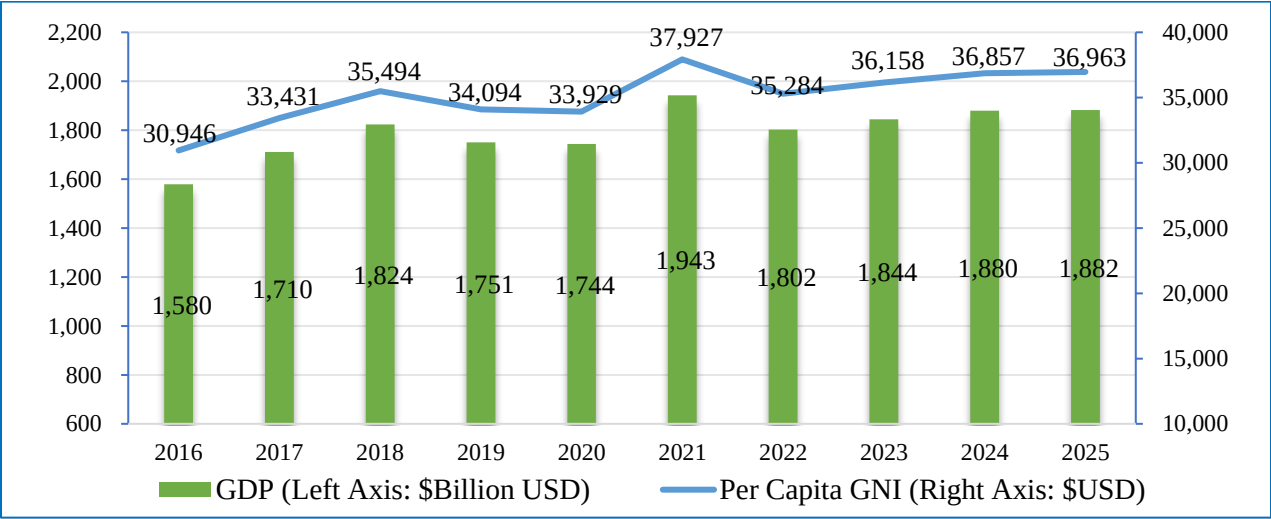
Data and Information Sources: Latest available statistics are used in this publication and will continue to be updated throughout the year as new data is available. Bank of Korea, Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS), Korea Ministry of Food & Drug Safety, Korea National Statistics Office, Korea International Trade Association, Euromonitor International.

Contact: U.S. Agricultural Trade Office Seoul

Section 1: Market Summary

National Economy: The Republic of Korea (ROK) has one of the world's largest and most advanced economies, supported by a highly export-oriented industrial base and globally competitive technology sectors. In 2025, the country's nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) totaled \$1.88 trillion, remaining essentially unchanged from the previous year, while Gross National Income (GNI) per capita edged up 0.6 percent to \$36,963 (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Korea: Economy Trend for 10 Years



Source: The Bank of Korea (www.ecos.bok.or.kr)

Although Korea's economic growth remained modest in 2025, household spending continued to face headwinds from persistent inflation, a weaker Korean won, economic uncertainty, and long-term demographic trends, including an aging population and a declining birthrate. In contrast, merchandise exports reached a record \$709.7 billion, up 3.8 percent from the previous year, supported by strong global demand for semiconductors, automobiles, and ships.

Domestic Retail Market: Korea's retail market remained relatively resilient in 2025 despite sluggish private consumption and economic uncertainty. According to Statistics Korea, total retail sales, excluding automobiles, reached approximately 586 trillion Korean won (about \$412 billion), up 1.2 percent from the previous year. Consumer spending continued to favor products offering quality, convenience, and value, while retailers strengthened omnichannel strategies and expanded premium product offerings. Korean household food spending has continued to rise in nominal terms, but real food consumption has weakened as rising prices pressure household budgets. In 2025, household spending on food and non-alcoholic beverages increased 1.9 percent YOY, while real spending declined 1.1 percent.

Among major retail formats, online retailing remained the fastest-growing channel, with non-store retail sales reaching 142.7 trillion Korean won (\$104.66 billion), up 3.5 percent from 2024. Continued growth in e-commerce, mobile shopping, and rapid delivery services have added pressure to traditional markets and smaller independent retailers. Department stores also recorded moderate growth, supported in part by continued demand for premium and luxury products. Hypermarkets and supermarkets face strong competition from online shopping and convenience-oriented purchasing. Convenience stores maintained relatively stable sales, reflecting their important role in everyday grocery purchases and ready-to-eat meals. However, compared with previous years, growth is slowing.

Grocery Retail Market: Retail sales of grocery food products reached approximately 185 trillion Korean won (about \$130 billion) in 2025, up 2.0 percent from the previous year. Food products accounted for approximately 32 percent of total retail sales, highlighting the significant role of grocery retailing in Korea's consumer market. **Figure 2** illustrates the trend in grocery food sales through retail channels over the past five years.

Figure 2. Korea: Grocery Food Product Sales in Retail Industry



Source: Retail Industry Statistics, Korea National Statistics Office (NSO, <http://kosis.kr>)

Advantages and Challenges

In 2025, Korea was the fifth-largest country market for U.S. agricultural and related product exports. The United States also remained the leading supplier of consumer-oriented agricultural products to Korea's retail sector. U.S.-origin food and agricultural products are well regarded by Korean consumers and importers for their quality, safety, product variety, and reliable supply (see **Table 1**).

Continued demand for premium, convenient, and health-oriented imported foods is expected to create opportunities for a broad range of U.S. products, including beef, pork, food preparations (HS 2106), dairy products, fresh fruit, tree nuts, and processed fruit and vegetable products.

The Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA), along with strong bilateral commercial relationships and continued market development activities, supports market access and opportunities for U.S. products across the retail, food service, and food processing sectors.

However, U.S. products face strong competition from suppliers offering lower prices, as Korean consumers remain value conscious. Higher product and logistics costs, along with fluctuating exchange rate, limiting the U.S. export competitiveness in price-sensitive categories.

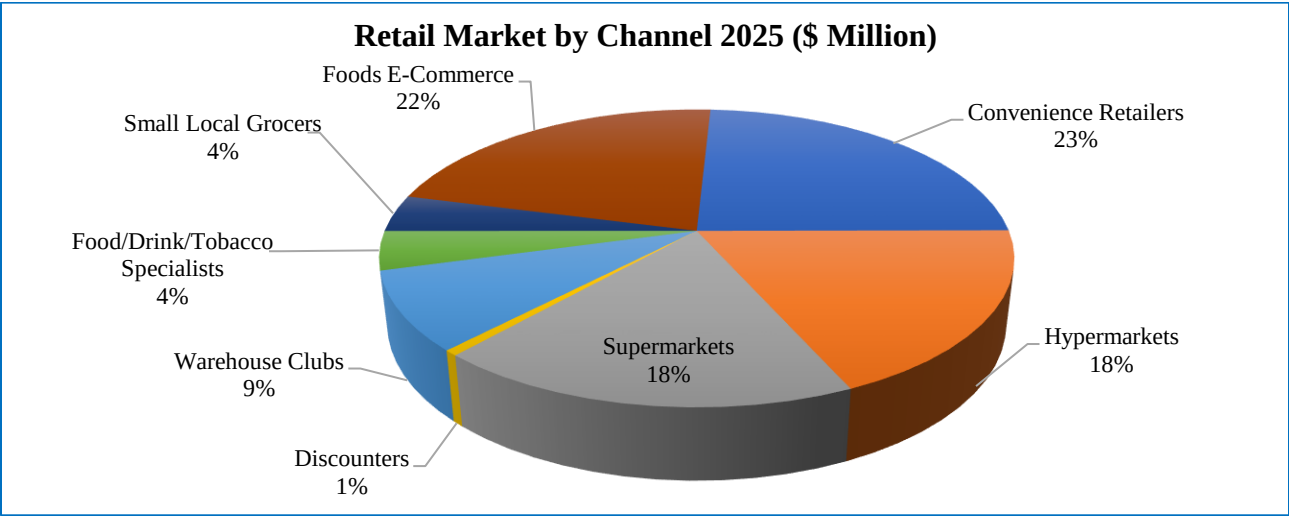
Table 1. Korea: Advantages and Challenges for U.S. Products

Advantages	Challenges
Retail infrastructure: Korea is one of Asia's most advanced retail markets, with well-developed distribution channels and widespread adoption of e-commerce, providing efficient market access for imported food products.	Preference for domestic fresh foods: Korean consumers generally prefer domestically produced fresh foods, particularly fruits, vegetables, rice, and livestock products.
Dependence on imports: Limited arable land and relatively low food self-sufficiency create sustained demand for imported food and agricultural products.	Regulatory requirements: Imported foods are subject to stringent and frequently changing food safety regulations and documentation requirements. Exporters need to closely monitor regulatory changes.
Growing demand for premium and value-added foods: Consumers increasingly seek premium, healthy, convenient, and differentiated products, creating opportunities for high-value U.S. consumer-ready foods.	Price competitiveness: U.S. food products can face price disadvantages due to exchange-rate fluctuations, higher production costs, and transportation expenses compared with some competing suppliers.
Strong reputation and market access: The United States is widely recognized as a reliable supplier of high-quality and safe food products. The KORUS FTA provides preferential or duty-free access for a wide range of U.S. food products, supporting the competitiveness of U.S. products.	Intense competition: Higher U.S. food prices and continued competition from major suppliers, including China, Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the European Union, can limit U.S. market share in price-sensitive categories.

Retail Sales by Channel

According to Euromonitor International’s dataset, the total sales of the ROK’s grocery retail segments amounted to \$94.5 billion in 2025. **Figure 3** shows the breakout of sales of Korean grocery retailers including foods e-commerce.

Figure 3. Korea: Grocery Sales of Retail Industry by Channel (2025)



Source: Euromonitor International

Section 2: Road Map for Market Entry

Entry Strategy

New-to-market U.S. exporters may consider several approaches to enter the Korean retail market, including developing relationships with Korean importers or trading agents, selling through U.S. trading companies or consolidators, establishing a local office, or exporting directly to Korean retailers.

In practice, Korean retailers rely heavily on independent importers and distributors for imported food products. While some leading retailers directly import high-volume products such as fresh fruit, beef, and seafood, working with experienced Korean importers or distributors remains the most practical entry strategy for most new-to-market U.S. exporters. For more information on establishing business partners in Korea and on the top imported consumer-ready food products, please refer to the [2026 Exporter Guide](#) report published by Post.

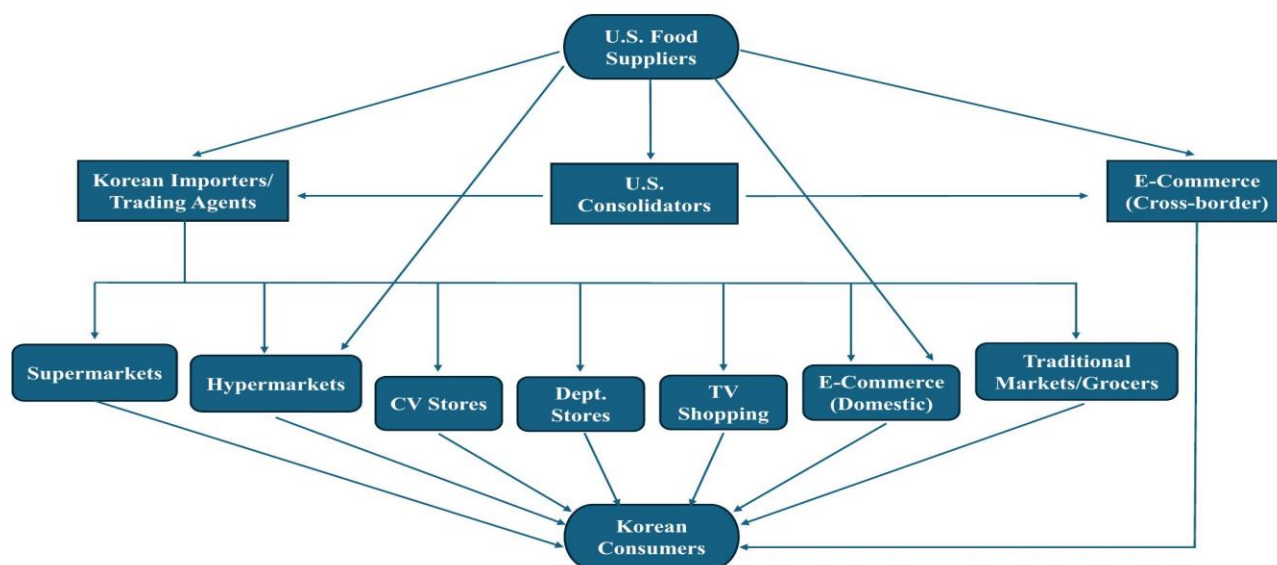
The Department of Commerce's [Country Commercial Guide](#) also contains useful information on the Korean market.

ATO Seoul also offers various marketing tools and trade facilitation help to U.S. suppliers and also offers information about the Korea market on its [website](#), including:

- Annual reports and periodic briefs on key products and industries
- Korean agricultural import data by 4-digit HS product classification (monthly spreadsheets)
- Local media food news clippings and contact information for industry organizations

Suppliers should also ensure their products meet Korean food regulations and standards. For assistance in identifying or resolving regulatory issues, please contact [the Office of Agricultural Affairs \(OAA\) Seoul](#).

Market Structure



Source: ATO Seoul Analysis

Company Profiles and Top Korean Retailers

The following tables show major retailers under each segment of Korean food retail market.

Table 2. Korea: Top E-Commerce Retailers (2025)

Company / Site Name		Sales Value (Billion K/won)	Website
Coupang Co. / Coupang		49,120	coupang.com
Naver Co. / Naver Shopping		12,350	naver.com
Kakao Co. / Kakao Shopping		8,991	store.kakao.com
Kurly Corp.		2,367	kurly.com
Gmarket Inc. / Gmarket & Auction		741	gmarket.co.kr auction.co.kr
SK Planet Co. / 11 th Street		438	11st.com

Source: Company IR reports, company internet homepages, Euromonitor passports – Retail E-Commerce.

Table 3. Korea: Top TV Shopping Channels with Online Mall (2025)

Company / Channel Name	Annual Sales (Billion K/Won)	Website
CJ ENM Commerce / CJ Onstyle	1,518	cjonstyle.com
Hyundai Home Shopping Network Corp. / Hmall	1,090	hmall.com
GS Retail Co. / GS Shop	1,049	gsshop.com
Lotte Home Shopping Co. / Lotte Home Shopping	902	lotteimall.com
NS Shopping Co. / NSmall	612	nsmall.com
Home & Shopping Co. / Home & Shopping	418	hnsmall.com
Shinsegae Home Shopping Co. / Shinsegae Live Shopping	337	Shinsegaetvshopping.com

Source: Company IR reports, company internet homepages, media news articles.

Table 4. Korea: Top Retailers with Offline Stores (2025)

Segment	Company / Brand	Store #
Grocery Supermarkets	Nonghyup Hanaro Yutong Co. / Hanaro Mart	2,200
	GS Retail Co. / GS The Fresh	596
	Lotte Shopping Co. / Lotte Super	338
	Homeplus Co. / Home Plus Express	293
	EMART, Inc. / No Brand	270
	EMART, Inc. / EMART Everyday	242
Hypermarkets	EMART, Inc. / EMART	132
	Lotte Shopping Co. / Lotte Mart	112
	Homeplus Co. / HomePlus	67
	EMART, Inc. / Traders Wholesale Club	24
	COSTCO Wholesale / COSTCO	20
Convenience Stores	BGF Retail Co. / CU	18,711
	GS Retail Co. / GS25	18,005
	Korea Seven Co. / Seven Eleven	11,040
	EMART, Inc. / EMART24	5,510
Department Stores	Lotte Shopping Co. / Lotte Dept. Store	32
	Shinsegae Co. / Shinsegae Dept. Store	13
	Hyundai Dept. Co. / Hyundai Dept. Store	13
	E Land Retail Co. / New Core Dept. Store	12
	Hanwha Galleria / Galleria Dept. Store	5
Organic Grocery Stores	Chorocmaeul Co. / Chorocmaeul	216
	OASIS Corp. / OASIS Market	50
	Pulmuone Co. / ORGA Whole Foods	5
Health & Beauty Stores	CJ Olive Networks Co. / Olive Young	1,369
	CJ Olive Networks Co. / Olive Better	10
	Shinsegae Co. / CHICOR	21

Source: Company IR reports, company internet homepages, media news articles.

Import Procedures

U.S. suppliers seeking entry into Korea should first determine if there is a potential market for their products in Korea. Research should cover key marketing and regulatory issues including consumption trends, size of the market and competition, major distribution channels, import tariffs and local taxes, and labeling and food additive restrictions.

Imported products must comply with all local rules to enter the market, and suppliers need to check if their products conform to the guidelines. [The Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Country Report](#) and [FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#) provide an overview of relevant standards and regulations.

For assistance in reaching out to established Korean import distributors and retail buyers, please contact [the Agricultural Trade Office \(ATO\) Seoul](#). ATO Seoul offers various marketing tools and trade facilitation supports to U.S. suppliers on [its website](#), including:

- [GAIN Reports](#): Routine and voluntary reports on key products, industries, and regulatory issues published by FAS Seoul.
- [Buyer Alerts](#): Your product/business offer will be announced via e-mail to pertinent Korean buyers registered in ATO Seoul's Industry Contact Database. The service is free of charge and is limited to U.S. origin food and agricultural products only.

Exporters of meat products should also check export requirements on the [Food Safety Inspection Service Export Library](#). Sanitary and phytosanitary requirements can be found on the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) [IRegs website](#). Exporters should also consult closely with their Korean importers to ensure they meet the latest regulations.

Distribution Channels and Major Segments

Supermarkets have traditionally been a leading retail channel for Korean grocery shoppers, followed by online retailers, hypermarkets, convenience stores, department stores, and other retail formats, including independent grocers, specialty stores, traditional markets, and duty-free stores. However, Korea's food retail landscape has changed significantly in recent years, driven by evolving consumer preferences, demographic shifts, and broader socioeconomic changes.

Convenience Stores: According to Statistics Korea, the convenience store food sales index rose from 100 in 2020 to 127.9 in 2025. Growth slowed significantly in 2025, with sales increasing by only 0.4 percent from the previous year. The modest increase suggests that growth in convenience store food sales has entered a more mature phase. At the same time, convenience stores are expanding beyond traditional snacks, beverages, and ready-to-eat meals to offer lunch boxes, home meal replacement (HMR) products, fresh produce, eggs, meat, and other everyday grocery staples. These expanded offerings are strengthening the role of convenience stores as neighborhood food retailers, particularly for single-person and smaller households.

Non-store Retailers (Online Retailing): The food sales index for non-store retailers rose from 100 in 2020 to 175.8 in 2025, representing a 75.8 percent increase over five years. In 2025 alone, the index increased 8.0 percent from 162.8 in 2024 to 175.8, marking the strongest year-on-year growth among major retail formats. The continued growth reflects Korea's structural shift toward online and mobile food shopping, supported by sustained consumer demand for online grocery purchases, including fresh food delivery, same-day and early-morning delivery, HMR products, and processed foods.

Hypermarkets: Food sales at hypermarkets rose from 100 in 2020 to 117.0 in 2025 but edged down 0.1 percent from 117.1 in 2024. The limited growth reflects increasing competition from online grocery shopping and consumers' growing preference for more convenient purchasing channels. Nevertheless, hypermarkets remain an important channel for bulk purchases, fresh food, and larger grocery trips. Rather than experiencing a sharp decline, the channel appears to have entered a mature, low-growth phase, with more limited growth prospects than faster-growing online and convenience-oriented channels.

Supermarkets: Food sales at Super supermarkets (SSM)¹ and neighborhood grocery stores showed the weakest performance among the major retail formats. The sales index declined from 100 in 2020 to 96.8 in 2025, including a 2.2 percent decrease in 2025. The index has remained below its 2020 base since 2021 and declined further in 2025, reflecting growing competition from online retailers, convenience stores, hypermarkets, and other large-format retailers. These trends have increased competitive pressure on traditional neighborhood supermarkets, particularly as consumers increasingly favor online and convenience-oriented shopping.

Department Stores: Food sales at department stores increased from 100 in 2020 to 143.2 in 2025, with a notable 6.5 percent increase in 2025. The growth reflects department store retailers' increasing focus on premium and differentiated food offerings. Retailers have expanded their assortments of premium ingredients, imported foods, deli items, bakery products, and ready-to-eat foods, transforming food halls into destination shopping venues. These food halls have also become increasingly popular among foreign tourists visiting Korea, further expanding their role beyond traditional grocery shopping and contributing to the appeal of department stores as shopping and lifestyle destinations.

Retail Sector Trends

Omnichannel Retailing Continues to Expand: The distinction between online and offline retail continued to blur in 2025 as major retailers expanded omnichannel services. Hypermarkets and department stores expanded same-day delivery services and mobile shopping platforms to better compete with e-commerce retailers and meet changing consumer expectations. Consumers increasingly expect a seamless shopping experience across physical stores, websites, and mobile apps. This trend is expected to remain an important feature of Korea's retail market in 2026, making both in-store merchandising and digital marketing increasingly important for suppliers seeking to reach and engage consumers. Please note that individual consumers tend to reveal different preferences at each point of sale opportunity across the omnichannel retailing spectrum.

Value-Oriented Consumption Remains Strong: Despite easing inflation, Korean consumers remained cautious about spending amid slower income growth and economic uncertainty. Consumers increasingly compared prices and sought discounts, promotions, and larger package sizes, while continuing to pay a premium for products offering better quality, health benefits, or convenience. As a result, consumers are increasingly focused on "value for money" rather than simply seeking the lowest price. This trend is expected to remain important in 2026.

Private Label Products Continue to Expand: Major retailers further expanded their private label (PB) food offerings in 2025 as consumers increasingly sought value-oriented alternatives to national brands. Retailers also expanded premium PB offerings, particularly in processed foods, dairy products, frozen foods, and ready-to-eat meals. The continued growth of PB products is expected to intensify competition for imported branded food products in 2026, particularly in price-sensitive categories.

Premiumization Remains Strong in Selected Food Categories: Although consumers have become more cautious about overall spending, demand remains relatively resilient for premium products

¹ A Korean retail term referring to large, chain-operated supermarkets, generally operated by major retail companies. In Korean official statistics, SSMs are classified as corporate/chain supermarkets and are treated as a distinct retail channel. Examples include E-Mart Everyday, Homeplus Express, and GS Supermarket.

offering superior quality, distinctive origin, health benefits, or convenience. Premium imported products, including beef, fresh fruit, wine, dairy products, healthy snacks, and functional foods, continue to attract consumer interest. Rather than focusing solely on price, Korean consumers are increasingly willing to pay a premium when products offer clear added value in quality, safety, health, or convenience, creating opportunities for differentiated U.S. consumer-oriented products.

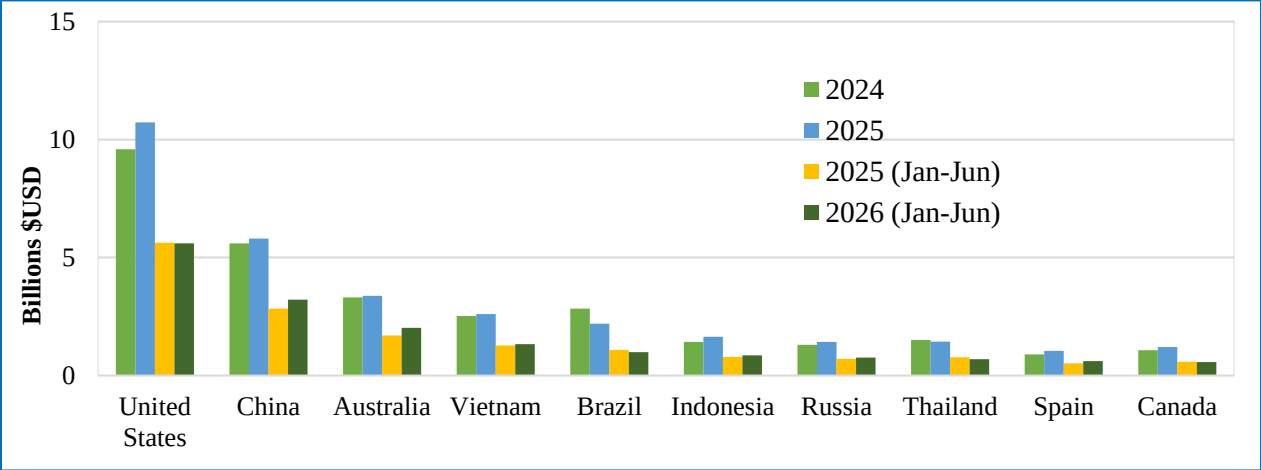
Convenience Foods Continue to Drive Food Retail Sales: Demographic changes, including the growth of single-person households and an aging population, along with increasingly time-constrained lifestyles, continued to support demand for convenient food options. Retailers expanded their assortments of HMR products, frozen foods, meal kits, and grab-and-go items across supermarkets, convenience stores, and online channels. This structural trend is expected to remain an important market driver in 2026 and beyond, creating opportunities for value-added food products that combine convenience with quality and health attributes.

Health and Protein-Oriented Consumption Gains Momentum: Growing interest in health, weight management, and healthy aging is increasingly influencing food retail demand in Korea. Production of high-protein products increased 24 percent YOY to KRW 568.8 billion in 2024, according to Korea’s Ministry of Food and Drug Safety. The trend has expanded beyond sports nutrition into everyday foods and beverages, including protein drinks, snacks, dairy products, and meal replacements. GS25 reported a 26.8 percent YOY increase in protein drink sales during the first half of 2026, surpassing its banana milk sales for the first time. As health and convenience converge, retailers are expected to expand high-protein, low-sugar, and nutritionally balanced products, creating opportunities for value-added U.S. food products. Please refer to the [Health Functional Food and Supplements Market Brief](#) for further details.

Section 3: Competition

In 2025, Korea imported more than \$46.3 billion of agricultural and related products from the world and the United States was the biggest supplier taking 23 percent of the market. Other key competing countries included China (13 percent), Australia (7 percent), Vietnam (6 percent), and Brazil (5 percent). **Figure 4** shows Korea’s import of food and agricultural products for the last two years and the first halves of 2025 and 2026.

Figure 4. Korea: Top 10 Ag. Exporters by Value



Source: Trade Data Monitor, South Korea Imports from _World (BICO - Agricultural and Related Products)

Out of the \$46.3 billion worth food and agricultural products that Korea imported from the world, the largest category was consumer-oriented products (\$21 billion), accounting for 45 percent of all Korean agricultural imports. Most imported consumer-oriented agricultural products are selling through the grocery retail sector and about 29 percent of the total consumer-oriented agricultural imports came from the United States, the largest supplier.

ATO Seoul's website continuously provides up-to-date information about Korea's food and agricultural imports and market competition:

- [Korea's Agricultural Import Statistics](#): monthly updates on Korean agricultural imports (four-digit HS product code level). Both U.S. export data (FOB value) and Korean import data (CIF value) are provided.
- [Korea's Agricultural Import Trends Presentation](#): quarterly summary of competition between the U.S. and competitors in key products.

Section 4: Best Product Prospects

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World

Beef (frozen/chilled) was the number one consumer ready product Korea imported from all sources last year, followed by food preparations, pork, coffee, cheese and curd, baked products, preserved fruits and nuts, and poultry meat. **Table 5** shows top 10 consumer ready food products Korea imported from the world and leading suppliers as of 2025.

Table 5. Korea: Top 10 Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products and Competition

Product Category/HS Code	Gross Imports 2025 (\$ million)	1 st Supplier (Share)	2 nd Supplier (Share)	USA Rank (Share)
Beef, Frozen/HS0202	2,593	USA (49%)	Australia (44%)	1 st (49%)
Food Preparations NESOI ² /HS2106	2,142	USA (42%)	Germany (11%)	1 st (42%)
Pork, Fresh, Chilled or Frozen/HS0203	2,051	USA (29%)	Spain (21%)	1 st (29%)
Coffee/HS0901	1,699	Brazil (25%)	Colombia (15%)	3 rd (11%)
Beef, Fresh or Chilled/HS0201	1,259	USA (70%)	Australia (29%)	1 st (70%)
Cheese and Curd/HS0406	835	USA (42%)	N.Z. (14%)	1 st (42%)
Bread, Pastry, Cakes/HS1905	547	China (25%)	Malaysia (13%)	3 rd (9%)
Other Preserved Fruits & Nuts/HS2008	508	China (30%)	Vietnam (23%)	3 rd (18%)
Poultry Meat & Offals/HS0207	492	Brazil (71%)	Thailand (24%)	4 th (1%)
Other Vegetables, Prepared or Preserved, Not Frozen/HS2005	452	China (75%)	Thailand (8%)	4 th (4%)

Source: Korean government import data released by Korea Int'l Trade Association (www.kita.net). CIF value.

² NESOI: Not Elsewhere Specified or Included

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States

Beef (frozen/chilled) again was the top consumer ready product Korea imported from the United States in 2025, followed by pork, soup and food preparations (including protein concentrate, drink base, sugar syrup, coffee creamer, and flavors), cheese and curd, fresh fruit, tree nuts, processed vegetable, coffee, processed fruit, and bakery goods (including cereals and pasta).

The following **Table 6** shows the top 15 U.S. consumer-ready food products exported to Korea in high value for the last three years.

Table 6. Top 15 USA Consumer-Oriented Products Exported to Korea (\$1,000)

Rank	Product Description	CY 2023	CY 2024	CY 2025	Growth '25/ '24
1	Beef & Beef Products	2,102,420	2,207,762	2,223,252	1%
2	Pork & Pork Products	621,024	716,292	665,635	-7%
3	Soup & Other Food Preparations	362,243	512,635	538,200	5%
4	Dairy Products	320,374	385,089	517,993	35%
5	Fresh Fruit	331,126	375,319	351,522	-6%
6	Tree Nuts	269,453	295,652	348,660	18%
7	Processed Vegetables	170,490	172,348	174,943	2%
8	Coffee, Roasted and Extracts	119,486	129,528	159,280	23%
9	Processed Fruit	88,179	108,034	119,501	11%
10	Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta	68,775	63,789	60,030	-6%
11	Meat Products NESOI	85,710	67,186	53,107	-21%
12	Wine & Related Products	67,765	52,850	53,077	0.4%
13	Dog & Cat Food	42,410	45,929	47,484	3%
14	Chocolate & Cocoa Products	48,314	52,023	39,497	-24%
15	Condiments & Sauces	41,164	41,301	38,392	-7%

Source: FAS/USDA/GATS/BICO – Standard Query, Compiled by ATO Seoul. FOB value.

Products Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

In 2025, Korea's food market continued to be shaped by health-conscious consumption, including growing demand for high-protein, low-sugar, and nutritious foods associated with the healthy aging trend. This trend is creating opportunities for products perceived as healthy, nutritious, and wholesome.

Imports of butter and other milk fats under HS 0405 recorded strong growth, supported in part by demand from food manufacturers for use as ingredients. Among U.S. products, coffee and coffee products, cheese and curd, and tree nuts recorded significant import values and strong year-on-year growth, indicating continued market opportunities for these products. The following **Table 7** shows 10 imported products with the highest growth rates in 2025.

Table 7. Korea: Top 10 Fastest Growing Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products³

Product Category/HS Code (4 digits)	Gross Imports 2025 (\$ million)	Growth from 2024	Imports from U.S. (\$1,000)	U.S. Growth from 2024
Butter and Other Milk Fats/HS0405	309	53%	36,576	161%
Cabbages and Other Brassicas/HS0704	38	45%	250	-35%
Coffee and Coffee Products/HS0901	1,699	37%	179,806	26%
Cheese and Curd/HS0406	835	28%	354,544	44%
Buttermilk, Yogurt and Fermented Milk/HS0403	17	27%	6,768	-14%
Sheep and Goat Meat/HS0204	266	25%	0	-%
Other Nuts/HS0802	372	25%	327,142	25%
Natural Honey/HS0409	21	24%	4,503	-8%
Ice Cream and Other Edible Ice/HS2105	85	23%	9,796	-15%
Pepper and Dried Capsicum/HS0904	83	14%	724	-9%

Source: Korean government import data released by Korea Int'l Trade Association (www.kita.net). CIF value.

(U.S.) Products with Good Market Potential but Limited Presence

Oats and oat-based products represent a promising opportunity for U.S. suppliers as Korean consumers increasingly seek healthier breakfast and snack options, including high-fiber, plant-based, and convenient foods. Although Canada is a major supplier of oats to Korea, U.S. exporters could target differentiated products such as premium oats, granola, oatmeal, and other value-added oat products rather than competing primarily on commodity pricing.

Salmon and other premium seafood products offer potential for differentiated U.S. products. While Korea's salmon market is dominated by major foreign suppliers, Alaska wild salmon and other U.S. seafood products could compete through wild origin, sustainability, quality, and traceability rather than price. These attributes align with Korean consumers' growing emphasis on food safety, quality, and product origin.

³ Listing is limited to top 10 growth products that Korean imports were \$10 million or larger.

(U.S.) Products Not Present in Market due to Significant Barriers

Korea maintains state-specific export eligibility requirements for **U.S. fresh blueberries**. As of 2026, only blueberries produced in orchards registered for export to Korea in Oregon are eligible for shipment to the Korean market. Korean consumers have established awareness and demand for U.S. fresh blueberries. However, the relatively short Oregon harvest and export window limits their availability throughout the year. Expanding export eligibility to other major producing states, including Washington, Georgia, and Michigan, could help U.S. exporters and Korean importers extend the marketing season and provide a more consistent supply of U.S. blueberries. The United States continues to seek expanded market access for cherries, and market access for apples, pears, baby carrots, strawberries, California stone fruits, and frozen raspberries and blackberries. Please refer to the [Fresh Deciduous Fruit Annual Report](#) for further details.

Section 5: Key Contacts and Further Information

Host Country Government

[Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs \(MAFRA\)](#)

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(MOFA\)](#)

[Ministry of Food and Drug Safety \(MFDS\)](#)

[Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources \(MOTIR\)](#)

USDA Cooperators, SRTG, State Offices and AMCHAM in Korea

[USDA Cooperators in Korea](#)

[U.S. State Regional Trade Groups \(SRTG\)](#) / [U.S. State Offices in Korea](#)

[American Chamber of Commerce \(AMCHAM\)](#)

Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Address: Room 303, Leema Building, 42 Jongro 1-gil, Jongro-gu, Seoul, Korea https://kr.usembassy.gov/usda/	Phone: +82-2 6951-6848 Email: atoseoul@usda.gov
Agricultural Affairs Office (AAO) Address: U.S. Embassy, 188 Sejong-daero Jongro-gu, Seoul, Korea https://kr.usembassy.gov/usda/	Phone: +82-2 397-4297 Email: agseoul@usda.gov
Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Address: Room 303, Leema Building, 42 Jongro 1-gil, Jongro-gu, Seoul, Korea http://www.aphis.usda.gov/	Phone: +82-2 725-5495 Email: yunhee.kim@usda.gov

Attachments:

No Attachments