

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: February 03, 2026

Report Number: BM2026-0005

Report Name: Burma Wheat Consumption and Market Updates

Country: Burma - Union of

Post: Rangoon

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Grain and Feed

Prepared By: FAS Rangoon

Approved By: Adam Branson

Report Highlights:

Burma's domestic wheat quality and production remain insufficient to meet growing demand. As a result, Burma has imported about 266,000-512,000 metric tons of wheat and milled wheat products annually between 2019-2024 , mainly from Australia and the United States. Without better domestic varieties, stronger extension services, and improved post-harvest practices, contacts shared that wheat will not become a reliable income-generating crop for Burmese farmers.

Burma (also known as Myanmar) has nearly 140 years of wheat cultivation history but continues to rely on imports to meet growing demand. There are about 15 wheat varieties cultivated nationwide across nearly 120,000 acres with annual production of approximately 70,000 metric tons (MT). Wheat is mainly grown in Shwebo, Monywa, Wetlet, Ye-U, Khin-U, Myaung, and Min Mu townships in Sagaing Region, as well as in Thabeikkyin, Wundwin, and Myittha townships in Mandalay Region and in both northern and southern Shan State. Among these, wheat from the central dry zone and Shan State has established markets, while wheat from Kachin and Chin states has no distinct market presence due to smaller cultivation areas.

Although rice remains the primary staple crop, wheat consumption is rising as dietary patterns change. To meet this demand, Burma imports up to 500,000 MT of wheat a year. In addition to insufficient volume, domestic wheat varieties do not yield protein, gluten, and ash levels required for high-quality breads and cakes. These locally grown wheat varieties are mainly used for traditional foods that rely on coarse wheat flour. Burmese wheat mills also mix local wheat with imported wheat flour to achieve the required bakery standards, reduce the impact of imported product shortages, and meet the regime's occasional requirement to use domestic wheat. Yet, industry sources report that major wheat mills rarely use domestic wheat because it contains more foreign material and has a lower flour extraction rate. Furthermore, domestic wheat costs more due to higher transportation and processing expenses.

On February 6, 2025, Burma's Department of Agricultural Research released a plan to develop new wheat varieties capable of producing various types of wheat flour for domestic use. This plan aims to address the decline in wheat cultivation caused by low market prices and high post-harvest losses. To promote wheat cultivation in Burma, the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) announced payments of 150,000 Myanmar kyat (\$37.5) per acre to wheat farmers starting from 2025 winter season. Despite this incentive and agricultural loans for wheat cultivation, fewer farmers choose to grow wheat as production costs have risen to about 650,000 Myanmar kyat (\$162.5) per acre and prices dropped. In 2024, farmers reported farm gate prices for wheat at 1,500-2,200 kyats per viss (\$229-336/MT), while the market price was around 3,500–3,700 kyats per viss (\$535-566/MT). A farmer from Pindaya noted that increasing wheat yields and prices has become a key priority.

Burmese wheat farmers face further challenges during harvest time due to labor shortages and machinery. Many threshing machines are old and need modification as they are paddy threshers. The lack of experience by operators also contributes to the loss of wheat grains at harvest time. Wheat farmers also continue to rely on burning to clear wheat fields.

Due to the lack of good wheat varieties, poor extension services, outdated machinery, and low wheat prices, wheat farmers often shift to other crops, such as chickpeas, cabbage and tomato.

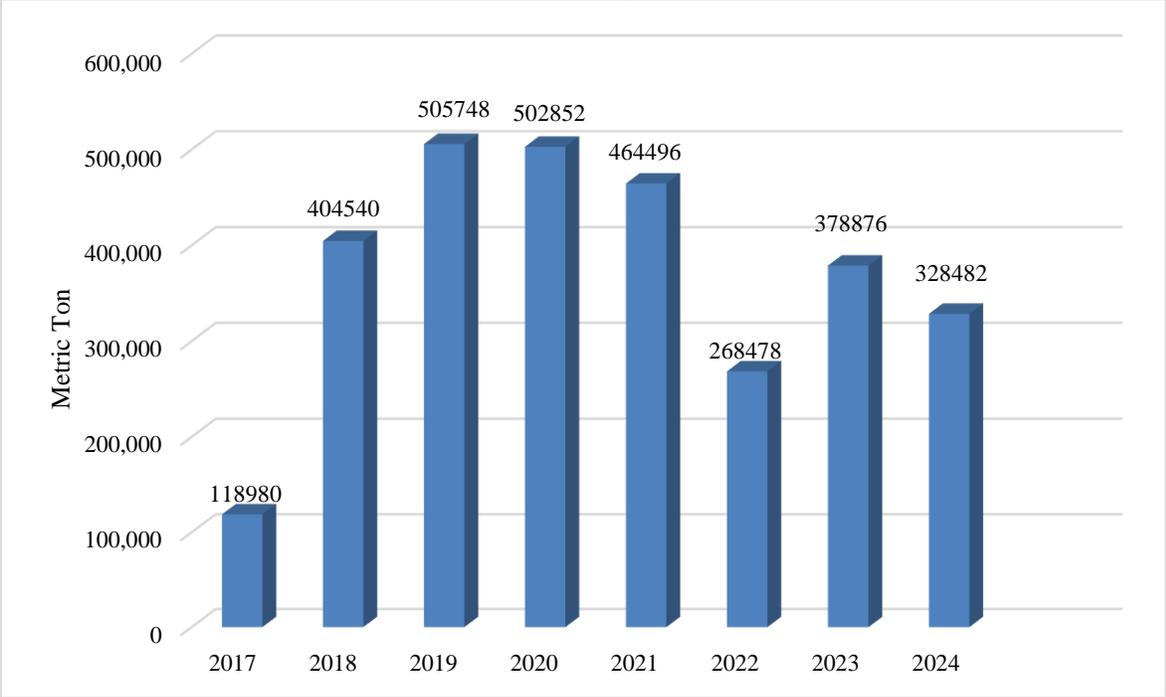
Imports

Burma mainly imports wheat from Australia, the United States, Ukraine, Canada, and Moldova and wheat flour mainly from Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey and Singapore. From 2011, in response to a growing demand for western wheat-based foods (e.g., pasta, pizza, snacks, baked goods, and noodles), Burma's wheat imports grew until the 2021 military coup.

In an effort to restrict the utilization of foreign currency, the regime has implemented [policies](#), which have complicated imports (e.g., [import license issuance](#)). In response to these constraints, there are reports of increased informal trade of wheat flour with India. However, in 2022, the regime strengthened trade enforcement, and more wheat flour began to enter through formal channels from ASEAN countries - which enjoy the benefit of a free trade agreement and zero tariff.

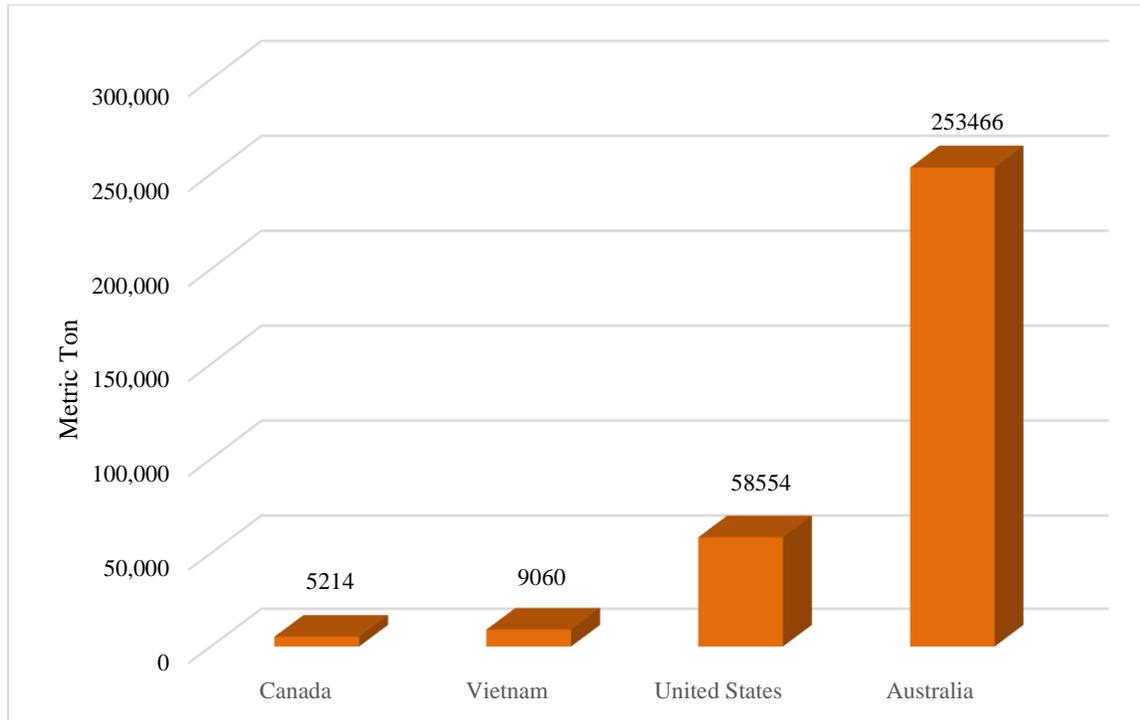
Australia exports wheat to Myanmar without tariffs and offers lower freight costs than the United States. Freight cost of U.S. wheat are about 20 percent higher than for Australian wheat. Due to these cost considerations, Australia is the top wheat supplier to Myanmar. Wheat mills report that they prefer Australian wheat because it has a larger grain size, thinner shell, mills more easily, and has a lighter color. Burmese producers use Australian wheat mainly for noodles, while they choose U.S. wheat for bread and cakes.

Figure 1: Burma: Wheat and Wheat Flour Import Volumes in 2017-2024



Source: PSD Wheat, TDM

Figure 2. Burma: Major Wheat Suppliers in 2024



Source: TDM

Wheat Consumption and Market Trends in Myanmar

Many wheat-based foods are commonly eaten for breakfast, as fast food and as snacks. Most of the morning snacks served at tea shops are made from wheat. Items such as fried noodles, pastries, deep-fried dough sticks (*Youtiao*) and coconut milk noodles all have wheat as their main ingredient. Yet, a formal wheat consumption survey has yet to be conducted in Burma so detailed assessments of consumption trends are difficult to obtain. In terms of Burma's wheat flour consumption, all-purpose represents 70 percent, bread flour represents 25 percent, and the remaining 5 percent is premium cake flour.

Recent Market Developments

Over the past five years, the overall wheat demand in Burma fell as conflict, transportation challenges, and high prices drove down consumption. At the same time, food producers shifted to high-quality wheat to make products with a longer shelf life. For instance, suppliers previously sent fresh bread and cake to Rakhine State by ship. Since conflict intensified, transportation became longer and riskier, so suppliers shifted to dry cake, bread, and cookies, which can be stored for up to two months. Meanwhile, wealthier families moved to cities, such as Mandalay and Yangon, to escape insecurity, and their relocation increased demand for premium bread and cake. Bakeries therefore started using more high-quality wheat and production costs went up. As the market remains very price-sensitive, bakeries readily change their flour choice even when the price difference is only 500 to 1,000 kyats (\$0.125-0.25) per unit.

Instant noodle businesses have expanded significantly since the COVID-19 period. Many Burmese brands have introduced innovative products featuring a variety of local and Korean flavors. Korean food has become popular among Myanmar youth.

Image 1. Burma: Popular Wheat-based Breakfast Foods

		
<p><i>Wheat Noodle with Coconut and Chicken</i></p>	<p><i>Roti with peas</i></p>	<p><i>Traditional Wheat Noodle salad</i></p>
		
<p><i>Wheat Noodle with Fried Garlic and meat</i></p>	<p><i>Samosa</i></p>	<p><i>E Kyar Kway (Burmese Youtiao)</i></p>
		
<p><i>Puff with Chicken, Mutton</i></p>	<p><i>Parata</i></p>	<p><i>Local Cakes</i></p>



Fried Noodle



Biscuit and Cookies



Image 2. Burma: Branded Instant Noodles with an Array of Flavors



Attachments:

No Attachments.