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Report Highlights:

New Zealand's HRI sector is recovering strongly thanks to international and domestic tourism, in addition to renewed investment in major events through the government's 2025 event-funding initiative. International visitor arrivals have rebounded to around 87-92 percent of pre-COVID levels, boosting hotel performance in key destinations such as Queenstown, Rotorua, and Christchurch. Hotels are increasingly investing in premium dining concepts to capture higher-value spending, while restaurants continue to adapt to rising costs by streamlining menus and focusing on high-margin, globally inspired dishes. Despite operational pressures, consumer demand for dining out remains strong, supporting steady demand for imported specialty products, including U.S. red meats, BBQ and hot sauces, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, which help operators differentiate menus and manage seasonal supply gaps.

Executive Summary:

New Zealand is an upper middle-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$48,280. In 2024, New Zealand's GDP reached US\$252 billion, making it the 46th-largest economy in the world. The country is the world's 15th-largest agricultural exporter by value and the second-largest dairy exporter.

Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Imports

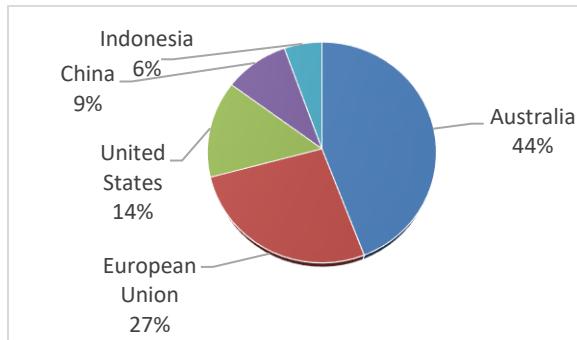


Chart 1: Top Exporting Countries to New Zealand

Food Retail Industry:

New Zealand's food retail market is dominated by a duopoly. Sales reached just over US\$17 billion in 2024 with retailers profit over the year at 7 percent. The two largest retailers, Foodstuffs and Woolworths, represent just over 80 percent of total retail revenues.

Food Processing Industry:

New Zealand's sophisticated food, beverage, and grocery manufacturing industries accounts for almost one-third of New Zealand's manufacturing sector. New Zealand's fruit and vegetable industry is comprised of 136 registered businesses, which employ an average of 30 employees each. Consumers are actively seeking fresh produce for healthy living reasons.

Food Service Industry:

New Zealand's food service sales reached US\$9.82 billion in 2024. Household discretionary incomes have fallen over the past 3 years, limiting dining out spending. Consumers are increasingly demanding high-quality, healthier meals, while favoring new restaurants and cafés. Increased online takeaway delivery options have benefited low-cost restaurants.

Quick Facts CY 2024

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products (US \$million)

US\$ 5.6 billion – Agricultural Products

US\$ 3.7 billion – Consumer Food Products

List of Top 10 Growth Products in Host Country

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Food preparations | 2) Pet food |
| 3) Pork | 4) Whiskey |
| 5) Grapes | 6) Cheese |
| 7) Sauces & seasonings | 8) Nuts |
| 9) Oranges | 10) Non-alcoholic beverages |

Food Industry by Channels (U.S. billion)

Retail Food Industry	\$17
Food Service-HRI	\$13
Food and Agriculture Exports	\$91

Top 10 Host Country Retailers (by sales)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) New World (Foodstuffs) | 2) Pak n Save (Foodstuffs) |
| 3) Woolworths NZ | 4) The Warehouse |
| 5) Four Square (Foodstuffs) | 6) Super Value |
| 7) Fresh Choice | |

GDP/Population

Population (millions): 5.4

GDP (billions USD): \$252

GDP per capita (USD): \$48,280

Sources: Trade Data Monitor LLC, ibisworld.com, Statistics New Zealand

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Minimum barriers to trade including low tariffs ranging from 0-5%.	- Strict border regulations on fresh produce. - High transportation costs due to long distance from United States.
Opportunities	Threats
- Strong consumer demand for value, high-quality products. - Produce from the United States is counter-seasonal. - Transportation costs are decreasing back to pre-COVID levels.	- High competition from neighboring countries e.g. Australia. - New Zealand favors purchasing from Trans-Pacific Partnership as a member nation.

Section I: Market Summary

New Zealand has a sophisticated HRI industry that is primarily driven by international tourism, domestic tourism, and events. New Zealand's network of accommodation services spans the whole country, and the quality-of-service ranges from low-grade motels to five-star hotels and specialized resorts. New Zealand's restaurants are still trying to manage COVID recovery, such as issues related to staff retention, customer counts, and supply chain disruptions. Yet, overall, the HRI sector continues to strengthen as tourism recovery accelerates and consumer dining habits stabilize.

In 2025, the New Zealand Government introduced a new event-funding initiative aimed at boosting regional and national visitation, strengthening the tourism calendar, and supporting hospitality operators across the country. The program allocates targeted funding to attract international sporting events, large-scale conferences, cultural festivals, and business events. By expanding the national events pipeline, the initiative is expected to drive higher hotel occupancy, increase foodservice activity, and stimulate demand throughout the broader HRI sector, particularly in cities and regions that rely heavily on seasonal tourism.

International and domestic travel is a major driver of New Zealand's HRI market, with international visitor arrivals at around 87-92 percent of pre-COVID levels and forecast to make a full recovery by 2026–2027. Growth is particularly strong from Australia, China, North America, and key European markets, supporting higher hotel occupancy in major tourism hubs such as Queenstown, Rotorua, Christchurch, and parts of the South Island. These destinations continue to outperform the national average, driven by strong leisure travel, year-round adventure tourism, and premium accommodation options.

The hotel food service sector is benefiting from rising occupancy, increased preference for premium experiences, and a concentrated channel of upscale and luxury hotels. Operators are investing heavily in elevated dining concepts and signature restaurants to capture both international guest and local spending. Queenstown and Auckland remain key markets for high-end hotel food and beverage development, though Auckland's performance is currently constrained by excess room supply and softer corporate demand.

New Zealand's restaurant market remains resilient despite cost pressures. Rising labor expenses, high rents, and elevated food prices have encouraged operators to streamline menus, reduce waste, and focus on high-margin dishes. Consumers continue to prioritize dining out, but spending is shifting toward premium casual, global cuisines, and venues offering fresh, well-known ingredients. Demand for imported specialty products; including U.S. beef and pork, sauces, snacks, ingredients, and premium beverages remain strong as restauranteurs look to differentiate menus and offset seasonal domestic supply gaps.

Market Trends

Healthy and Trendy

Trendy dining options have become increasingly popular, with consumers searching for fashionable “Instagrammable” meal options and health-conscious consumers have fueled demand for healthier premium food options. Rising health consciousness is prompting many consumers to reduce their alcohol intake and opt for premium, niche offerings in smaller quantities or abstain entirely. As a result, per capita alcohol consumption is declining, with increasingly more consumers searching for low-or-no-alcohol beverages.

Premiumization in Alcoholic Beverage Market

The New Zealand market is gravitating towards premiumization as consumers are consuming less in volume, while increasing their purchases of choosing high-end spirits and wine.

Ethnic foods

Foods and flavors from all around the world are popular with New Zealand consumers. In general, New Zealand consumers are curious and well-traveled. They enjoy trying new cuisines and eating foods that they would not normally make at home. Especially popular cuisines which are set for rapid growth are Asian cuisines.

Advantages and Challenges

ADVANTAGES	CHALLENGES
U.S. products are considered high quality and consistently available.	Imported U.S. products are generally more expensive because of the strong U.S. dollar along with high transportation costs due to the distance.
Growing popularity of convenience and fast foods – especially U.S. fast foods. This food sourced from the United States and the existing procurement systems are favorable.	Eating “healthier” is very trendy and favorable in New Zealand. Fast food, which is often associated with American food, is often considered “junk” food with less health benefits.
The New Zealand hospitality market has many options that cater to different consumer preferences. There are opportunities in different food trend spaces, such as organic and BBQ.	There is growing competition from Australia, China, and Singapore in the consumer-oriented food category. Price of goods tend to be cheaper due to proximity.
International restaurants, cafés, fast food outlets, and hotel chains are increasing in quantity and popularity.	Labor is scarce and it is difficult/expensive to hire and retain HRI workers.

Section II: Roadmap for Market Entry

Entry Strategy

New Zealand’s HRI sector offers strong opportunities for U.S. exporters due to its high reliance on imported food products, demand for premium and specialty ingredients, and a hospitality market that prioritizes consistency, quality, and global flavors. The following strategy outlines how U.S. companies can successfully enter and grow within the New Zealand HRI landscape. FAS Wellington reminds U.S.

exporters to enter the market through a distributor, importer, agent, or broker who understands the New Zealand market and targets specific hospitality categories or specific local investors looking to fill a specific gap in the local restaurant market. To succeed in New Zealand, the U.S. exporter must ensure that all import regulations and labeling laws are met. Exporters can find these laws through trade specialists like distributors and wholesalers.

U.S. exporters should position their products to align with the premiumization and menu innovation. Promotion using social media does well in New Zealand. U.S. exporters should consider hosting a launch party and inviting local “influencers” to expose the market to the new hotel/restaurant. Exporters could also consider advertising in major industry magazines, niche/local newspaper inserts, television, or radio.

U.S. exports should participate in local trade events and engage in market promotions. The biggest trade show in New Zealand is [Fine Food New Zealand](#), held biannually and brings together domestic companies, major international buyers, importers, and key industry players could also increase a product’s awareness. The next event will take place in June 2027.

Market Structure

Accommodation Services

The accommodation services industry in New Zealand is valued at \$5.16 billion. After the dramatic fall in occupancy through and after the COVID years, hotel occupancy rates have increased dramatically and even encouraged the development of new luxury hotels in the main cities. There are many competitors in the industry, which reduces the ability of most hotels to increase prices. The below table highlights the top 7 accommodation service providers in New Zealand:

Company	Websites
Accor Group	https://www.accorhotels.com/gb/country/hotels-new-zealand-pnz.shtml
Dynasty Hotel Group	Not available
Heritage Group	https://www.heritagehotels.co.nz/
Millennium Group	https://www.millenniumhotels.com/
Scenic Group	https://www.scenichotelgroup.co.nz/
Hilton Group	http://www3.hilton.com/en_US/hi/search/findhotels/index.htm
Cordis	http://www.cordishotels.com/en/auckland
Intercontinental	https://www.ihg.com/destinations/us/en/new-zealand-hotels

Restaurants/Pubs/bars/nightclubs

Pubs, bars and nightclubs have evolved to meet the changing tastes of increasingly discerning customers. Venues are investing in entertainment options, including arcade games, shuffleboard, mini golf and pool tables, to create a livelier and more social ambience. New Zealand consumers are focused on quality over quantity. As a result, premiumization trends are boosting industry revenue. Inflationary pressures are easing in New Zealand meaning that consumers are slowly starting to dine out more

frequently. However, rising health consciousness is boosting purchases of high-quality and healthier meals. This trend provides opportunities for new cafes and restaurants that service niche markets.

Below is a table of the relevant top 10 hospitality companies behind the \$500 million dollar industry:

Company	Websites
Restaurant Brands	https://www.restaurantbrands.co.nz/
BurgerFuel Group	https://burgerfuelgroup.com/
SkyCity	https://skycity.co.nz/
Savor Group	https://savor.co.nz/
Good Spirits Hospitality	https://www.igshospitality.com/
Cooks Coffee Company	https://www.cookscoffeecompany.com/
Star Social Group	https://www.starsocial.nz/about-us
Foley Hospitality	https://foleyhospitality.co.nz/
The Lawrenson Group	https://www.lawrensongroup.co.nz/
Namu Group	https://namugroup.co.nz/

Catering services

In 2025, New Zealand catering companies faced price pressures, but since 2024, the \$694.7 million industry revenue rose by 2.9 percent. The increase can be explained by corporate catering - encouraged by rising business confidence - from companies increased spending on corporate functions, and revenue from the recovering airline sector following the lifting of COVID restrictions. Caterers are diversifying their product range by introducing more vegetable, vegan, and organic products to keep up with changing consumer tastes. This table shows the major catering companies that operate in New Zealand:

Company	Websites	Market Share (2025)
Compass Group	https://compass-group.co.nz/	12.6%
Spotless	https://www.downergroup.co.nz/spotless	6.5%
LSG Sky Chefs	https://www.lsg-group.com/	11.6%

Section III: Competition

Products from the United States are viewed favorably in New Zealand, but strong competition from Australia, Asia, and the European Union exists. In addition, New Zealand companies are price-sensitive and affected by currency volatility, which causes importers to shop around for substitute products.

Table 1. Value of New Zealand Imports for Consumer-Related Products (\$US millions)

Partner Country	2023	2024	Percentage change
Australia	1061	1174	10.65
United States	392	377	-3.83
China	216	249	15.28
Indonesia	107	146	36.45
Thailand	121	137	13.22
Singapore	125	136	8.8

New Zealand consumers have a varied demand and are interested in a wide variety of food, not all local produce. These consumers typically travel overseas frequently and are familiar with a wide range of cuisines and tastes. This development reflects trends and products on supermarkets shelves.

As New Zealand is not a manufacturing country, demand for imported consumer-oriented products remains robust, and overall, it grew by 6.2 percent. From the top six trading partner countries in the table above, it shows a larger-than-normal increase in imports of consumer-related products which reflects strong demand in the market.

Section IV: Best Product Prospects

*Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World
(value USD millions)*

Product	2023	2024	Percentage Change
Soup & other food preparations	418	446	6.70
Cereals & pastas	378	411	8.73
Dairy products	355	318	-10.42
Chocolate & cocoa products	224	291	29.91
Processed vegetables	239	229	-4.18
Pork & pork products	177	210	18.64
Cat & dog food	171	201	17.54
Fresh fruit	156	174	11.54
Processed fruit	145	169	16.55
Wine & related products	152	149	-1.97

Source: Trade Data Monitor

The table above shows the top consumer-oriented imports. Chocolate/cocoa, pork & pork products, pet food, and processed fruits had the largest increase in value over the year. Chocolate and cocoa prices continued to soar over the year, almost doubling in price.

*Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States
(value USD millions)*

Product	2023	2024	Percentage Change
Dairy products	98	73	-25.51
Food preparations	62	62	0
Pork & pork products	32	45	40.63
Fresh fruit	28	33	17.86
Dog & cat food	23	23	0
Distilled spirits	23	21	-8.70
Tree nuts	19	19	0
Non-alcoholic beverages	13	16	23.08
Processed fruit	12	14	16.67
Processed vegetables	17	14	-17.65

Source: Trade Data Monitor

The table above shows the most popular imported products from the United States to New Zealand in 2024, from highest value to lowest. Interestingly, the highest imported products from 2023 fell the most over 2024, while pork and pork products grew significantly. FAS Wellington sees great potential in the pork market as demand continues to grow in 2025 and 2026. This is because domestic pork products are more expensive, so retailers and distributors are imported more to keep up with demand and while maintaining pork relatively affordability. Fortunately for imported products, studies show that when New Zealand consumers were asked the top factors for choosing either global or local produce, New Zealanders place the most importance on price, previous good experience, promotions, and better product benefits such as flavor for deciding on a brand (rather than “locally-made”).

Products Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

Currently, New Zealand consumers are relatively health conscious and always seek foods that enrich their health with proven benefits. Similarly, allergy products such as gluten-free, nut-free, lactose-free, grain-free, etc. are all proving very popular with consumers. Pork and pork products have substantial opportunity in the New Zealand market as local production is low and costly compared with cheaper and more abundant imports.

Products Not Present in Market with Good Sales Potential

Ethnic foods, health foods, allergy-foods, innovative fermented foods, “Instagram” foods.

Products Not Present in Market due to Significant Barriers

Farm-raised salmon, certain genetically modified products, and certain food additives. It is important that any imported products entering New Zealand meet the Import Health Standards (IHS), which are governed through the Ministry of Primary Industries.

Section V: Key Contacts and Further Information

Name	Function
Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)	Governing code for food regulation
Hotel Council Aotearoa	Industry association for hotels in NZ
Import Health Standards (IHS)	Outlines the biosecurity requirements
Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI)	Governing body of exports and primary sector
NZ Customs Service	Governing body for protecting NZ's borders
NZ Working Tariff Document	Membership association for NZ hospitality
NZ Restaurant Association	Document outlining NZ tariff structure
U.S. Embassy Wellington Instagram	Up to date information on the sector

Other Relevant Reports

Copies of other relevant reports from this office can be found by searching at:

<https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/search>.

- Exporter Guide (search in the Exporter Assistance category).
- Retail Report (search in the Exporter Assistance category)

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Attachments:

No Attachments