

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Greece

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Export Opportunities to Greece

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Market Development Reports

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Report Highlights:

This report offers updated information for U.S. companies interested in exporting food and agricultural products to Greece, including an overview of the country's economic situation and best product export opportunities.

Greece Agriculture Overview

Greek Agricultural Sector Trade Figures (\$Million)	CY 2011	CY 2012	CY 2013
Agricultural, Fish, and Forest			
Total Exports	6,345	6,466	6,785
Total Imports	9,155	7,955	8,352
Total Imports from the United States	127	82	92

Source: Global Trade Atlas (GTA)

Small farms and low capital investment characterize Greek agriculture. Greece's utilized agricultural area is close to 3.7 million hectares, of which 59 percent is in the plains, and 41 percent is in mountainous or semi-mountainous areas. Two-thirds of the land under cultivation is used for arable crops, with one-quarter for tree plantations. The remainder is used for vegetables, pastures, and vineyards. There are approximately 150 million olive trees in the country, either in systematic orchards or scattered across the country. The number of individual agricultural holdings is estimated at approximately 930,000. Thus, the average area per holding is slightly less than four hectares. By contrast, the average holding in the EU as a whole is fourteen hectares. Lower agricultural productivity in Greece is correlated to the smaller average-size of holdings. The economies of scale offered by modern farming practices have limited impact on the small plots of land, typically used in Greece.

Greece's financial crisis is affecting all areas of the economy, including agriculture. Agricultural output has steadily declined from 17 percent of GDP in the early 1990's to only 3.5 percent today. Greece's main competitors are other European Union countries. Germany (\$1 Bln), the Netherlands (\$1 Bln), France (\$752 Mln), Italy (\$727 Mln), and Bulgaria (\$627 Mln) are the leading suppliers in the food and agricultural trade. The leading importers of Greece's goods are Italy (\$1 Bln), Germany (\$827 Mln), Bulgaria (\$395 Mln), the United Kingdom (\$340 Mln), and Turkey (\$319 Mln). Greek primary agricultural imports include cheese (\$451 Mln), beef (\$250 Mln), pork (\$212 Mln), and food preparations (\$196 Mln). Olive oil (\$568 Mln) dominates Greece's agricultural exports, followed by cotton (\$433 Mln), cheese (\$360 Mln), olives (\$343 Mln), and canned peaches (\$318 Mln). In 2013, U.S. agricultural exports were valued at approximately \$87.9 Mln, while imports from Greece reached \$274.7 Mln. Tree nuts (\$23.7 Mln) and hides & skins (\$19.4 Mln) were the top U.S. exports to Greece in value terms, whereas processed fruits & vegetables (\$148.3 Mln), vegetable oils (\$30.1 Mln), seafood products (\$26.8 Mln), and cheese (\$23.8 Mln) were the leading U.S. imports from Greece.

Greece imports significantly more food and beverages than it exports. Products with good sales potential include meat, alcoholic beverages, organic foods, dairy products, some exotic fruits, and off season fruits and non-GMO food ingredients for the domestic food processing and confectionary/ice cream sectors.

Bilateral Ag Trade 2013

U.S. Ag Exports to Greece \$87.9 M

Tree Nuts: \$23.7 Mln

U.S. Ag Imports from Greece \$274.7 M

Processed Fruit & Vegetables: \$148.3 Mln

Hides & Skins: \$19.4 Mln
 Distilled Spirits: \$8.2 Mln
 Fish Products: \$5.7 Mln
 Forest Products: \$4.4 Mln
 Tobacco: \$4.3 Mln

Olive Oil: \$30.1 Mln
 Seafood Products: \$26.8 Mln
 Cheese: \$23.8 Mln
 Wine & Beer: \$11.8 Mln
 Tobacco: \$10.6 Mln

- Greece is a net agricultural Importer.
- The United States exports mostly consumer oriented and intermediate commodities to Greece.
- U.S. imports from Greece are mainly consumer-oriented products.

Advantages and Challenges for U.S. Exporters in Greece are showed in the table below.

Advantages	Challenges
The United States and Greece have long-standing cultural and political ties.	The GOG’s political positions are often protectionist and decisions are not always science based.
There are strong private sectors trading ties between the United States and Greece in certain products.	There are widespread biases against U.S. foods as inferior in favor of Greek and EU origin products.
Greek importers are interested in the wide variety and consistent quality of US products.	Non-tariff barriers such as phytosanitary restrictions and traceability requirements hinder U.S. exports.
Greece needs agricultural imports to sustain its food and feed processing industry.	The Greek feed/livestock sectors are not politically puissant and resist engaging at the MS level on EU GMO approvals.
Modern mass grocery retail outlets are increasing their market share, which should increase the range of products offered to consumers.	Geographical challenges, including a large rural and island-based population, will continue to hamper the speed at which these formats are adopted and variety of food products stocked.
Academic and Ag research representatives in Greece frequently take pro-agbiotech positions favoring the use of bioengineered plant genetics.	Greece’s acceptance of EU agricultural reforms is often grudging.
The Greek food industry relies on imported ingredients, many from the United States.	The frequency with which Greek government officials change can make it difficult to open a trade policy dialogue or expect continuity in import procedures.
There is opportunity to promote the fact that much of Greek food and Greece’s agrofood exports are inter-dependent on U.S. inputs.	Narrow domestic interests may, for political reasons, override the greater economic importance of this trade relationship, prompting the adoption of non-tariff barriers

	to keep out the “competition”.
Through the years, FAS has maintained good relations with key officials at the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food, National Chemical Laboratory, Food Control Organization, Ministries of Health & Environment, and National Research Foundations.	Greek border entry points, while acting efficiently, still periodically misinterpret EU regs/directives or lack the latest information from Brussels, particularly those pertaining to transit processes & documentation.

As a member of the EU, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) governs Greece’s agricultural sector. Similarly, Greece employs the same tariffs and border measures as the other EU member states. Product imported into Greece must meet all Greek and EU food safety and quality standards, as well as labeling and packaging regulations. It is important to work with experienced importers, and/or have an agent to work with Greek regulatory authorities to ensure the acceptability of specific products. Personal relationships and language ability are of value when conducting business transactions. It is also advisable for the agent to contact health authorities at the port of entry as interpretation of health directives may vary from port to port. For more information on Product Trade Restrictions, Food Standards and Regulations, please refer to Post’s FAIRS GAIN Report GR1205:
<http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Pages/Default.aspx>

Export Opportunities

1) Tree Nuts (Almonds)

Greek Almonds Trade Figures (\$Million)	2011	2012	2013

Total Exports	9	6	8
Total Imports	31	32	35
Imports from the U.S.	18	18	20
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	0.72	0.78	0.75

Data Source: GTA

Greece is the second largest almond producer (8,000 MT in MY2012/2013) in the EU-28, after Spain. Almond cultivation in Greece has a long tradition and history. According to industry estimates, there are approximately 40,000 hectares currently cultivating almonds, including all types of systematically cultivated orchards and a large number of scattered trees (yielding approximately 1,200 MT annually for private consumption). Per capita consumption of tree nuts in Greece at 17 kilos/year is the highest in the EU and one of the highest in the world. Almonds represent an important component of the Greek diet and are consumed mainly as a snack food, and, to a lesser extent, as an ingredient for confectionary products (ice cream and chocolate). Greece is a net importer of almonds. The United States is the main almond supplier to the Greek market, accounting for 60 percent of total imports (5,359 MT in 2013). In 2013, Greece's almond imports from the U.S. reached 3,214 MT, valued at \$19.7 million. Imported almonds are destined mainly for the confectionary, ice cream, and chocolate industries, both for the domestic and re-export markets (mostly Bulgaria and Italy).

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

Pre-processed U.S. almonds (value added roasted and flavored canned packages) are slowly developing a market as a snack food because Greek consumers like their quality and uniformity.

Opportunities

In spite of the institutional challenges and ongoing economic downturn, areas of opportunity remain in the Greek tree nuts market for U.S. companies. Greece is a potential market for further development of high quality U.S. nuts, particularly almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, and pistachios for the confectionary and the ice cream industry.

2) Frozen Seafood Products

Greek Frozen Seafood Trade Figures (\$Million)	2011	2012	2013
Total Exports	101	100	87
Total Imports	363	280	280
Imports from the U.S.	7	6	5
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	0.72	0.78	0.75

Data Source: GTA

Fish-farming is one of the fastest growing industries in Greece, with annual growth rates of up to 10 percent, putting the country in a world-leader position as a cultivator of Mediterranean fish. Greece accounts for approximately 60 percent of the EU’s production of sea bass and sea bream (105,000 MT), two of the most popular Mediterranean fish varieties. Fish consumption in Greece has increased in the last decade (22 kg per capita), in line with public awareness that seafood —fresh or frozen— can be a healthy alternative to meat. Although Greek consumers were initially biased toward fresh seafood products, Greek consumers have gradually accepted that many frozen processed seafood products offer similar quality at potentially cheaper prices to their fresh/unpackaged counterparts. Of note, by European Parliament and Council Regulation No. 1169/2011, frozen products must be labeled accordingly.

In 2013, Greece imported 62,817 MT of frozen seafood, valued at approximately \$280 million. The Netherlands (\$46 million), Spain (\$46 million), China (\$25 million), and India (\$17 million) were the leading suppliers to the Greek frozen seafood market. In 2013, Greece imported \$5 million worth of frozen seafood from the United States, mainly molluscs (\$4 million). In 2013, Greece’s exports of frozen seafood reached 24,027 MT, valued at approximately \$86.8 million. Italy (\$26.8 million), Spain (\$19 million), and Germany (\$12.5 million) were the leading destinations.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

U.S. seafood products with good sales potential include frozen and salted fish, mainly herrings, Pacific Salmon, mackerel, mollusks, and fish fillets. Convenience is the main driver of demand for these products. In order to maintain retail volume sales, players in frozen processed seafood are expected to continue to engage in special offers and price promotions. In addition, the penetration of cheaper private label products is expected to increase further.

Opportunities

In spite of the institutional challenges and ongoing economic downturn, areas of opportunity remain in the Greek frozen seafood market for U.S. companies. Demand for products in frozen processed seafood continues to be driven by a general shift among consumers away from food service towards home cooking.

3) Wood Products

Greek Wood Products Trade Figures (\$Million)	2011	2012	2013
Total Exports	115	114	98
Total Imports	384	329	335
Imports from the U.S.	8	5	6
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	0.72	0.78	0.75

Data Source: GTA

According to the Greek First National Forest Inventory, Greece’s forest area is estimated at 6,513,000 hectares, of which 23.9 percent (3,154,000 hectares) is suitable for commercial production. The majority of forested lands in Greece are located in mountainous regions with steep slopes severely limiting potential for commercial wood production. Greek forests also suffer from poor management, competitive agricultural and settlement uses, and summer fires.

Greece’s annual log production is estimated at 756,000 m³, comprising 634,000 m³ of softwood and 122,000 m³ of hardwood. Sawn wood production is very limited at 64,000 m³ of softwood: 44,000 m³ of temperate hardwood and 29,000 m³ of tropical hardwood. Much of the harvested wood is devoted to the manufacture of particleboard or low-grade products, such as pallets. According to industry estimates, Greece produces around 900,000 m³ of particleboard every year. There is no veneer production, and plywood production is estimated at 21,000 m³ of temperate hardwood (mainly poplar) and 21,000 m³ of tropical hardwood.

In 2013, Greece imported approximately \$335 million worth of wood products. Bulgaria (\$84 million), Romania (\$36.5 million), and Italy (\$20.3 million) were the leading suppliers to the Greek wood market. Greece imported \$6.3 million worth of wood products from the United States, mainly oak wood (\$2 million), veneer sheet (\$1.6 million) and prefabricated buildings (\$1.2 million).

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

U.S. wood products with good sales potential include white oak, hardwood lumber (tropical timber, oak, ash, and beech), logs & chips, and panel products including plywood.

Opportunities

In spite of the institutional challenges and ongoing economic downturn, areas of opportunity remain in the Greek wood products market for U.S. companies. Although there is a significant amount of local production of non-wood building materials in Greece, the country is still import-dependent on quality wood products, not only for building construction, but also for furniture, marine, boxes and crates, paneling, tool handles, and decorative veneers.

4) Pulses (Lentils)

Greek Lentils Trade Figures (\$Million)	2011	2012	2013
Total Exports	0.4	1	0.5
Total Imports	12	12	8
Imports from the U.S.	3	2	2
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	0.72	0.78	0.75

Data Source: GTA

Pulses, including beans, lentils, and chickpeas are favorite ingredients in many traditional Greek dishes. Although pulse purchases have declined over the past 20 years, they are now stable or modestly reviving, as consumers become more nutrition-conscious and strive for a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet. Greece's lentil consumption is entirely satisfied by imports mainly from Canada (\$5.7 million) and the United States (\$1.6 million).

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

The Greek market for pulses - particularly canned products and raw pulse products - is expected to grow in the next five years because of the increasing demand for inexpensive and healthier meal choices.

Opportunities

In spite of the institutional challenges and ongoing economic downturn, areas of opportunity remain in the Greek pulses market for U.S. companies. Increasing consumer awareness of overall health trends is affecting the Greek diet. Rising obesity rates and food safety scares are shifting consumer consumption towards healthier meal choices, such as lentils, dried pulses, peas, and chickpeas.

Greece Trade Events in 2014

AGROTICA (International Fair for Agricultural Machinery, Equipment, and Supplies)

Date: January 30 – February 2, 2014

Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre

Organizer: Helexpo

Phone: +30-2310-291101

Email: agrotica@helexpo.gr

Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

ELEOTECHNIA (Mediterranean Exhibition of Olive and Olive Oil)

Date: March 7-10, 2014

Venue: Former West Airport Expo Center, Elliniko, Athens, Greece

Organizer: Compass Expo Limited

Phone: +30-210-7568888

Email: george@compassexpo.com

Website: <http://www.eleotexnia.gr/eng/dkotinos.html>

OENORAMA (Wine and Spirits Expo)

Date: March 7-10, 2014

Venue: EKEP Exhibition Centre

Organizer: Vinetum Ltd.

Phone: +30-210-7660560

E-mail: stergides@vinetum.gr

Website: <http://www.oenorama.com/>

OENOS (International Wine Fair)

Date: March 14-16, 2014

Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre

Organizer: Helexpo

Phone: +30-2310-291111

Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

DETROP (International Exhibition of Food & Beverages)

Date: March 14-16, 2014

Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre

Organizer: Helexpo

Phone: +30-2310-291201

Email: detrop@helexpo.gr

Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

ARTOZYMA (International Exhibition for Bakery, Confectionery, Raw Materials, Equipment, and Products)

Date: September 25-28, 2014

Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre

Organizer: Helexpo

Phone: +30-2310-291201

Email: artozyma@helexpo.gr

Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

Meat Days (Trade Show for Meat Industry & Meat Products)

Date: November 1-3, 2014

Venue: Metropolitan Expo, Athens

Organizer: O.mind Creatives

Phone: +30-210-9010040

E-mail: info@omind.gr; info@meatplace.gr

Website: <http://www.meatdays.gr/en/>

BIOLOGICA (Exhibition of Organic Products)

Date: November 2-4, 2014

Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre

Organizer: Helexpo

Phone: +30-2310-291201

Email: biologica@helexpo.gr
Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

HOTELIA (International Hotel Equipment Exhibition)

Date: November 20-23, 2014
Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre
Organizer: Helexpo
Phone: +30-2310-291111
Email: helexpo@helexpo.gr
Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

PHILOXENIA (International Tourism Exhibition)

Date: November 27-30, 2014
Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre
Organizer: Helexpo
Phone: +30-2310-291111
E-mail: helexpo@helexpo.gr
Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr>

XENIA (International Tourism & Hospitality Industry Expo)

Date: November 28-December 1, 2014
Venue: Athens Metropolitan Expo, Athens
Organizer: XENIA Exhibitions S.A.
Phone: +30-210-8842916
Email: info@xenia.gr
Website: <http://www.xenia.gr>

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