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Report Highlights:

This report summarizes general economic and business conditions in Hungary as they pertain to U.S. exports of food and agricultural products. Included is an overview of products sales prospects, market trends, and Hungary's relative position in the international market.

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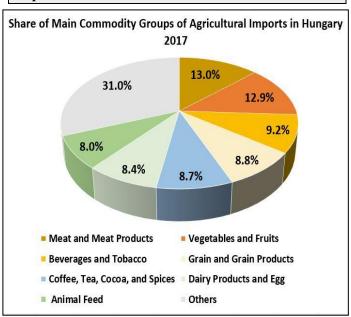
Budapest

Market Fact Sheet: Hungary

Executive Summary

Hungary is the world's 48th and the EU's 24th most competitive country. Its economic growth is targeted 4.3 percent in 2018. The budget deficit is steadily below the 3 percent of GDP. Average annual inflation is expected to pick up to 2.8 percent. Hungary has a strong external profile, resilient export-driven economy, low private-sector debt levels, and flexible exchange-rate regime. Growth in real wages has remained unbroken resulting in increasing purchase power. Hungary's foreign trade structure is stable. however, more than 92 percent of agricultural imports come from EU member states. Non-EU trading partners include neighboring countries, Turkey, China, Japan, and the United States. Hungary's actively maintained Central and Eastern European relations are helpful in expanding regional market opportunities, but competition is strong from EU producers with geographic, tariff, regulatory and administrative advantages.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products



Food Processing Industry

Hungary is self-sufficient in basic foods. The country's production potential is 120 percent of current needs and could be increased to 160 percent. Currently, more than 5,000 food businesses are operating in the country. Approximately 96 percent of them are micro, small, or medium-sized enterprises. However, more than 70 percent of the total production value comes from large companies that are integral parts of the EU's food industry.

Food Retail Industry

Although Hungary's food retail sector continues to grow, the number of retail shops has fallen to 39,960 since 2013, while their size and turnover increased. The rate of stores per 10,000 inhabitants dropped to 129. The number of shopping malls and hypermarkets has stagnated since 2010. In 2017, there were 121 shopping malls, and 164 hypermarkets in the country. Multinational chains have the advantage of more efficient logistics, supplies, and sources in the sector, which struggles with a heavy labor shortage. Household spendings on food have been rising in recent years. Hypermarkets account for 24 percent of all turnover, discount stores for 21 percent, supermarkets for 17 percent, and the market share of retail chains is 13 percent.

Quick Facts CY 2017

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products: USD 3.613.9

million

List of Top 10 Growth Products in Host Country

1) Cheese 6) Beef

2) Bread, Pastry & Cakes 7) Fish & Seafood

3) Coffee 8) Tree nuts

4) Sugar confectionary 7) Distilled beverages

5) Beer 10) Snack food

Food Industry by Channels (USD million)

Food Industry Output	11,076.6
Food Exports	4,625.1
Food Imports	3,613.9
Food Inventory	680.2
	kg/capita
Domestic Food Retail (excl. coffee,	10,246.1
tobacco and beverages)	
Food Service	3,918.9

Food Industry Gross Sales

Domestic Food Market: USD 6,451.8 million

Top 10 Host Country Retailers

1) TESCO 6) Reál 2) COOP 7) Auchan 3) Spar 8) Penny Market

4) CBA 7) Aldi 5) Lidl 10) DM

GDP/Population

Population (millions): 9.8 GDP (USD billion): 139.1

GDP per capita (USD): 15,647.85 (2017)

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges

Strengths	Weaknesses	
 Fiscal loosening and cuts in VATs intensify the market and help profitability. Increasing household consumption and retail trade driven by wage increases, strong wage outflow, improved consumer confidence, and low unemployment rate 	 Unbalanced distribution of wages and purchasing power in the country. Less direct contacts with Hungarian importers, because multinational chains are purchasing to serve EU-wide markets. 	
Opportunities	Threats	
 Increasing demand and growth potential in food retail businesses, especially in suburban and rural areas. EU membership facilitates the entry of U.S. products through other countries' distributors. Benefits from the country's 	 Competitive and politically supported domestic food sector. Strong competition from EU producers with geographic, tariff, regulatory and administrative advantages. 	
geographical position.	- High transport costs and negative stereotypes can be challenging for U.S. products	

Data and Information Sources:

Global Trade Atlas; Hungarian Central Statistical Office; World Bank; Trade Magazine, GfK, Standard & Poor's

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I. MARKET OVERVIEW

Population and Key Demographic Trends (changes in consumption)

Hungary has a population of 9.8 million though the Central Statistical Office (CSO) forecasts a decline. Under the best scenario, the population will stabilize at around 9 million people, but a more realistic number is probably closer to 7.75 million by 2070. Despite the negative demographic trend and a 2.7 percent increase in food prices, real household spending was up 7.5 percent in 2017, driven by wage increases, improved consumer confidence, and low unemployment rate. In the first eight months of 2018, household consumption grew by 11 percent compared to the same period of the previous year. A value added tax (VAT) rate reduction in recent years (from 27 to five percent) on basic food products (including beef, pork, poultry meat, milk, and fish) also stabilized the market and intensified domestic demand.

Size of Economy, Purchasing Power, and Consumer Behavior

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised its projection for Hungary's GDP growth to 4.0 percent, but sees the positive trend slowing to 3.3 percent in 2019. The Government of Hungary (GOH) forecasts 4.1 percent. The IMF expects the average annual inflation to pick up to 2.8 percent in 2018 and to 3.3 percent in 2019. Fuel and food prices are pushing inflation up as petrol and diesel prices hit a four-year peak in 2018.

GDP per capita in Hungary was USD 15,647.85 in 2017. Growth in real wages has remained unbroken for five years. Analysts expect wage growth to continue, resulting in increasing purchasing power. The distribution of wages and purchasing power is very unbalanced in the country. The richest settlements are highly concentrated around the capital and close to the Austrian border. A recent CSO study shows that Hungarian residents spent USD 11/day on average in retail stores in 2017. The highest amount (USD 14/day) was spent by the residents of Budapest and its surroundings. The lowest spending (USD 8/day) was measured in the North-Eastern region of Hungary.

Per capita purchasing power of residents in Budapest is 123.3 percent of the Hungarian average, while that of the population of Northeast Hungary is only 77.4 percent, according to a study by market researcher GfK. The average purchasing power in Hungary is 44.5 percent of the EU average.

Overall Business Climate

Hungary maintains an open economy and its high-quality infrastructure and central location are features that make it an attractive destination for investments and exports. Hungary's strategic location in Europe, easy access to both EU and non-EU markets within and outside the Schengen area, highly skilled and educated work-force, and sound infrastructure have led global companies to locate manufacturing and service facilities there (see Hungary's Country Commercial Guide). Improvements in technological readiness and financial markets provide positive business incentives. Fiscal loosening and cuts in VATs, corporate income taxes and social security contributions intensify the market and trade, and help profitability. Although more than 92 percent of agricultural imports are from EU member states, there are still room for U.S. exports, especially for value-added products.

Recent Trends

Local and regional media frequently publish articles detailing Hungarian consumers' percieved (and actual) discrepancies in the quality of identically-branded food products sold in Western Europe and Hungary. Worries about ingredients and lower quality also have strong influence on buyers' confidence in import products. This so called "dual ingredient" issue was common in the Central and Eastern European countries.

Most consumers adjust their eating habits and diet for health reasons, as their health consciousness is increasing. Therefore, slight growth was observed in consumption of hypoallergenic, and organic food products, but price sensitivity is still among the most influencing factors affecting purchase decisions.

Advantages and Challenges for U.S. Suppliers in the Hungarian Market

Auvantages and Chancinges for C.S. Suppliers in the Hungarian Market					
Advantages	Challenges				
- International credit-rating agencies put Hungary into investment grade.	- Labor market is tight, labor shortage is increasingly pressing in agriculture, the food industry, and the retail sector as well as in the hotel industry and catering services.				
 There are improvements in technological readiness and financial markets as well as in the business and innovation environment. Fiscal loosening and cuts in VATs, corporate income taxes and social security contributions intensify the market and help profitability. 	Domestic food sector is competitive and politically supported.				
 Hungary's actively maintained Central and Eastern European relations are helpful in expanding regional market opportunities. There can be benefits from the country's geographical position. 	- Competition is strong from EU producers with geographic, tariff, regulatory and administrative advantages.				
 Growing real wages improve the financial situation of households. Increasing household consumption and retail trade are driven by wage increases, strong wage outflow, improved consumer confidence, and low unemployment rate. 	 Domestically produced food products account for 60% of total consumption. Consumer confidence is growing in Hungarian products. 				
- There are increasing demand and growth potential in food retail businesses, especially in suburban and rural areas.	 Settlements with highest spending power are concentrated around the capital, where market competition is stronger. Hungary's food production potential is 160 percent of its present level. 				

Advantages	Challenges
- The number of experienced multinational retailers are relatively high.	- Multinational retail chains are purchasing to serve EU-wide markets. There are less direct contacts with Hungarian importers.
- Western consumption patterns are emerging.	- Ninety-two percent of food and agricultural imports are from EU member states.
- EU membership facilitates the entry of U.S. products through other countries' distributors.	- High transport costs and negative stereotypes can be challenging for U.S. products
	- Hungarian consumers are unfamiliar with the value of U.S. products.

II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

Market Research, Local Business Customs, and Trends

A representative survey conducted by the insurance company Generali in 2018 found that one-third of Hungarian shoppers regularly make impulse purchases, buying products they do not need or had not planned on buying. When making a standard purchase, around 50 percent of Hungarians focus on the "price to value ratio," 25 percent look for discounted items, and 17 percent always buy the cheapest product.

Practicality and comfort are also important for consumers. Hungarians prefer shops that are close to their residential area. A report by market researcher GfK found that consumer perceptions surrounding discount stores have improved as their expansion continues. According to the survey, discount stores — once perceived as units with cheap, warehouse-like interiors and a poor product range — are now seen as easy to navigate, stocking fresh quality products, and offering fast and easy payment.

In-store and digital solutions as well as online commerce also play a significant role in securing buyers' comfort. Thus, online trade is expanding rapidly. As limits on new purchasers entering this market have been reached, retailers put more weight on keeping their clients and inducing them to buy more, according to the research company GKI Digital.

General Consumer Tastes and Trends

Brand is an important factor in pre-purchase consumers' decisons, based on a Nielsen survey. Demand for high-quality and premium goods has increased. The majority of Hungarians prefer domestic brands to global ones because of (allegedly) better price/value ratio. According to the annual Nielsen Global Brand-Origin Report, preference for global brands is strongest in baby food/formula categories. As a result of greater access to global brands, expanding distribution, e-commerce offerings, and modern trade retail channels, a swing can be seen in preference toward big multinationals.

Hungarian consumers are open to innovative products and more influenced by social media than the European average. While one-fifth of European buyers are paying attention to product-related social media content, one-third of Hungarians are receptive to such information. In addition, 74 percent of Hungarian buyers are definitely interested in promotions. A third of them are willing to switch from a shop to another one because of good campaigns, or special product sales and promotions.

Consumers' health consciousness has been increasing, and buyers are looking for and willing to pay more for healthy products, or food and drinks that do not contain undesirable ingredients (e.g. high level of sugar, salt, carbohydrates, or fat content; preservatives and additives). There are market opportunities for food retailers and processors to satisfy the increasing demand for healthy products as the majority of buyers deliberately adjust their diet for health reasons. In parallel, their preference is often influenced by sensitivities to ingredients.

The genetically engineered (GE) content of food is also a sensitive issue; consumers are the target of intense, competing messages regarding the safety of GE products. Genetically modified organisms are prohibited in the Hungarian constituion and the press often publishes negative articles about GE ingredients in food and feed. At the same time, the number of pro-biotech publications and messages are increasing as well. In this regard, consumer choices and attitudes are influenced by price sensitivity, the awareness of new technologies, and the availability of related information and substitute products. Especially health and environmental aspects have priority in purchase decisions.

III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS & REGULATIONS and IMPORT PROCEDURES

Customs Clearance

As an EU member, Hungary has adopted the EU's import and food safety regulations. Agricultural products are subject to the standard import sanitary and phytosanitary rules, quotas, duties, and other provisions. Hungary's national food legislation is harmonized with EU food laws. For more information on food legislation and food safety regulations, please see the EU's Food Law General Principles, and the related documents.

Documents Generally Required by the Country's Authority for Imported Food

Applications for agricultural import licenses must be submitted to the Hungarian Trade Licensing Office. These licenses impose rights and obligations on applicants with respect to trade. Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1291/2000 lays down "common detailed rules for the application of the system of import and export licenses and advance fixing certificates for agricultural products." Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1301/2006 contains the common rules for the administration of import tariff quotas for agricultural products managed by a system of import licenses.

Imported products must meet member state requirements and must be accompanied by proper certification at the port of arrival. Certificates must be in Hungarian. For more information please consult the FAIRS report on Hungary's import regulations and standards.

Labeling Requirements

EC regulations on food labeling and packaging must be applied directly in the EU member states. Additionally, harmonized national laws regulate the process of packaging, labeling, and waste management (Government Decree No. 442/2012 /in Hungarian/; Decree No. 36/2014 /in Hungarian/). For more information on labeling requirements, packaging and container regulations please consult Hungary's FAIRS report.

Tariffs and FTAs

Regarding tariffs and trade agreements, Hungary applies EU-harmonized legislation. For detailed information, please consult the EU's website.

Trademarks and Patents

Trademarks and brand names are legally protected. Hungary is an active a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization, and has a complete codification covering the protection of industrial property, copyright and authors' right (Act No. XXXIII of 1995 on invention protection by patents, in Hungarian).

Companies interested in the registration of trademarks or brand names have to apply to the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office, where information folders and application forms are available.

IV. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

Food Retail

The Hungarian retail sector continues to grow, expanding since 2010. Despite that, the number of stores is decreasing. Five years ago the rate of stores per 10,000 inhabitants was 146, then it dropped to 129, according to the latest CSO figures. The number of shopping malls and hypermarkets has stagnated since 2010. In 2017, there were 121 shopping malls, and 164 hypermarkets in the country. The number of retail shops has fallen since 2013, while their average size and turnover increased, the CSO noted. The number of shops that sell food fell by 2.5 percent (to 39,960) in 2017.

Household spendings on fast-moving consumer goods have been rising in recent years. Hypermarkets account for 24 percent of all turnover, discount stores for 21 percent, supermarkets for 17 percent, and the market share of retail chains is 13 percent, according to the GfK. In January-August 2018, retail sales rose an adjusted 6.7 percent compared to the same period of 2017. Adjusted food sales were also up 4.1 percent.

Analysts see rising oil prices feeding into consumer prices. In January-September 2018, consumer prices increased by 2.7 percent on average, the CSO noted. This trend continues because oil prices are expected to lift inflation above 4 percent for a short period in early 2019.

Despite the increasing prices, positive trends in consumption and spending on food as well as better financial situation of households provide opportunities for U.S. exporters. A broad range of consumers are open to American foodstuffs. An increasing number of consumers are seeking quality products, special or gourmet specialties from the United States, helped in part by stories, traditions (such as barbecue) and positive feelings for America. For instance,

- Increasing beer consumption offers limited but improving export opportunities for U.S. products.
 Especially, craft beer has good market potential despite the high number and good availability of substitute products.
- U.S. bourbon whiskey is also popular among Hungarians who can afford more premium products. Whiskies account for 13 percent of country's total spirit sales. The current level of U.S. whiskey exports to Hungary can be maintained, however, the EU's introduced and additional duties (25 percent tariffs) can negatively impact the trade. High VAT and excise tax on spirits also make the exports challenging.

• As western consumption patterns are emerging especially among the younger consumers, exports of sugar confectionary and snack food offer lucrative opportunities.

Tourism and Catering

Tourism is one of the largest sectors of Hungary's economy. The 16 million foreign tourists who visited Hungary last year spent a total of EUR 5.5 billion, MasterCard reported, 30 percent of which was on food. Therefore, foodservice operators, event marketing professionals, and regional tourism offices teamed up to create more open-air events, making various consumer foodservice types and cuisines (including the American street food culture) popular to boost sales, as a report of Euromonitor established. Full-service restaurants, burger fast food, and food trucks lead this trend. Gastro-tourism and demand for fine dining drive sales in Budapest, but fine dining initiatives are emerging in the countryside as well.

• High quality **U.S. beef** and **wine** have good prospects at full-service, white table cloth restaurants, targeting both upper end Hungarian consumers and tourists.

Food Processing

Hungary is self-sufficient in basic foods. Currently, more than 5,000 food businesses are operating in the country. Since farmers and processors typically produce mass products, the sector is under competitive pressures.

- Imports of **out-season or unavailable ingredients, additives, and packaging materials** as well as technologies can provide further export opportunities.
- **Dried fruits and tree nuts** from the Unites States are sought by Hungary's well-developed confectionery and bakery industries, and for special but popular dietary trends such as the Paleo diet. Despite challenging conditions, U.S. exports of tree nuts have remained flat in recent years. Still, maintaining the current market position is difficult because suppliers from less expensive and developing countries have well set trade relations with Hungary.

Livestock Production

• U.S. bull semen accounts for 41 percent of imported **cattle genetics**. The volume of U.S. exports to Hungary has shown a growing trend since 2016, and the United States became the country's most important supplier. Regarding the stabilized dairy market, and the increasing number of cattle inventories, there are real potentials for these products.

V. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD IMPORTS (Prospects for U.S. exporters)

Product category	2017 Market size	2017 Imports	5 year avg. annual import growth	Key constraints over market development	Market attractiveness for USA
Beer made from malt million liters	700	104.37	1.9%	High number and good availability of substitute products.	Growth in beer consumption at the cost of distilled beverage.
Distilled beverages million liters of pure alcohol	31	6.0	4.8%	 High VAT and excise tax on spirits. High number and good availability of substitute products. 	 Significant retail turnover of distilled beverages (USD 318 million/year). High annual domestic alcohol consumption (11.6 l/capita).
Sugar Confectionary metric tons	30,000 (estimated)	14,567	9.9%	Growing number of consumers consider sugar unfavorable in diet and reduce the daily sugar intake.	 Emerging western consumption patterns. Demand and market opportunities for U.S. products.
Snack foods (excl. nuts) metric tons	50,000	43,803	6.3%	Public health product tax on snack foods.	Hungarian snack food consumption is less than the European average; there is room to grow.
Tree nuts metric tons	14,000	9,268	2.8%	Suppliers from less expensive developing countries have well set market positions.	Tree nuts are sought for special but popular diets, such as Paleolithic (paleo) diet.
Beef & beef products metric tons	28,000	15,701	2%	Growing fears from lower food safety standards.	 Limited market availability of high quality beef. Market opportunities for U.S. beef at full service restaurants.
Fish & Seafood metric tons	63,400	24,409	7.3%	Low per capita fish consumption.	 Government programs support the increase of fish consumption. As of January 1, 2018, VAT rate on fish has been reduced to 5 percent
Kidney beans & white pea beans (dry) metric tons	10,000	8,436	7.2%	Low consumption.	Heath conscious consumers are open to increase the share of legumes in their diet.
Bovine semen doses	852,000	352,763	0%	Competition from EU producers with geographic, regulatory, and administrative advantages.	• The US is the most important supplier of Hungary, accounting for 41 percent of bovine semen imports.

VI. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Ministry of Agriculture, Kossuth Lajos tér 11, Budapest 1055, Hungary; Tel.: +36 1 795 2000

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National Food Chain Safety Office (in Hungarian):

- Animal Health and Animal Welfare Directorate (in Hungarian)
 Keleti K. utca 24, Budapest 1024, Hungary; Tel.: +36 1 336 9000; E-mail: aai@nebih.gov.hu
- Directorate of Plant Protection, Soil Conservation, and Agri-environment (in Hungarian)
 Budaörsi út 141-145, Budapest 1118, Hungary; Tel.: +36 1 309 1000
 E-mail: nti@nebih.gov.hu
- Directorate of Wine Products and Alcoholic Beverages (in Hungarian) Budaörsi út 141-145, Budapest 1118, Hungary; Tel.: +36 1 346 0930 E-mail: bor@nebih.gov.hu

Hungarian Trade Licensing Office, Németvölgyi út 37-39, Budapest 1124, Hungary Tel.: +36 1 4585-800; E-mail: mkeh@mkeh.gov.hu

Hungarian Intellectual Property Office, II. János Pál pápa tér 7, Budapest 1081, Hungary Tel.: +36 1 312 4400; E-mail: hipo@hipo.gov.hu

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