

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
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Bulgaria

Post: Sofia

Product Brief - Dried Fruits and Nuts

Report Categories:

Dried Fruit

Tree Nuts

Product Brief

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Report Highlights:

Though having a population of only 7.5 million people Bulgaria is considered as having a healthy market for dried fruits and nuts. In 2012 the United States nut sales to Bulgaria increased 44 percent, supporting positive perceptions of this market. Provided in this report is information on the market, trade, and regulatory requirements for U.S. suppliers.

General Information:

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1. Market Overview

Bulgaria, a member of the WTO since 1995, traditionally has been a net exporter of agricultural products. Over the last 3 years, agricultural trade expanded as both exports and imports grew substantially between 2010 and 2011. In 2011, total agricultural imports grew by 27 percent while exports increased by 36 percent over 2010 levels. In 2011, the positive balance of trade reached US Dollars 1.29 billion or 60 percent more than the 2010 positive balance of trade of USD 804 million.

The 2012 imports decreased slightly compared to 2011 (data available only until November 2012) with the balance of trade not expected to match that of 2011.

| | 2012^{1/} (USD Billion) | 2011 (USD Billion) | 2010 (USD Billion) |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Agricultural Imports | 2.61 | 2.73 | 2.15 |
| Agricultural Exports | 3.66 | 4.01 | 2.95 |
| Trade Balance | 1.05 | 1.29 | 0.804 |

1/ January-November 2012 data.
Source: World Trade Atlas (WTA), Agriculture Total Group 2

Between 2011 and 2012, U.S. agricultural and food exports to Bulgaria increased by 17 percent, from USD 25.6 million to USD 26.3 million. In 2008, U.S. agricultural exports reached 58 million, a record

high. In 2012, top agricultural exported products included tree nuts, whiskies, processed fruits, intermediate products, and tobacco. The products with the highest growth in 2011 were tree nuts, snack foods, feed and fodders, and tobacco. Actual imports of U.S. products, however, is more significant as most products enter the country through indirect channels, via Romanian and Greek ports or over the continent through German, Dutch or UK distributors. Higher-value products are typically transshipped over the continent. Over the last two years, retailers, mainly German companies have become more aggressive in the market and have allowed their outlets to import independently of the parent organization. As a result, U.S. brands such as bourbons, tree nuts, snacks, and others are becoming more cost competitive and available on the local market. According to trade sources, actual U.S. agricultural exports to Bulgaria are nearly triple that of direct exports reported by U.S. Customs.

U.S. exports of the above products to Bulgaria are expected to continue to grow in the short term. In the medium term, Bulgaria is likely to increase imports of tree nuts and high value consumer products and beverages.

In total, more than 80 percent of the imported agricultural goods originate from within the European Union. Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania are major trading partners. Two thirds of Bulgarian exports are directed to the European Union, mainly to Greece, Italy, Spain, and Romania.

Nuts remain the biggest category in sweet and savory snacks in terms of generated value sales. Nuts benefits from being a traditionally popular product that is both healthy and nutritious. It successfully maintains its strong position in spite of the competition from street stalls/kiosks which offer a range of unpackaged nuts.

The share of private label has been increasing during the years, mostly in nuts and ‘other’ sweet and savory snacks. The share of private label products is expected to continue growing due to the attractive pricing and good quality of the products.

A GfK survey done in late 2011 showed that for 87 percent of consumers the price was an important purchasing factor, and for 41 percent the price was the most important reason in shopping. Affordable prices were stated as the main reason for shopping at certain retailers, followed by good quality of products, proximity to home (one third of consumers), and good private labels products (one fifth of consumers).

Table 1. Advantages and Challenges

| Advantages | Challenges |
|---|--|
| More favorable trade regime due to the EU membership. Since 2007, import duties have sharply declined from 35-40 percent to zero or around 5 percent, both for almonds and peanuts. | Bulgaria is a middle-income country with an estimate average per capita GDP of \$7,200 for 2011 (Source: IMF). Constraints on disposable income present marketing challenges for potential U.S. exporters. |
| Developing local market with expanding total nuts consumption, and particularly | Preference of U.S. companies to work with EU distributors responsible for a certain region of Europe, |

| | |
|---|--|
| increasing consumption of high value products. | and to exclude local importers who would like to engage in direct import from United States. |
| Lower competition from countries such as Gambia, India, Iran, China etc. due to inability to meet EU sanitary/safety import requirements. | Increasing popularity of private label products. U.S. companies may find it challenging to promote certain brands in this hard-discounters' dominated environment. |
| The Bulgarian retail market is expanding offering more consumers access to modern retail options | U.S. exporters' lack of confidence in local importers translates into unattractive payment terms (i.e., down payment, deadlines) thus missed business opportunities. |
| Bulgarian consumer confidence in U.S. products due to the U.S.' very well-established food safety regulatory system. | Deteriorating economic conditions are creating a larger class of price-conscious importers. |
| Rising incomes among certain consumer groups support continued growth in the market for high value processed products, including nuts. | Retailers often charge high listing fees for products. |

Source: [FAS Sofia](#)

2. Market Sector Opportunities and Threats

2.1 Market entry strategy

The largest portion (about 80 percent) of nuts and dry fruits is introduced on the market from the importers through direct distribution to the retail chains. Lower portion (about 13-14 percent) is distributed through convenient stores, mostly in the smaller towns, and the remaining 6-7 percent finds its way to the market through gas stations, kiosks, and small specialized stores for fruits and vegetables. Cost reduction is the main advantage of using direct distribution as well as helps preserve the freshness of the products. Currently there are more than 100 players on the Bulgarian nuts and dry fruits market. The big importers are represented by 15-20 companies. The rest are smaller companies with erratic purchases and insignificant market share.

The U.S. exporters may obtain up-to-date list of Bulgarian importers of nuts and dried fruits by contacting the Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia (see Section 6).

3. Market Size, Structure, Trends

Retail chains in Bulgaria will keep opening new outlets despite weak consumption. The country currently has a total of 1900 hypermarkets, supermarkets and drugstores, which is 400 percent more than in 2005, and this number is projected to rise by 6-7 percent per year, reaching 2600 in 2016. Retailers currently hold a market share of 35 percent and it is likely to reach 40 percent in 2012 and 50 percent in 2014. At the same time, Bulgarian Retailers' Association says the market has shrunk by 1.0 billion Euros over the last 3 years due to the declining consumption (source [BU1203](#)).

Hypermarkets and supermarkets offer big discounts and large variety of nuts and dry fruits and are the most popular place for buying nuts for the regular consumers. The advantage for the importer is that the distribution channel is short (importer – retailer). The disadvantages come from the positioning on the

shelves, which is often not very attractive and the various entrance and other fees that the importers should pay in order to have their products displayed, which adds to cost and shrinks their margins. Most of the retailers have their own private labels but do not import directly. They work closely with local companies who import the products and in many instances also provide packaging services.

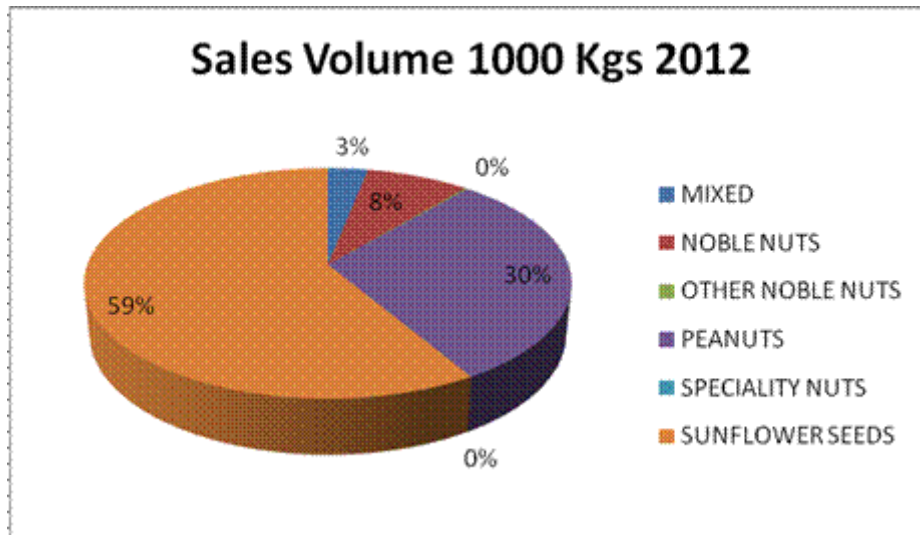
Another retail segment for dried fruits and nuts sales is represented by the convenience stores. The sales of nuts in these stores mostly rely on the customers' brand loyalty and subjective perception. The least popular retail outlet, but fast becoming more attractive is the gas station and kiosk model. They rely mainly on impulse purchase and relatively good shelf positioning.

Snacks are the main substitute for nuts and dry fruits. Annual sale of snacks and nuts in Bulgaria are estimated at about \$200 million. Nuts and dry fruits account for about 43 percent of the total.

Consumption of dried fruits and nuts is the highest during Christmas and Easter holidays as traditional part of the local cuisine and broader presence in restaurants and bars. The winter period registers higher sales due to lower availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and higher home consumption. Companies use different communication channels to broadly advertise their products.

The best selling nuts in Bulgaria in terms of sales volume are sunflower seeds, which enjoy strong customers' loyalty and account for about 59 percent of all sales, followed by peanuts with 30 percent and the so called noble nuts (almonds, cashew, pistachio, hazelnuts) with 8 percent, and specialty nuts (coated), mixes, and other nuts comprising the remaining 3 percent. The products are usually imported in bulk and packaged by the importers or retailers. See Chart 1

Chart 1



Source: Industry

In terms of sales value, sunflower seeds account for 39 percent, followed by peanuts with 21 percent. Despite their lower share in volume, noble nuts hold a large share of sales value with 26 percent. Mixed and specialty nuts are still not very popular and account for the remaining 4 percent. See Chart 2.

Chart 2

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Bulgaria | Tree Nuts | 2,796 | 3,959 | 2,761 | 2,832 | 5,009 | 7,189 | 44 |
| Bulgaria | 0802120000 - ALMDS,FR/DRD/SH | 1,993 | 2,847 | 1,265 | 1,679 | 3,831 | 5,674 | 48 |
| Bulgaria | 0802510000 - PSTCHIO,F/D/N,SH | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 877 | -- |
| Bulgaria | 0802110000 - ALMOND,FR/DR,N/S | 0 | 0 | 163 | 497 | 45 | 247 | 446 |
| Bulgaria | 2008194000 - ALMONDS,PRE/PRS | 32 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 209 | -- |
| Bulgaria | 2008193020 - PISTACHIOS PR/PS | 105 | 96 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 154 | -- |
| Bulgaria | 2008198500 - MIX NUTS,PR/PRES | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | -- |
| Bulgaria | 0802502000 - PSTCHIO,F/D/N,SH | 666 | 809 | 1,053 | 656 | 1,133 | 0 | -- |
| Bulgaria | 0802504000 - PSTCHIO,F/DR/SHL | 0 | 200 | 280 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -- |
| Grand Total | | 2,796 | 3,959 | 2,761 | 2,832 | 5,009 | 7,189 | 44 |

Data Source: Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Statistics

| Table 3. Bulgaria Import Statistics | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Commodity: 080211, Almonds, Fresh Or Dried, In Shell | | | | | | | |
| Year To Date: January – October | | | | | | | |
| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 125051 | 17 | 118315 | 31 | 596819 | 92 |
| Greece | T | 59038 | 9 | 31163 | 5 | 428412 | 66 |
| Germany | T | 167 | 0 | 493 | 0 | 127830 | 20 |
| Lithuania | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17903 | 3 |
| Netherlands | T | 50699 | 6 | 24928 | 3 | 14850 | 2 |
| Czech Republic | T | 0 | 0 | 426 | 0 | 5682 | 1 |
| Poland | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1998 | 1 |
| Austria | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 145 | 0 |
| Slovakia | T | 15147 | 2 | 41806 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| United States | T | 0 | 0 | 19500 | 16 | 0 | 0 |

Source of Data: Eurostat

Table 4. Bulgaria Import Statistics
Commodity: 080212, Almonds, Fresh Or Dried, Shelled

Year To Date: January – October

| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
|-----------------|------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 4076720 | 834 | 2861230 | 886 | 3407154 | 1337 |
| Un. States | T | 563001 | 316 | 910591 | 542 | 1826161 | 1089 |
| Greece | T | 1732483 | 265 | 1781171 | 291 | 1344067 | 213 |
| Germany | T | 6506 | 1 | 16788 | 2 | 106882 | 16 |
| Netherlands | T | 847743 | 141 | 77209 | 11 | 71653 | 10 |
| Czech Rep. | T | 0 | 0 | 302 | 0 | 22714 | 3 |
| Spain | T | 0 | 0 | 8467 | 1 | 17978 | 3 |
| Lithuania | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14096 | 4 |
| Slovenia | T | 0 | 0 | 1123 | 0 | 1424 | 0 |
| Italy | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1338 | 0 |
| Austria | T | 309 | 0 | 751 | 0 | 632 | 0 |
| Turkey | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 208 | 0 |
| Panama | T | 0 | 0 | 29678 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Slovakia | T | 6648 | 1 | 9338 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Belgium | T | 0 | 0 | 174 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cyprus | T | 920029 | 110 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Australia | T | 0 | 0 | 25638 | 17 | 0 | 0 |

Source of Data: Eurostat

| Table 5. Bulgaria Import Statistics | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Commodity: 080620, Grapes, Dried (Including Raisins) | | | | | | | |
| Year To Date: January - October | | | | | | | |
| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 773268 | 1055 | 141814 1 | 1063 | 181123 5 | 1721 |
| Iran | T | 401212 | 878 | 304803 | 462 | 500754 | 675 |
| Turkey | T | 309568 | 152 | 383416 | 130 | 463127 | 165 |
| Greece | T | 25684 | 10 | 128671 | 80 | 202843 | 62 |
| Uzbekistan | T | 0 | 0 | 294018 | 186 | 167598 | 116 |
| Pakistan | T | 0 | 0 | 22287 | 44 | 158298 | 296 |
| India | T | 0 | 0 | 46008 | 46 | 156824 | 322 |
| Netherlands | T | 6971 | 3 | 149441 | 56 | 83702 | 21 |
| Hungary | T | 1492 | 0 | 2950 | 1 | 43070 | 23 |
| Chile | T | 0 | 0 | 42497 | 38 | 14496 | 20 |
| South Africa | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14083 | 20 |
| Germany | T | 23607 | 9 | 7260 | 2 | 5153 | 1 |
| Austria | T | 4734 | 2 | 150 | 0 | 589 | 0 |
| Lithuania | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 554 | 0 |
| Italy | T | 0 | 0 | 187 | 0 | 143 | 0 |
| China | T | 0 | 0 | 35989 | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| Slovakia | T | 0 | 0 | 463 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source of Data: Eurostat

| Table 6. Bulgaria Import Statistics | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Commodity: 120210, Peanuts (Ground-Nuts), Not Roasted Or Otherwise Cooked, In Shell | | | | | | | |
| Year To Date: January - October | | | | | | | |
| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 903839 | 683 | 542203 | 466 | 0 | 0 |
| China | T | 321735 | 342 | 258909 | 278 | 0 | 0 |
| Egypt | T | 137003 | 90 | 185272 | 118 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | T | 0 | 0 | 134 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Greece | T | 207067 | 123 | 26638 | 28 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | T | 6859 | 4 | 71251 | 42 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|--------|-----|---|---|---|---|
| Romania | T | 231175 | 124 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|---------|---|--------|-----|---|---|---|---|

Source of Data: Eurostat

| Table 7. Bulgaria Import Statistics | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Commodity: 120220, Peanuts (Ground-Nuts), Not Roasted Or Otherwise Cooked, Shelled, Whether Or Not Broken | | | | | | | |
| Year To Date: January - October | | | | | | | |
| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 5679268 | 5408 | 6817175 | 5011 | 0 | 0 |
| Argentina | T | 993032 | 801 | 1520111 | 1029 | 0 | 0 |
| Brazil | T | 0 | 0 | 58663 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| China | T | 3590365 | 3994 | 2920492 | 2563 | 0 | 0 |
| Greece | T | 928990 | 494 | 1845566 | 1144 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | T | 163339 | 115 | 406835 | 209 | 0 | 0 |
| Nicaragua | T | 3542 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Paraguay | T | 0 | 0 | 38948 | 26 | 0 | 0 |
| Romania | T | 0 | 0 | 23295 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | T | 0 | 0 | 3264 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Source of Data: Eurostat

| Table 8. Bulgaria Import Statistics | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Commodity: 080250, Pistachios, Fresh Or Dried, Whether Or Not Shelled | | | | | | | |
| Year To Date: January - October | | | | | | | |
| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 1912584 | 367 | 800760 | 251 | 0 | 0 |
| Cyprus | T | 735653 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| France | T | 0 | 0 | 355 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | T | 766968 | 100 | 93613 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Greece | T | 257739 | 28 | 467358 | 90 | 0 | 0 |
| Slovakia | T | 0 | 0 | 49999 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| United Arab Emirates | T | 0 | 0 | 21129 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| United States | T | 152224 | 173 | 168306 | 130 | 0 | 0 |

Source of Data: Eurostat

Table 9. Bulgaria Import Statistics
Commodity: 080231, Walnuts, Fresh Or Dried, In Shell

Year To Date: January - October

| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
|-----------------|------|------|----------|--------|----------|-------|----------|
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 0 | 0 | 261416 | 184 | 74252 | 46 |
| Romania | T | 0 | 0 | 90606 | 52 | 32883 | 22 |
| Moldova | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30991 | 22 |
| Italy | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10379 | 2 |
| Germany | T | 0 | 0 | 808 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ukraine | T | 0 | 0 | 170002 | 132 | 0 | 0 |

Source of Data: Eurostat

Table 10. Bulgaria Import Statistics
Commodity: 120600, Sunflower Seeds, Whether Or Not Broken

Year To Date: January - October

| Partner Country | Unit | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | |
|-----------------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity | USD | Quantity |
| World | T | 22213083 | 12495 | 22869525 | 12415 | 41591449 | 9322 |
| France | T | 6945362 | 736 | 5387768 | 586 | 18457687 | 1621 |
| Romania | T | 5140932 | 1344 | 7853980 | 5444 | 6936353 | 1189 |
| Hungary | T | 2471461 | 286 | 1378190 | 176 | 4189434 | 342 |
| Italy | T | 92873 | 11 | 409905 | 50 | 2034610 | 196 |
| Spain | T | 479363 | 50 | 1144952 | 110 | 2031836 | 203 |
| Austria | T | 1157125 | 107 | 1197347 | 105 | 1929042 | 192 |
| Moldova | T | 1130764 | 2041 | 2388155 | 2817 | 1914772 | 1823 |
| Turkey | T | 753825 | 574 | 710275 | 268 | 1394858 | 421 |
| Ukraine | T | 3421695 | 7253 | 1745069 | 2695 | 1232527 | 1734 |
| Greece | T | 28471 | 3 | 53747 | 83 | 704026 | 1475 |
| Serbia | T | 265621 | 32 | 303411 | 55 | 434897 | 68 |
| Germany | T | 307410 | 30 | 20128 | 2 | 207115 | 28 |
| United States | T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 120385 | 29 |
| Netherlands | T | 743 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2011 | 0 |
| Chile | T | 2855 | 0 | 3638 | 1 | 1895 | 0 |
| China | T | 278 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kosovo | T | 11835 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Israel | T | 1006 | 0 | 18150 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Slovakia | T | 0 | 0 | 5781 | 4 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|------|---|--------|----|---|---|
| Un. Kingdom | T | 1464 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Switzerland | T | 0 | 0 | 249030 | 20 | 0 | 0 |

Source of Data: Eurostat

5. Market Access

5.1 Regulatory environment

The European Union is a common market and customs union for its 27 Member States. The [European Commission](#) is the institution responsible for ensuring EU law is applied throughout all Member States. Each Member State is responsible for the implementation of EU law (adoption of implementing measures before a specified deadline, conformity, and correct application) within its own legal system. As a member of the EU-27 Bulgarian trade is subject to EU regulations.

5.2 Marketing Standards

The following products are not required to conform to the general marketing standard: bitter and shelled almonds, shelled hazelnuts, shelled walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, macadamia, and pecans.

The general marketing standard defines minimum quality and maturity requirements, introduces a maximum tolerance, and requires products to be labeled with full name of their country of origin. Additional information about marketing standards could be found at U.S. Mission to the European Union's [web page](#).

5.3 Labeling Requirements

The standard U.S. label fails to comply with [EU labeling requirements](#). General provisions on the labeling, presentation and advertising of pre-packaged foodstuffs marketed in the EU are laid down in [European Parliament and Council Directive 2000/13/EC](#). It applies not only to foodstuffs intended for sale to the ultimate consumer but also for supply to restaurants, hospitals and other mass caterers.

Directive 2000/13/EC will be repealed by [European Parliament and Council Regulation 1169/2011](#).

This new EU Regulation, adopted in November 2011, establishes new horizontal food labeling requirements which will apply from December 13, 2014, except for the new mandatory nutrition declaration requirement which will apply from December 13, 2016, and Part B of Annex VI (specific requirements concerning the designation of minced meat) which will apply from January 1, 2014.

Detailed information on the EU's new food labeling requirements is available in [GAIN Report E70002](#) "New EU Food Labeling Rules Published."

In addition, EU labeling law requires dried fruits that were preserved with sulfur in excess of 10 mg

SO2 /kg to indicate it on the label. We recommend contacting your importer about details of those requirements prior to shipping.

5.4 EU tariffs for dried fruits and nuts

As a member of the European Union Bulgaria is in full compliance with the applicable regulations and tariffs. The EU import tariffs for the main dried fruits and nuts are summarized in the below table. Additional information pertaining to other dried fruits and nuts is available in the [EU official Journal](#) pages 94 through 100, 157, and 165.

Table 11. EU Tariffs for Dried Fruits and Nuts

| Product | CN Code/HS | Rate of Duty (%) | Tariff Rate Quota |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Almonds in shell bitter | 0802 1110 | free | |
| Almonds shelled bitter | 0802 1210 | free | |
| Almonds in shell other | 0802 1190 | 5.6 | 90,000 MT at 2 % |
| Almonds shelled other | 0802 1290 | 3.5 | 90,000 MT at 2 % |
| Pistachios | 0802 5100 & 5200 | 1.6 | |
| Hazelnuts | 0802 21 & 22 | 3.2 | |
| Brazil nuts | 0801 21 & 22 | free | |
| Cashew nuts in shell | 0801 31 & 32 | free | |
| Walnuts in shell | 0802 3100 | 4.0 | |
| Walnuts shelled | 0802 3200 | 5.1 | |
| Macadamia | 0802 6100 & 6200 | 2.0 | |
| Dates | 0804 1000 | 7.7 | |
| Dried prunes | 0813 2000 | 9.6 | |
| Cranberries | 2008 9949 | 17.6 | |
| Other dried fruits | 0813 4095 | 2.4 | |
| Peanuts in packages > 1kg | 2008 1191 | 11.2 | |
| Peanuts < 1kg roasted | 2008 1196 | 12.0 | |
| Peanuts < 1kg not roasted | 2008 1198 | 12.8 | |
| Raisins | 0806 20 | 2.4 | |

Source: The Official Journal of the European Union. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 927/2012 of October 9, 2012, amending Annex I to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the Common Customs Tariff

5.5 Phytosanitary requirements

The phytosanitary requirements are regulated by [EU Council Directive 2000/29/EC](#). The directive lists all requirements and products that need a phytosanitary certificate for imports into the EU. Pistachios, almonds, and peanuts are also subject to toxin checks at customs when imported from certain countries. For imports from the United States, this applies to almonds. Importers have to apply for these checks at certain customs locations, and goods are kept by authorities until results are available.

5.5.1 Import Conditions for U.S. Almonds

In September 2007, the EU implemented special import conditions which called for mandatory testing of U.S. almonds imported into the EU. USDA and The California almond industry have developed a “Voluntary Aflatoxin Sampling Plan” (VASP) comparable to the EU sampling procedures so that almonds can be uniformly tested before they are shipped to the EU. Per Commission [Regulation 1152/2009](#), these procedures are considered to provide sufficient assurances which means that almonds shipped under VASP are subject to random controls. The Regulation covers almonds in shell or shelled, roasted almonds and mixtures of nuts or dried fruits containing almonds, and foodstuffs containing a significant amount of almonds (at least 20 percent). While almonds shipped without a VASP certificate used to be subject to 100 percent border controls in the original Commission Regulation 1152/2009, the regulation has been amended in March 2012 to no longer authorize imports without a VASP ([Commission Regulation 274/2012](#)).

Regulation 1152/2009 also introduced the use of a Common Entry Document (CED). Importers have to provide prior notification to the competent authorities at the designated port of entry for the goods covered by the regulation at least one working day prior to the arrival of the goods, using the CED. The CED was published as Annex II to [Regulation 669/2009](#). Provisions for methods of sampling and analysis for the official control of mycotoxins including aflatoxins are laid down in [Commission Regulation 401/2006](#).

More information is available in the [European Commission’s Guidance Document](#) and on the [Almond Board of California](#) website.

5.5.2. Maximum levels for Aflatoxin

Aflatoxin is a group of fungal toxins that are produced by *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus*, which grow easily on peanuts, nuts, and dried fruits when they are inappropriately stored in warm, humid conditions. Aflatoxin is a powerful liver carcinogen and, therefore, receives a lot of attention to ensure food safety. Maximum aflatoxin levels for the entire EU, including Germany, are laid down in Commission [Regulation 1881/2006](#). These are also applied to imported products. In order to ensure comparable results, the EU requires that tests are carried out using sampling methods according to [EU Regulation 401/2006](#).

Table 12. EU Maximum Level for Aflatoxin in Dried Fruits and Nuts

| Maximum Levels for Aflatoxins | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | B1 | B1, B2, G1 and G2 combined |
| Almonds, pistachios and apricot kernels, intended for direct human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs | 8,0 microgram/kg | 10,0 microgram/kg |
| Almonds, pistachios and apricot kernels to be subjected to sorting, or other physical treatment, before human consumption or use an ingredient in foodstuffs | 12,0 microgram/kg | 15,0 microgram/kg |
| Groundnuts (peanuts) and other oilseeds, to be subjected to sorting, or other physical treatment, before human consumption or use and ingredient in foodstuffs, with the exception of: -groundnuts (peanuts) and other oilseeds for crushing for refined vegetable oil production | 8,0 microgram/kg | 15,0 microgram/kg |
| Groundnuts (peanuts) and other oilseeds and processed products thereof, intended for direct human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs, with the exception of: - crude vegetable oils destined for refining; - refine vegetable oils | 2,0 microgram/kg | 4,0 microgram/kg |
| Hazelnuts and brazil nuts, intended for direct human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs | 5,0 microgram/kg | 10,0 microgram/kg |
| Hazelnuts and brazil nuts, to be subjected to sorting, or other physical treatment, before human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs | 8,0 microgram/kg | 15,0 microgram/kg |
| Tree nuts, other than hazelnuts, brazil nuts, Almonds, pistachios, to be subjected to sorting, or other physical treatment, before human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs | 5,0 microgram/kg | 10,0 microgram/kg |
| Dried fruit and tree nuts, other than almonds, pistachios, hazelnuts, brazil nuts and processed products thereof, intended for direct human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs | 2,0 microgram/kg | 4,0 microgram/kg |

Source: Official Journal of the European Union. Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 of December 19, 2006, setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs.

6. Post Contact and Further Information

For more information concerning market entry and for a current importer list contact:

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