

Required Report: Required - Public Distribution

Date: November 27, 2024

Report Number: NL2024-0022

Report Name: Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional Annual

Country: Netherlands

Post: The Hague

Report Category: Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional

Prepared By: Marcel Pinckaers

Approved By: Laura Geller

Report Highlights:

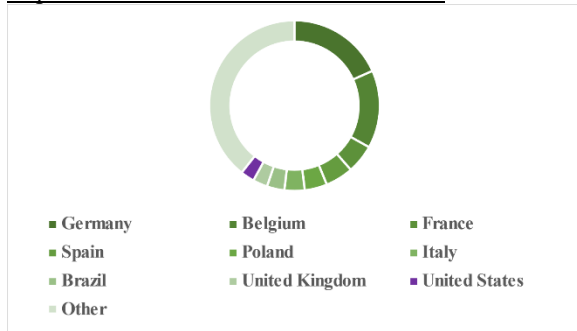
Hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) foodservice industry sales in the Netherlands in 2023 were valued at €15.3 billion in 2023, up by nine percent compared to 2022. Last year, sales in all segments saw an increase but restaurants and cafés saw its sales go up the most, profiting from the trading down trend among consumers. Consumer foodservice operators faced significant cost increases, and many were forced to pass these rising costs onto consumers, while also focusing on minimizing waste and adjusting menus to manage expenses. Competition in the foodservice sector intensified in 2023, especially with food retailers increasing their focus on meal delivery services and convenience store formats. These grocery giants, offering ready meals, meal kits, and delivery services, became more attractive alternatives to traditional foodservice options, especially during times of high inflation when consumers were more cautious with their spending.

Market Fact Sheet: The Netherlands

Executive Summary:

Although the Netherlands is a small country geographically, it is the gateway for U.S. products into the European Union (EU). It is also the largest importing country within the EU and the third largest exporter of agricultural products in the world.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products:



Source: Trade Data Monitor

Food Processing Industry:

Over 8,435 food companies in the Netherlands generated net sales of \$99 billion in 2023. The industry has been a steady supplier of jobs in the Netherlands (152,000) and the number of food companies continues to grow due to an increasing number of small food companies (with less than 10 employees).

Food Retail Industry:

The Dutch retail sector is rather consolidated, employing over 300,000 people, and operating in an estimated 6,130 stores. The sector’s turnover was valued at \$54 billion. Due to the increased costs of living, consumers are looking for products on sale and moving from branded products to private labeled products. Cheaper, further processed variants are gaining popularity as well as discount stores.

Foodservice – HRI Industry:

In 2023, turnover was valued at \$16.4 billion (up nine percent). Sales in all segments saw an increase, but restaurants and cafés saw sales go up the most, profiting from the trading down trend among consumers. Operators faced significant cost increases, and many were forced to pass these rising costs onto consumers, while also focusing on minimizing waste and adjusting menus to manage expenses. Competition intensified in 2023, especially with food retailers increasing their focus on meal delivery services and convenience store formats.

Quick Facts CY 2023

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products, total:
\$56.9 billion

List of Top 10 Growth Products in the Netherlands (imported from the World):

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Fresh fruit | 6. Fresh vegetables |
| 2. Dairy products | 7. Poultry products |
| 3. Bakery goods | 8. Processed vegetables |
| 4. Flowers, nursery prod. | 9. Wine |
| 5. Cocoa products | 10. Juices |

Food Industry by Channels 2023, in \$ billion:

Consumer-Oriented Products Imports	\$57
Consumer-Oriented Products Exports	\$105
Agricultural & Related Products Imports	\$109
Agricultural & Related Products Exports	\$153
Food Industry	\$99
Food Retail	\$54
Food Service	\$17

Top 10 Food Retailers in the Netherlands, Market Share:

Albert Heijn	37.1%	Deka	2.0%
Jumbo	21.1%	Hoogvliet	2.0%
Lidl	10.6%	Spar	1.7%
Plus/Coop	9.5%	Jan Linders	1.1%
Aldi	5.2%	Poiesz	1.0%

GDP/Population:

Population: 17.9 million
GDP: \$1,048 billion (€964 million)
GDP per capita: \$58,404 (€53,732)

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges

Strengths:

U.S. producers offer a great variety of food products with a consistent quality and have a great story to tell about sustainability, farm to table supply chains, and their heritage.

Opportunities:

Strong demand for food products with a special claim and that are healthy and nutritious. Demand for affordable convenience is up.

Weakness:

Transatlantic transportation is costly and takes time. Some U.S. food products suffer from a negative perception among Dutch consumers due to misinformation.

Threats:

There is fierce competition on price, quality, uniqueness, and innovation from other EU member states.

Data and Information Sources: Trade Data Monitor; industry experts, company websites

Contact: FAS The Hague, agthehague@usda.gov

SECTION I. MARKET SUMMARY

Although the Netherlands is a small country geographically, it is the gateway for U.S. products into the European Union (EU) due to the presence of the Port of Rotterdam, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, the confluence of two major European rivers, and an excellent road and railway infrastructure. It is the largest importing country within the EU and the third largest exporter of agricultural and related products in the world, after the United States and Brazil and before Germany. These exports (\$153 billion in 2023) include products produced in the Netherlands as well as imported products that are re-exported, often after further processing and adding value.

Overall Business Climate

The fundamental strengths of the Dutch economy continue to be its strategic location, mild climate, highly developed financial sector, a well-educated and productive labor force, high-quality physical and communications infrastructure, and a rather stable political climate.

In September 2024, the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) published its most recent economic forecast. The economy is expected to grow by 0.6 percent in 2024 and 1.5 percent next year. Purchasing power is set to recover by 2.5 percent in 2024 due to wage growth. The percentage of people in poverty is expected to decrease to 4.5 percent of the population in 2024. This is according to the concept [Macro Economic Outlook \(MEV\) for 2025](#) published by CPB. The CPB also published on September 17, 2024 [a medium-term projection for the period up to the end of 2028](#).

Consumer Trends

Average Dutch households struggle to do many things on a regular weekday, including work, taking care of the family, engaging socially, and of course eating. Dutch consumers are faced with a dilemma. While on the one hand there is less time for buying groceries and less knowledge about how to prepare a meal, there seems to be a growing interest in health and nutrition but also origin and sustainable production methods on the other hand. In the meantime, overall costs of living, including food prices, have gone up.

As a result, the demand for easy accessible, convenient, healthy, and nutritious food products, albeit at an affordable price, continues to grow. Driven by [Millennials](#) and [Generation Z](#), demand is also on the rise for instant delivery of foodstuffs while sales of packaged food in smaller portions is up as well. The Dutch are increasingly eating alone, eating out, and on-the-go. International cuisines that are gaining popularity including those from Israel, Lebanon, and Syria.

Consumer consciousness about how food products are produced is growing. Wageningen University and Research (WUR) annually publishes the “[Monitor Duurzaam Voedsel](#)” report, which provides an overview of consumer spending on sustainable food in the Netherlands. Total consumer spending on foods certified as sustainable grew by 14 percent in 2023 to an estimated \$13.6 billion. The share of sustainable food compared to total spendings on food remains at 19 percent last year. Sustainable food products are recognizable to consumers when they have a quality mark. Products with the ‘Better Life’ (Dutch: Beter Leven) quality mark were sold the most (\$4.6 billion) followed by product with the ‘Rainforest Alliance’ quality mark (\$3.3 billion) and products labeled organic (\$2.1 billion). A wider range of certified products and changing consumer preferences — paying more attention to sustainability and health — has explained the growth in demand for these products. Most of the spending takes place in the supermarket due to a wider availability of sustainable products.

Foodservice – HRI Market Sales In 2023

According to [Euromonitor International](#) (Euromonitor), a market research provider, the recovery of the HRI foodservice market from the COVID-19 crisis continued in 2023. Total sales were valued at €15.3¹ billion, up by nine percent compared to 2022. Sales in all segments saw an increase last year but restaurants and cafés saw its sales go up the most, profiting from the trading down trend among consumers.

In 2023, consumer foodservice operators faced significant cost increases, particularly in ingredients and energy, exacerbated by inflation and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Many were forced to pass these rising costs onto consumers, while also focusing on minimizing waste and adjusting menus to manage expenses. As the economic pressures mounted, operators aimed to reduce overheads by limiting food waste and optimizing their offerings.

Competition in the foodservice sector intensified in 2023, especially with food retailers like [Albert Heijn](#), [Jumbo](#), [Spar](#), and [HelloFresh](#) increasing their focus on meal delivery services and convenience store formats. These grocery giants, offering ready meals, meal kits, and delivery services, became more attractive alternatives to traditional foodservice options, especially during times of high inflation when consumers were more cautious with their spending.

The shift from independent to chain foodservice outlets continued, with a decline in independent outlets, particularly bars and pubs, which were heavily impacted by the pandemic and ongoing price hikes. As restaurant owners struggle with rising ingredient, labor, and energy costs, many are turning to technology and new business models to streamline operations, reduce waste, and minimize staffing needs. These changes are expected to drive further consolidation in the industry, as more independent players join chains to benefit from financial stability and operational efficiencies.

Table 1. Consumer Foodservice Sales by Type, in million €

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Full-Service Restaurants	5,296.2	3,393.2	4,429.0	5,412.0	5,938.3
Limited-Service Restaurants	4,326.0	3,300.3	4,209.1	4,858.9	5,316.8
Cafés/Bars	3,087.7	1,454.1	1,525.2	2,822.2	3,127.0
Self-Service Cafeterias	663.0	383.0	584.0	694.0	724.0
Street Stalls/Kiosks	245.1	149.2	193.1	234.1	238.9
Total	13,618.0	8,679.9	10,940.4	14,021.2	15,345.0

Source: Euromonitor

A vast number of consumers are placing orders for home delivery through third party delivery platforms. Younger consumers are particularly comfortable in using mobile apps on their smartphones to order and pay for this service, as it offers greater convenience. Delivery scooters and bicycles are working overtime in the Netherlands. [Just Eat Takeaway](#) leads the market for meal delivery from various HRI foodservice outlets to consumers in the Netherlands, followed by [UberEats](#). As the market saturates, profit margins may come under pressure, especially due to rising personnel and logistics costs. The

¹ \$1 = €0.93

future of these companies may depend on economies of scale, cost containment, and the extent to which consumers are willing to pay for the convenience of fast deliveries.

Table 2. Advantages and Challenges of the Dutch Foodservice Market

Advantages <i>U.S. Supplier Strengths & Market Opportunities</i>	Challenges <i>U.S. Supplier Weaknesses and Competitive Threats</i>
Generation Z is more food conscious and eats even more out of home at an affordable price than the other convenience generation, the Millennials. This creates opportunities for the foodservice industry.	U.S. products have become more expensive due to rising prices for agricultural commodities, costs for packaging materials, transportation, and energy.
HRI-Foodservice companies that offer online ordering in combination with home delivery have been doing well since the pandemic. This offers opportunities for U.S. foodservice chains that want to tap into this segment.	Transatlantic transportation is costly, takes time, and is under pressure especially during discussions about greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.
The Dutch are affluent, open minded, and curious about new cuisines. This creates opportunities for tasty, innovative, and convenient products on the one hand, but also for healthy and nutritious food products – all at an affordable price.	Fierce competition on price, quality, uniqueness, and innovation from other EU Member States and from non-EU countries that have negotiated lower tariff rates, such as Canada and Mexico.
Overall consumers’ consciousness about and interest in food products is growing and there is willingness to pay for authenticity, storytelling, and taste.	Beef that is not hormone-free, poultry, and products containing GMO derived ingredients (that are not EU approved) cannot be exported to the Netherlands.

Source: FAS/The Hague

SECTION II. ROAD MAP FOR MARKET ENTRY

Entry Strategy

Before introducing your product, FAS/The Hague advises U.S. new-to-market exporters to research the Dutch market. Besides this report, the USDA FAS Office in The Hague annually writes [the Exporter Guide](#), [the Food Processing Ingredients Market report](#), [the Food Retail Market report](#) and [the Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards report](#). These and other commodity reports can help a new-to-market exporter better understand the Dutch market and can be downloaded from the [FAS](#) website. In addition, FAS/The Hague advises U.S. exporters to reach out to U.S. industry groups for their expertise and local network and representatives.

After doing market research, U.S. companies should consider visiting and/or exhibiting at U.S. and foreign trade shows. These are excellent venues to meet local buyers, to conduct product introductions, and to gauge buyers’ interest. FAS in The Hague can advise which trade shows in Europe could be considered visiting or exhibiting at. Participation in Trade Missions organized by the U.S. agriculture industry groups has also proven to be a very effective way to meet local buyers.

Market Structure

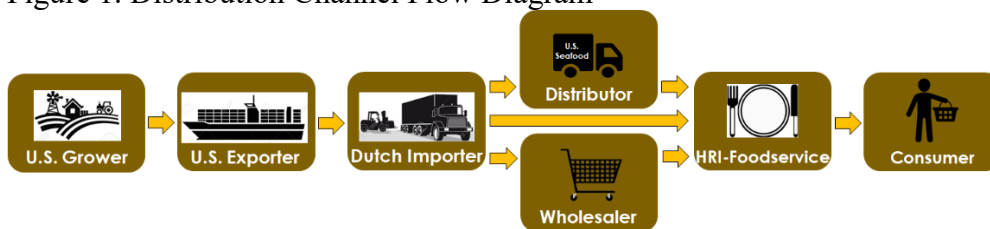
Unlike the retail sector, the Dutch foodservice industry is fragmented and has many independent players. This is especially the case for cafés/bars, restaurants, cafeterias, and street stalls/kiosks. The majority of limited-service restaurants and delivery outlets, however, are consolidated and often part of an international chain. Well-known examples of international limited-service restaurants active in the Netherlands include McDonalds, Domino's Pizza, KFC, Burger King, Subway, and New York Pizza. Chains from the United States are popular in the Netherlands because of their efficiency and consistency, but also because the meals are affordable. They continue to be successful because they have been able to respond to changing consumer demands and now, for instance, offer vegetarian and healthier food products. Other U.S. chains that opened outlets in the Netherlands include Dunkin' Donuts (coffee and donuts), Five Guys (burgers and fries), and Taco Bell (tacos, burritos, and quesadillas).

Distribution

The majority of foodservice establishments purchase products in three different ways: directly from U.S. suppliers, from Dutch importers, or from local wholesalers/distributors. Large limited-service restaurants most likely import unique specialty ingredients directly from the United States, but generally they depend on local partners for sourcing most of their ingredients. Independent players, like bar and cafés, restaurant, and hotel owners, prefer to purchase from wholesalers and distributors.

Independently owned cafés and restaurants prefer to have products delivered to save time and ensure products are available when needed. High-end hotel and restaurant players prefer to buy fresh products like bakery, produce, seafood, meat, alcoholic beverages (excluding beer) and dairy products from specialized distributors. The benefit lies in the possibility to have tailor-made orders and the interpersonal relationship. Beer and non-alcoholic beverages are generally bought directly from breweries. For shelf-stable grocery products, like spices, nuts, sauces, and cooking ingredients, hotel and restaurant owners turn to wholesalers.

Figure 1. Distribution Channel Flow Diagram



Source: FAS/The Hague

Due to strict import requirements and standards, Dutch wholesalers and distributors prefer to work with local importers that are specialized in buying U.S. products. For meat, seafood, and wine, importers also often distribute these imported products. The following wholesalers are active in the Netherlands: Bidfood, Horesca, Hanos, de Kweker, Makro, Sligro, and VHC. Almost all wholesalers have shops and delivery services. Bidfood and Horesca, however, have no shops and only deliver their products, while Makro only has shops and rarely delivers. Most wholesalers operate nationwide except de Kweker and Horesca who are active regionally.

Sub-Sector Profiles

Table 3. Company Shares in Chain Consumer Foodservice: % Foodservice Value 2019-2023

% value	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
McDonald's Corp	23.8	26.8	24.6	23.1	22.4
Van de Valk Groep	7.9	6.6	7.4	7.0	7.0
Domino's Pizza Inc	5.2	8.3	6.8	6.3	6.5
New York Pizza BV	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.9	4.4
Yum! Brands Inc	3.5	3.5	3.8	4.1	4.2
Rce Groep BV	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.8	3.9
Jumbo Food Groep BV	5.5	3.0	3.6	3.5	3.7
Restaurant Brands International Inc	3.4	3.9	3.4	3.3	3.2
Vital Food Group BV	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.3
De Beren Holding	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.3	2.3
NS Group NV	3.3	2.5	2.2	2.4	2.1
Doctor's Associates Inc	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6
Other	36.7	34.0	36.1	37.4	36.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Euromonitor

SECTION III. COMPETITION

This section summarizes the overall competitive situation that U.S. suppliers face in the Dutch foodservice industry. U.S. exporters of products that are also grown or produced within the EU are at a disadvantage due to proximity, shipping time, tariffs, exchange rate, and certification issues. For other products, U.S. companies often compete with other third country suppliers. There are only a hand full of products where the United States has limited competition.

Table 4. Competitive Situation U.S. Suppliers Face in the Dutch Foodservice Market, 2023

<i>Product Category (product code) Imports in \$ million</i>	<i>Main Suppliers, in percentage</i>		<i>Strengths of Key Supply Countries</i>	<i>Advantages and Disadvantages of Local Suppliers</i>
Craft beer (HS 2203) Total imports: \$666 From USA: \$4	1. Belgium 2. Germany 3. Poland 4. Mexico 9. USA	60 10 6 5 1	Local breweries brew good quality and innovative craft beer and compete directly with U.S. breweries.	Strong demand for new flavors, funky labels, and innovative tastes.
Sweetpotato (HS 071420) Total imports: \$67 From USA: \$30	1. USA 2. Egypt	44 35	Competition from Egypt, China, and Honduras.	The availability of fresh and processed sweetpotato products continues to grow. Strong demand for variety and quality.

Condiments & sauces (Product group) Total imports: \$699 From USA: \$17	1. Germany 2. Belgium 3. Italy 4. Thailand 11. USA	20 18 10 8 2	Good quality and taste sauces are locally available and benefit from its proximity and being in the EU market.	Demand for good quality, tasty, and unique, yet affordable condiments and sauces.
Snack food (Product group) Total imports: \$2,619 From USA: \$43	1. Belgium 2. Germany 3. France 4. U.K. 10. USA	29 28 7 5 2	Germany, Belgium, and France are close to the market and offer good quality products.	Demand for branded, good quality, and unique products that have a story to tell.
Spices (Product group) Total imports: \$530 From USA: \$3	1. China 2. Brazil 3. Germany 4. Vietnam 5. Peru 22. USA	15 9 9 8 7 1	Competition from countries in Asia.	Demand for new and good quality spices. Exports of U.S. spices including vanilla, anise, and cardamoms are growing.
Wine (HS 2204) Total Imports: \$1,640 From USA: \$28	1. France 2. Italy 3. Germany 4. Spain 5. Belgium 10. USA	28 16 16 12 5 2	France, Italy, Germany, and Spain have good quality wines at competitive prices and are moreover popular holiday destinations.	Limited commercial availability of domestic wine in the Netherlands.
Distilled spirits (Product group) Total imports: \$1,571 From USA: \$182	1. U.K. 2. Germany 3. Belgium 4. USA	24 16 12 12	Competition from good quality products produced in neighboring countries, dominated by Belgium and Germany.	Strong demand for whiskies with funky labels, innovative tastes and that have a story to tell.
Seafood products (Product group) Total imports: \$5,515 From USA: \$118	1. Iceland 2. Norway 3. Germany 4. Belgium 5. Denmark 14. USA	15 11 8 6 5 2	Iceland and Norway are the leading supplier of cod and salmon, respectively while Germany dominates Dutch imports of pelagic fish. The USA dominates the supply of Alaska Pollack, scallops, and wild salmon. For shrimp & prawns, cod, and	The Netherlands is an international trader in and processor of seafood products, serving foodservice markets and retail throughout Europe. The Dutch increasingly depend on imports for Alaska Pollack, scallops, wild salmon, shrimp & prawns, sole, plaice, cod, and

			lobster, the USA competes with other non-EU exporters.	lobster.
Beef and beef products (Product group) Total imports: \$2,602 From USA: \$201	1. Germany 2. Belgium 3. Ireland 6. USA	15 10 9 8	Germany, Belgium, and Ireland are close to the market.	There is a shortage of high quality, consistent, grain fed, tasty, and marbled beef.

Source: Trade Data Monitor

SECTION IV. BEST PRODUCT PROSPECTS CATEGORIES

Products that, in addition to a competitive price, are unique and innovative or not sufficiently available have the best prospects in the Dutch market:

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the World:

- Wine
- Food preparations
- Beef
- Grapes

Top Consumer-Oriented Products Imported from the United States:

- Food preparations
- Almonds
- Beef
- Pistachios

Products Present in Market with Good Sales Potential:

- Nuts and dried fruits
- Sauces and condiments
- Seafood
- Snack foods
- Pulses
- Wines, craft beer, and distilled spirits

Products Not Present in Market with Good Sales Potential:

- High value products with special certification
- Sweet corn
- Confectionary, chocolate, and bakery products
- Wines from other states than California

Products Not Present in Market due to Significant Barriers:

- Specialty products containing non-EU approved GMO derived ingredients
- Beef from plants that are not yet EU approved
- Poultry

SECTION V. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions or comments regarding this report, require listings of local importers or need assistance exporting to the Netherlands, please contact FAS/The Hague:

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service
Embassy of the United States | John Adams Park 1, 2244 BZ Wassenaar, the Netherlands
+31 (0)70 3102299 | agthehague@usda.gov | www.fas.usda.gov

Attachments:

No Attachments