

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: August 10, 2026

Report Number: CH2026-0101

Report Name: Dalian Market Profile

Country: China - People's Republic of

Post: Shenyang ATO

Report Category: Agricultural Trade Office Activities, Promotion Opportunities, Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional, Retail Foods, Product Brief

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Report Highlights:

With a population of 7.54 million and GDP of \$143 billion in 2025, Dalian is Northeast China's leading maritime gateway and a key distribution hub for imported food and agricultural products. The city's deep-water port, bonded cold-storage facilities, seafood processing sector, and logistics infrastructure support imports and distribution throughout Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, and eastern Inner Mongolia. Dalian's hospitality sector, seafood-focused dining culture, and food processing industry create opportunities for U.S. suppliers of seafood, beef, pork, dairy products, tree nuts, wine, and food ingredients. The city's seafood processing cluster provides opportunities for imported raw materials used in domestic distribution, further processing, and re-export. For U.S. exporters, the strongest market entry opportunities are through local importers, foodservice distributors, seafood processors, and premium retail channels.

City Overview



Dalian is a major sub-provincial city located at the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula in Liaoning Province. Situated between the Bohai Sea and the Yellow Sea, the city serves as Northeast China’s primary maritime gateway and an important center for international shipping, cold-chain logistics, and seafood processing.

In 2025, Dalian’s GDP reached \$143 billion, making it the first city in Northeast China to surpass RMB 1 trillion in economic output. Historically developed as a rail and maritime hub, Dalian has evolved into a major industrial and trade center, with key sectors including petrochemicals, equipment manufacturing, shipbuilding, software and information technology, maritime services, tourism, and seafood processing.

Dalian’s advantages for imported food products are closely linked to its port infrastructure, bonded logistics facilities, and transportation connections to inland markets. The city’s cold-chain network supports the storage, handling, and distribution of imported seafood, meat, dairy products, and other temperature-sensitive products throughout Northeast China. Per capita disposable income reached \$8,139 in 2025, reflecting relatively strong consumer purchasing power and supporting demand for premium imported food products.

Dalian City at a Glance 2025	
(USD calculated using 2025 average exchange rate of 1 USD = 7.18 CNY)	
Province	Liaoning
Population	7.54 million
Land Area	12,574 KM²
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	\$143 billion
per capita GDP	\$18,200
Per capita disposable income	\$8,139
Growth in per capita disposable income	4.0 percent
Total Retail Sales of Consumer Goods	\$31.8 billion
Tourism Revenue	\$27.8 billion
Foreign Direct Investment	\$2.7 billion
Total Imports	\$28.69 billion
Total Exports	\$33.89 billion
Source: Liaoning Statistics Yearbook 2025	

Logistics and Regional Distribution

Dalian serves as a major logistics and distribution hub for imported food and agricultural products in Northeast China. The city’s deep-water port, bonded logistics facilities, cold-chain infrastructure, and multimodal transportation network support the movement of imported seafood, meat, dairy products, and other agricultural commodities to markets across Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, and eastern Inner Mongolia.

Dalian’s location provides advantages for importers and distributors serving Northeast China, where access to international suppliers is more limited compared with coastal markets in eastern and southern China. Imported products can be stored, processed, and distributed locally before reaching regional foodservice operators, retailers, and food manufacturers.

For U.S. exporters, Dalian’s logistics infrastructure is particularly relevant for products requiring temperature-controlled storage and handling,

including frozen seafood, meat products, dairy ingredients, and other perishable agricultural products.

Port of Dalian

The Port of Dalian is the largest comprehensive port in Northeast China and a major entry point for imported agricultural commodities. The port handles significant volumes of bulk agricultural products, including soybeans, feed grains, vegetable oils, frozen meat, and seafood.

The port's cold-chain and bonded storage facilities are particularly important for imported frozen foods, including seafood and meat products. Imported seafood and other temperature-controlled products can be stored, processed, and distributed through Dalian's logistics network before reaching markets throughout Northeast China.

Major port areas include:

- Dayaowan Port Area: Main container terminal and primary location for cold-chain logistics operations.
- Dalian Bay Port Area: Handles general cargo, bulk grains, and roll-on/roll-off shipping.
- Nianyawan Port Area: Primarily used for crude oil and chemical liquid products.
- Ganjingzi & Dagang Port Areas: Support general cargo and regional bulk distribution.

Dalian has approximately 80 specialized berths, including 38 deep-water berths capable of accommodating vessels up to 300,000 deadweight tons. The port is connected to regional markets through integrated sea-rail and highway networks, allowing imported products to move efficiently into Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, and eastern Inner Mongolia.

For U.S. agricultural exporters, Dalian's combination of port capacity, bonded storage, and seafood processing infrastructure makes the city an important gateway for entering Northeast China.

Tourism



Tourism is an important driver of Dalian's foodservice sector. As a coastal tourism destination and international cruise port, Dalian attracts significant domestic and international visitors, particularly during the May–October peak season.

According to the Dalian Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, tourism revenue reached \$27.8 billion in 2025, up 20 percent year-on-year. South Korea, Japan, and Russia remained key international source markets, while international arrivals continued to recover. Tourism-related demand supports purchases of imported food products by hotels, restaurants, and catering operators. High-end establishments serving domestic and international visitors create opportunities for premium ingredients, including U.S. seafood, beef, pork, dairy products, and wine.

Market for Imported Products

Dalian provides opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products through three major channels: foodservice, food processing, and premium retail. Among these sectors, foodservice represents the strongest near-term opportunity, supported by Dalian’s hospitality industry, seafood culture, and demand for high-quality imported ingredients.

The city’s food processing sector also offers opportunities for U.S. suppliers, particularly for imported raw materials used by seafood processors and food manufacturers. Dalian’s port facilities, bonded warehouses, and cold-chain infrastructure support the handling and distribution of imported ingredients for domestic consumption and further processing.

Retail opportunities are more selective and concentrated among higher-income consumers through premium supermarkets, membership warehouse clubs, and online grocery platforms. Products with strong quality attributes, brand recognition, or clear differentiation are better positioned in this segment.

U.S. exporters should focus on developing relationships with local importers, distributors, foodservice suppliers, and processors that have established regional networks. Dalian’s role as a distribution hub also provides access to surrounding markets in Northeast China.

Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional (HRI)

Dalian’s commercial foodservice sector is supported by tourism, international business activity, and a strong seafood dining culture. The city’s HRI market includes international hotels, upscale seafood restaurants, Japanese and Korean restaurants, Western-style restaurants, bakeries, and specialty coffee shops.

The HRI sector represents the strongest near-term opportunity for U.S. food and agricultural products, particularly premium ingredients that offer consistent quality, reliable supply, and menu differentiation.

Hotels

International hotel groups maintain a presence in Dalian, particularly in the Donggang financial district, Xinghai Bay area, and major commercial centers. These hotels operate restaurants, buffets, banquet facilities, and catering services that utilize imported ingredients.

Selected International Hotel Groups in Dalian include

Hotel Operator	Number of Outlets	Key Brands Represented
IHG	5	InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Hotel Indigo
Marriott International	6	The Luxury Collection, Renaissance, Aloft, Four Points
Hilton Worldwide	6	Conrad, Hilton, Hampton
Accor	8	Pullman, Mercure, Novotel, Ibis
Hyatt Hotels	1	Grand Hyatt
Shangri-La Group	1	Shangri-La Dalian

International hotels are important buyers of imported beef, seafood, dairy products, wine, and specialty ingredients for fine dining restaurants, international buffets, and banquet operations.

Restaurants

Dalian's restaurant sector benefits from its coastal location, seafood culture, and historical connections with Japan and South Korea. These factors have contributed to a relatively developed market for international cuisine and imported food products.

Japanese and Korean Restaurants

Dalian has one of the highest concentrations of Japanese and Korean restaurants in northern China. These restaurants are key users of premium imported ingredients, including seafood, beef, dairy products, and specialty items required for Japanese and Korean cuisine.

Western Dining, Bakeries and Cafés

Younger consumers, tourism, and growing interest in international cuisine are supporting demand for Western-style restaurants, bakeries, and specialty coffee shops in Dalian. These businesses provide opportunities for imported ingredients, including beef, pork, dairy products, tree nuts, dried fruits, bakery ingredients, and premium beverages such as wine and craft beer.

Retail

Dalian's retail food market benefits from relatively high disposable incomes, growing demand for premium products, and a diverse range of retail channels, including supermarkets, membership warehouse clubs, premium grocery stores, and online-to-offline (O2O) platforms. Total retail sales of consumer goods reached \$31.8 billion in 2025.

Imported food products are mainly positioned toward higher-income consumers seeking quality, safety, and product variety. Key retail opportunities are concentrated in premium supermarkets, warehouse clubs, and online platforms that have established imported food categories.

Dashang Group, headquartered in Dalian, is one of the city's largest retail groups and operates supermarkets, department stores, and other food retail outlets. International retailers and membership warehouse clubs, including Sam's Club and METRO AG, serve higher-income households and small business customers with imported seafood, beef, dairy products, bakery ingredients, tree nuts, and wine.

Premium supermarket formats, including Ole' and Blt, target affluent consumers with imported wine, cheese, chilled meats, and specialty foods. Online grocery platforms such as Freshippo, Meituan, and JD.com continue to expand access to imported products through online ordering and home delivery.

Retail Format	Key Brands	Target Consumer	Imported Product Focus
Regional Retail Group	Dashang New Mart, Mykal	urban middle class	Packaged goods, cooking oils, wine, seafood
Membership Clubs	Sam's Club, Metro	High-income families, small business buyers	beef, frozen seafood, tree nuts, bakery, dairy
Premium Supermarkets	Ole', blt	Affluent households	Chocolates, fine wines, cheese, chilled meats
New Retail / O2O	Freshippo (Hema), Meituan	Younger consumers, urban households	Fresh seafood, fruits, ready-to-eat meals, dairy

For U.S. exporters, retail opportunities are most suitable for products with strong brand recognition, premium positioning, or clear quality advantages. Partnerships with experienced importers and distributors remain important for market access and consumer promotion.

Seafood Processing

Dalian is one of China's major seafood processing and distribution centers. The city's deep-water port, bonded cold-storage facilities, and established seafood processing infrastructure support both domestic distribution and export-oriented processing.

The seafood industry includes hundreds of processing and cold-storage enterprises, ranging from large export-oriented companies to small and medium-sized processors. Many local processors rely on imported raw materials, particularly wild-caught seafood, which is processed locally and supplied to domestic and international markets.

Dalian's seafood processing sector operates largely through an import-process-distribute model. Imported products, including Alaska pollock, cod, salmon, and other seafood species, are typically imported in bulk frozen formats and processed locally through filleting, portioning, and value-added preparation. Finished products are distributed to domestic food service and retail channels or exported to overseas markets.

In addition to imported seafood processing, Dalian has developed industries around high-value local seafood products, including sea cucumber, scallops, abalone, and sea urchin. Processors produce value-added products such as dried sea cucumber, frozen scallop products, and prepared seafood items for domestic consumers and foodservice operators.

The growth of convenience foods and ready-to-cook products is creating additional opportunities for seafood processors. Local companies are expanding production of seafood dumplings, seasoned seafood products, hot-pot ingredients, and other prepared foods for supermarkets, online platforms, and restaurant channels.

For U.S. exporters, Dalian's seafood processing sector provides opportunities to supply raw materials, particularly high-quality seafood products used for further processing and value-added applications.

Premium and ultra-premium pet food manufacturing may also create new demand for U.S. seafood ingredients if tariff rates become more favorable.

SWOT Analysis: U.S. Agricultural Products Exports to Dalian

Strengths • U.S. agricultural products are recognized among many Chinese importers, chefs, and processors for food safety standards, product consistency, and reliable supply. • U.S. seafood, beef, dairy products, and tree nuts align well with demand from premium foodservice operators, processors, and specialty retailers. • Established U.S. export supply chains provide experience serving large-scale buyers and processors.	Weaknesses • Tariffs, transportation costs, and cold-chain requirements can reduce the price competitiveness of U.S. products compared with domestic and regional suppliers. • Longer transportation distances require effective cold-chain management, particularly for frozen and temperature-sensitive products. • Consumer awareness of specific U.S. brands remains limited compared with some competing suppliers, particularly in retail channels.
Opportunities • Dalian's role as a Northeast China import and distribution hub creates opportunities for U.S. products entering regional foodservice, retail, and processing channels. • The city's seafood processing cluster provides opportunities for U.S. seafood suppliers to provide raw materials for domestic processing and distribution. • International hotels, premium restaurants, membership clubs, and online retail platforms continue to support demand for higher-quality imported foods.	Threats • Policy changes, tariffs, and regulatory requirements may affect market access, costs, and importer decisions. • Competition from geographically closer suppliers, including Russia for seafood, Chile for wine and fruit products, and Southeast Asian suppliers benefiting from regional trade agreements, remains strong. • Slower economic growth and cautious consumer spending may increase price sensitivity and encourage substitution toward lower-cost alternatives.

Emerging Sector for U.S. Food Products

Dalian's craft beer market has developed in recent years, supported by growing consumer interest in premium and locally brewed beer as well as the city's vibrant tourism and dining sectors. The city has attracted new specialty beer bars and breweries, including operators expanding from other major Chinese cities, reflecting increasing demand for diverse beer styles. Dalian is also home to the China representative of Yakima Chief Hops, a leading U.S. hop supplier, highlighting the city's connection to the craft brewing industry. The continued growth of craft beer presents opportunities for U.S. hop

exports and other brewing ingredients. For more details, see the USDA report [US Brewing Ingredients - Opportunities in China's Booming Craft Beer Sector](#) | CH2025-0099

Key Agriculture Related Trade Shows and Events in Dalian

- Asia-Pacific Seafood Expo

Expo held annually in Dalian, the Asia-Pacific Seafood & Fisheries Expo is one of the region's key seafood trade events, attracting seafood importers, processors, distributors, retailers, and HRI buyers. The expo provides an important platform for international suppliers to showcase products, develop business relationships, and connect with buyers from Northeast China.

- Dalian International Beer Festival

The Dalian International Beer Festival is a major annual event that attracts domestic and international visitors and highlights the city's strong beer culture. The festival supports the development of Dalian's premium beer and craft brewing sector, creating potential opportunities for U.S. suppliers of hops and other brewing ingredients.

Best Product Prospects for U.S. Products

Dalian's seafood industry, hospitality sector, and premium food retail channels create opportunities for a range of U.S. agricultural and seafood products. Products with strong quality attributes, established supply chains, and applications in food service or processing are best positioned in the market.

Key product prospects include:

Seafood: Dalian's role as a major seafood processing and distribution center creates opportunities for U.S. seafood products, including live lobster, Alaska seafood, salmon, cod, and other high-value species. Imported seafood is used by processors, hotels, restaurants, and premium retailers.

Beef and Other Animal Proteins: Premium U.S. beef, pork, and poultry products have opportunities in international hotels, steakhouses, Japanese and Korean restaurants, and other foodservice channels seeking consistent quality and product specifications.

Dairy and Bakery Ingredients: Cheese, butter, cream, and other dairy ingredients are suitable for bakeries, cafés, hotels, and Western-style restaurants. Demand is supported by growth in premium bakery products and international cuisine.

Tree Nuts and Specialty Ingredients: Almonds, walnuts, pecans, dried fruits, and other specialty ingredients have potential in bakeries, confectionery products, foodservice applications, and premium retail channels.

Wine, Beer, and Spirits: Imported wine, craft beer, and spirits, including whisky, have opportunities in Dalian's hospitality sector and among higher-income consumers. Demand is supported by international hotels, premium restaurants, tourism activity, and growing interest in premium alcoholic beverages.

Please refer to the following GAIN report for further information on exporting products to China.

Exporter Guide: [Exporter Guide Annual](#)

HRI: [Hotel Restaurant Institutional Annual](#)

Retail: [Retail Foods Annual](#)

Food Processing: [Food Processing Ingredients Annual](#)

**For more information, please contact ATO
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Attachments:

No Attachments.