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**Report Highlights:**

This report offers information for U.S. companies interested in exporting agri-food products to Italy, including an overview of the country's economic situation, market structure, export requirements, and best product export opportunities.

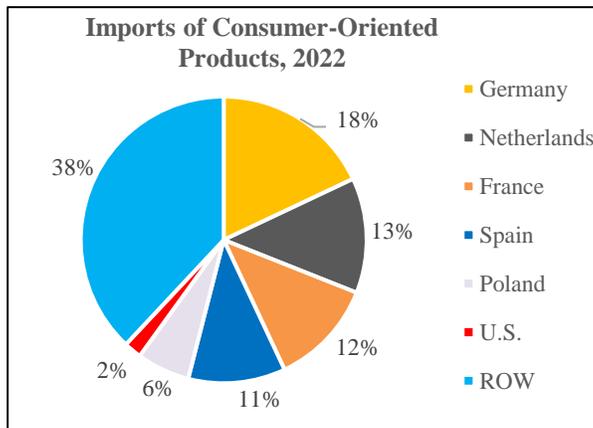
# Market Fact Sheet: Italy

## Executive Summary

Italy's economy is the eighth largest in the world and the third largest in the euro-zone, with a GDP estimated at \$2 trillion and a per capita GDP of \$34,083 in 2022. Being a net agricultural importer, most raw materials and ingredients are imported, as Italy's economic strength is in the processing and the manufacturing of goods. Italy exports mainly consumer-oriented products to the United States, while the United States exports mostly bulk commodities to Italy. In 2022, U.S. agricultural exports to Italy were \$1.1 billion, while U.S. imports from Italy were \$7.4 billion.

## Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products

In 2022, Italy's imports of consumer-oriented products were \$31.2 billion, of which 83 percent originating from other EU-27 member states. Imports from the EU-27 were primarily dairy products, beef and pork meat, fresh fruit, and processed vegetables.



## Food Processing Industry

The Italian food-processing industry is highly fragmented, characterized by a growing consolidation of smaller companies. Progress in food technology, marketing innovations, "Made in Italy" products, and exports of finished food products have all contributed to Italy's increasing demand for food ingredients. Italian consumers continue to favor baked goods, processed meat and seafood, and dairy products.

## Food Retail Industry

The Italian food retail industry is highly diversified. Hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores, major discount stores, and specialized stores coexist with traditional corner grocery stores and open-air markets. Italy's food retail sales reached \$170.4 billion in 2022. Increased sales were registered in discounters (+4.1 percent), supermarkets (+2.8 percent), hypermarkets (+2.7 percent), and small local grocers (+1 percent).

## Quick Facts CY 2022

**Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products:** \$31.2 billion

### List of Top 10 Growth Products in Italy

- 1) Dairy Products
- 2) Processed Meat and Seafood
- 3) Baked Goods
- 4) Processed Vegetables
- 5) Pasta and Rice
- 6) Chocolate Confectionary
- 7) Savory Snacks
- 8) Sauces, Dressings, and Condiments
- 9) Tree Nuts
- 10) Ready Meals

### Food Industry by Channels (\$ billion)

Food Exports	\$53.9
Food Imports	\$31.2
Retail	\$170.4
Food Service	\$73.6

### Top 10 Italian Retailers

- 1) Conad
- 2) Coop Italia
- 3) Selex Gruppo Commerciale SpA
- 4) Esselunga SpA
- 5) Gruppo VèGé
- 6) Gruppo Eurospin
- 7) Schwarz Gruppe
- 8) Crai Secom SpA
- 9) D.IT Distribuzione Italiana Soc. Coop.
- 10) Spar International

### GDP/Population

Population: 58.9 million  
 GDP: 2 trillion  
 GDP per capita: \$34,083

## Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
Italy's food consumption levels are among the highest in the world.	Competition from EU countries that export to Italy tariff-free.
Opportunities	Threats
Italy is dependent on raw imports for its processed food industry. Italian food products have a reputation for being of high quality.	Non-tariff barriers, including traceability requirements, can hinder U.S. exports.

## Data and Information Sources:

Trade Data Monitor (TDM), LLC; Euromonitor; industry contacts.

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## SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW

Italy’s economy is the eighth largest in the world and the third largest in the euro-zone, with a GDP estimated at \$2 trillion and a per capita GDP of \$34,083 in 2022. Being a net agricultural importer, most raw materials and ingredients are imported, as Italy’s economic strength is in the processing and the manufacturing of goods, primarily in small and medium-sized family-owned firms. Italy exports mainly consumer products to the United States, while the United States exports mostly bulk commodities to Italy. In 2022, U.S. agricultural exports to Italy were \$1.1 billion, while U.S. imports from Italy were \$7.4 billion.

### U.S. - Italy Agricultural Trade 2022

U.S. leading exports to Italy	U.S. leading imports from Italy
Soybeans: \$371.9 million	Wine: \$2.5 billion
Tree nuts: \$276.5 million	Baked goods, cereals, and pasta: \$1.05 billion
Wheat: \$136.3 million	Olive oil: \$690.3 million
Pulses: \$54.1 million	Dairy products: \$509.4 million
Distilled spirits: \$44.4 million	Condiments and sauces: \$436.3 million
<b>Total: \$1.1 billion</b>	<b>Total: \$7.4 billion</b>

Source: BICO

Agriculture is one of Italy’s key economic sectors, accounting for approximately 2.2 percent of GDP. Italy’s agriculture is typical of the northern and southern division found within the European Union (EU). The northern part of Italy produces primarily grains, soybeans, meat, and dairy products, while the south specializes in fruits, vegetables, olive oil, and durum wheat. Even though much of its mountainous terrain is unsuitable for farming, approximately 6 percent of the population (58.9 million) is employed in farming. Most farms are small, with the average size being eleven hectares.

Advantages	Challenges
High consumer interest in new products.	Price competition is fierce. Italy’s inflation rate for 2022 was 8.2 percent.
The tourism industry increases demand for hotel, restaurant, and institutional products.	Competition from similar food products produced in other EU countries that enter tariff-free.
U.S. food products are viewed as “trendy, new, and innovative”, especially those with health benefits.	Complying with European and Italian regulations.
Italians are becoming more aware of foreign cuisines.	Competition in the Italian food market is fierce and many consumers still prefer traditional Italian products.
Exchange rate fluctuations can affect imports of U.S. products.	Mandatory customs duties, sanitary inspections, and labeling requirements can be onerous.

## SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

- Survey existing and potential opportunities by reviewing [FAS GAIN](#) reports and consider engaging a market research firm to assist in analyzing market opportunities and challenges.

- Identify a key importer, broker, distributor, agent, or wholesaler, as they know how to best navigate the import and distribution process. They are key to doing business in Italy. Food importing is a specialized business, and an importer plays a pivotal role in navigating the hurdles of Italian and EU food law. Italian importers are mostly small to medium-sized companies and normally carry a whole range of products. The terms and length of association between the U.S. company and the Italian company are normally established by contract.
- Price is always important, although quality and novelty alone do move some imported products.
- Be prepared to start small by shipping a few pallets or cases of a product and recognize that it could take several months or years before an importer is ready to order full containers. Italians place a lot of importance on first building the trust to consolidate the business relationship.
- Scrutinize the purchasing procedures of the larger retail channels.
- Be willing to meet special EU labeling requirements and consider working through a consolidator or participating in mixed container shipments.
- Participation in some of the larger European international food trade shows (ANUGA, SIAL, and TUTTOFOOD) offers a good opportunity to get a sense of the Italian market and provides the opportunity to meet potential Italian importers or distributors.

### **SECTION III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS & REGULATIONS AND IMPORT PROCEDURES**

As a member of the EU, Italy applies the “*Community Acquis*”, i.e., the entire body of EU laws and regulations associated with the treaties and international agreements to which the EU is a party. EU member states share a customs union, a single market in which goods can move freely, a common trade policy, and a common agricultural and fisheries policy.

To the extent that EU food laws have been harmonized, Italy’s food laws and regulations follow EU rules. Similarly, Italy employs the same tariffs and border measures as the other EU member states. Products imported into Italy must meet all Italian and EU food safety and quality standards, as well as labeling and packaging regulations. In Italy, the primary responsibility for food safety rests with the Italian Ministry of Health, while food production is the primary responsibility of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty, and Forests. In some instances, other Italian ministries may have responsibilities, such as the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy on standards, labeling, and trade promotion, or the Ministry of Economy and Finance on customs and duties.

For more information, see latest *Italy Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS)* and *Italy FAIRS Certificate* reports at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

You may also want to review the FAIRS reports produced by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium that are available at: <https://usda-eu.org/reports/fairs-report/>.

Most imported food products enter the Italian market through brokers or specialized traders. Imported products from North America often enter Italy indirectly from the Netherlands’ Port of Rotterdam or directly via air. U.S. exporters need to work closely with the industry, focusing on the importers and distributors who can best promote U.S. products to the Italian food sector. These groups have an in-depth knowledge of import requirements, such as product certification, labeling, and packaging. They

also typically handle shipping, customs clearance, warehousing, and distribution of products within the country. American exporters who can assist in consolidating shipments from other U.S. sources or have a wide range of products for export have the greatest chance for success in the Italian market.

## **SECTION IV. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS**

### ➤ **Italian Food Processing Ingredients Sector**

The Italian food-processing industry continues to be highly fragmented, characterized by a growing consolidation of smaller companies. The leading players tend to employ multichannel strategies, which have helped them to offset food service losses with higher sales in the retail channel during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, a gradual return to in-person work, study, and activities left consumers with less time or inclination to cook or bake. On the other hand, confectionery, snack bars, ice cream, and pastries benefitted from a gradual return to normality. Italy depends almost entirely on raw material imports, most of which come from other EU countries. For additional information, see *Italy Food Processing Ingredients 2023* report at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

### ➤ **Italian Food Retail Sector**

The Italian retail food market is highly diversified. Italy's food retail sales reached \$170.4 billion in 2022, a 2.1 percent increase compared to 2021. Increased sales were registered at discount stores (+4.1 percent), supermarkets (+2.8 percent), hypermarkets (+2.7 percent), and small local grocers (+1 percent). Conversely, convenience stores registered a 1 percent decrease. Multi-channel strategies, blending online and in-store sales, are key to success across retailing. Grocery retailers are paving the way towards innovative solutions in this respect, offering e-commerce shopping with deliveries to the consumer's home and in-store lockers for customers to collect online orders. For additional information, see *Italy Retail Foods 2023* report at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

### ➤ **Italian Food Service – Hotel, Restaurant, Institutional**

In 2022, Italy's consumer food service value sales registered an increase of 23.5 percent compared to 2021 while moving towards full recovery from the lingering COVID-19 pandemic. Consumer food service players faced the challenge of reviving footfall in outlets: while some looked at price promotions, many focused on improving their menus and the dining experience. Italian tourism is rapidly recovering from the effects of the pandemic and reaching pre-pandemic levels. Italy received approximately 50 million international tourists in 2023, an 85.3 percent increase from 2022. The hospitality industry was one of the hardest hit sectors during the pandemic but bounced back to pre-pandemic levels since the full reopening of the sector in 2022. For more information, see *Italy Food Service – Hotel Restaurant Institutional 2023* report at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

➤ **Competitive situation for selected consumer-oriented products**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Italy's imports from the world 2022</b>	<b>Italy's imports from the United States 2022</b>	<b>Key constraints over market development</b>	<b>Market attractiveness for the United States</b>
Pork meat and products	\$2.5 billion	\$0	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Denmark	Growing consumers' demand.
Bakery goods	\$1.8 billion	\$1.9 million	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, France, Austria, and Spain.	Growing consumers' demand.
Tree nuts	\$1.4 billion	\$326.5 million	Competition from Turkey, Germany, Chile, and Spain.	Growing demand from manufacturers, confectionary, and snack industry.
Chocolate and cocoa products	\$1.2 billion	\$421,095	Competition from other EU countries, mainly Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium.	Growing consumers' demand.
Distilled Spirits	\$997 million	\$241.8 million	Competition from UK and other EU countries, mainly France, the Netherlands, and Spain.	Growing consumers' demand. Robust demand from tourism.

Source: Trade Data Monitor LLC

## SECTION V. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD IMPORTS



U.S. Exports of Agricultural & Related Products to Italy(\*)  
CY 2018 - 2022 and Year-to-Date Comparisons  
(in millions of dollars+)



Export Market: \*Italy(\*)\*

Product	Calendar Years (Jan-Dec)					January - October		
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023	%Chg
<b>Bulk Total</b> .....	541.0	428.2	465.7	439.7	602.6	470.6	824.3	75.2
Wheat.....	140.0	188.3	215.9	112.7	136.3	108.8	81.9	-23.3
Corn.....	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	17.4	5.2	-69.9
Coarse Grains (excl. corn).....	0.0	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Rice.....	2.0	1.9	1.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	27.0
Soybeans.....	304.0	138.5	177.9	258.5	371.9	281.9	662.7*	135.1
Oilseeds (excl. soybean).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	-
Cotton.....	8.0	3.7	8.2	9.4	7.1	6.5	5.3	-18.6
Pulses.....	39.0	42.5	39.4	48.7	54.1*	46.8	53.3	13.8
Tobacco.....	30.0	38.1	14.8	4.2	6.0	3.6	9.8	170.4
Other Bulk Commodities.....	10.0	10.5	8.0	7.9	9.0	6.8	5.7	-18.1
<b>Intermediate Total</b> .....	213.0	175.3	126.7	143.9	136.5	99.0	89.6	-9.4
Milled Grains & Products.....	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.6	65.3
Soybean Meal.....	48.0	34.5	0.0	20.8	0.1	0.1	0.0	-
Soybean Oil.....	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.1	-65.5
Vegetable Oils (excl. soybean).....	7.0	7.7	3.4	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.8	40.8
Animal Fats.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Live Animals.....	2.0	2.3	1.6	1.2	1.8	1.6	1.7	5.0
Hides & Skins.....	55.0	29.6	16.8	16.9	35.9	29.7	31.1	4.9
Hay.....	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	-
Distillers Grains.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Other Feeds, Meals & Fodders.....	8.0	11.9	8.1	7.8	6.7	5.3	6.5	22.1
Ethanol (non-bev.).....	0.0	0.2	0.8	3.6*	2.0	2.0	0.4	-80.1
Planting Seeds.....	41.0	50.8	56.6	56.2	43.7	22.7	20.1	-11.5
Sugar, Sweeteners, Bev. Bases.....	0.0	0.9	2.3	1.8	2.8	2.7	1.1	-58.1
Dextrins, Peptones, & Proteins.....	3.0	1.5	1.4	1.7	2.5	2.1	1.4	-34.1
Essential Oils.....	12.0	7.5	6.2	7.4	10.0	6.6	8.0	22.4
Other Intermediate Products.....	37.0*	28.0	28.9	24.6	28.4	24.0	16.9	-28.8
<b>Consumer Oriented Total</b> .....	465.0	501.4	443.0	448.8	414.7	350.1	381.6	9.0
Beef & Beef Products.....	49.0	30.9	10.5	19.0	28.6	24.0	32.0	33.1
Pork & Pork Products.....	2.0	1.2	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.0	-89.1
Poultry Meat & Prods. (excl. eggs)	1.0	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	-10.1
Meat Products NESOI.....	0.0	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	-89.7
Eggs & Products.....	3.0	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.9	728.0
Dairy Products.....	2.0	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.5	-25.0
Fresh Fruit.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Processed Fruit.....	13.0	11.3	11.3	13.7	19.8	16.2	8.5	-47.3
Fresh Vegetables.....	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.1	-48.9
Processed Vegetables.....	36.0	19.9	38.3	21.9	14.4	13.7	18.1	32.9
Fruit & Vegetable Juices.....	1.0	0.5	1.2	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.3	-16.0
Tree Nuts.....	283.0	362.7*	313.6	321.2	276.5	227.2	246.8	8.6
Confectionery.....	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	37.5
Chocolate & Cocoa Products.....	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	6.7
Bakery Goods, Cereals, & Pasta.....	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.1	-13.4
Food Preparations.....	11.0	11.5	14.1	16.4*	14.7	12.2	11.5	-5.4
Condiments & Sauces.....	3.0*	2.6	1.7	2.8	2.4	2.1	2.9	38.4
Non-Alcoholic Bev. (excl. juice).....	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	-2.3
Beer.....	4.0*	3.3	1.4	2.2	1.5	1.4	1.1	-19.7
Wine & Related Products.....	2.0	2.9	1.0	2.0	4.1	3.8	2.8	-26.9
Distilled Spirits.....	47.0	41.9	41.2	40.6	44.4	41.9	47.2*	12.4
Nursery Products & Cut Flowers.....	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1	1.1	703.0
Dog & Cat Food.....	1.0	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.4	-41.0
Other Consumer Oriented.....	2.0	2.9	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.5	2.8	465.7
<b>Agricultural Related Products</b> .....	170.0	138.5	95.9	147.0	199.3	164.8	122.8	-25.5
Biodiesel & Blends > B30.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	4548.8
Forest Products.....	93.0	82.9	55.5	83.9	115.0	99.9	65.4	-34.5
Seafood Products.....	77.0	53.6	40.4	63.1	84.2	64.8	57.2	-11.8
<b>Agricultural Products</b> .....	1,219.0	1,104.9	1,035.3	1,032.4	1,163.7	919.6	1,295.5*	40.9
<b>Agricultural &amp; Related Products</b> .....	1,389.0	1,241.4	1,131.2	1,179.4	1,353.0	1,084.4	1,418.3*	30.8

Prepared By: Trade & Economic Analysis Division/GMA/FAS/USDA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Trade Data

Biodiesel aggregate includes only higher-level and pure biodiesel HTS chapter 38 codes; biodiesel blends below 30% by volume (aka. petroleum oils containing biodiesel) found in chapter 27 are excluded.

\* Denote Highest Export Levels Since at  
Least CY 1970

www.fas.usda.gov/GATS  
GATSHelp@fas.usda.gov

For more detailed U.S. trade statistics, check USDA's Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS):

<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/gats/default.aspx>

## **Best High Value, Consumer-Oriented Product Prospects Categories**

- **Products present in the market which have good sales potential**
  - Tree nuts
  - Distilled spirits
  - Food preparations
  - Sauces, dressings, and condiments
- **Top consumer-oriented products imported from the world**
  - Dairy products
  - Beef and pork
  - Processed vegetables
  - Fresh fruit
- **Top consumer-oriented products imported from the United States**
  - Tree Nuts
  - Distilled spirits
  - Beef and beef products
  - Processed vegetables
- **Products not present in significant quantities, but which have good sales potential**
  - Functional and health food
  - Free-from products (lactose-free, gluten-free)
  - Beer
  - Organic products
- **Products not present in the market because they face significant barriers**
  - Beef, other than that sold through the High-Quality Beef Quota
  - Poultry (sanitary procedures – chlorine wash)
  - Processed food products containing genetically engineered (GE) ingredients

## **SECTION VI. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

Office of Agricultural Affairs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Embassy Rome, Italy

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FAS Italy publishes numerous market and commodity reports available through the Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments