

Trade Snapshot

Q1 2025

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FIDEA

Food & Drink
Exporters Association



Executive summary

The Food and Drink Federation's (FDF) Trade Snapshot provides an overview of the UK's food and drink trade performance for the first quarter of 2025. It explores the key trends, challenges and opportunities in global markets. The data for Q1 illustrates a trade picture that preceded the US administration's implementation of global tariffs on 5 April.

UK food and drink exports remained stable in volume but grew in value, with total exports reaching £6.0bn, a 6.3% increase compared to Q1 2024. Non-EU exports saw robust growth, outpacing exports to the EU. Ireland, the USA, and France remained the leading export markets, with the USA showing a notable 23.4% increase, which could be driven by strong demand ahead of new tariffs. The agreement signed with the US on 8 May is welcome but needs to be the start of ongoing discussions that lead to the removal of the 10% tariff.

Imports of food and drink grew by 7.1% to £15.8bn, with non-EU imports increasing by 19.8%. China and Canada saw particularly strong increases in export value to the UK, up 35.1% and 70.4% respectively. Again, the disruption caused by US tariffs could be causing trade diversion towards the UK. Tariff reviews and updated trade agreements, such as with Turkey, could further diversify supply chains and reduce costs for UK businesses.

The UK-EU negotiations on a Common Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Area could remove most checks and certificates for food and drink trade, potentially boosting UK exports to the EU by up to 22.5%. Under the alignment-based agreement, the government must ensure that the UK is able to influence EU decision making where this impacts British business, considering UK specific factors, such as climatic conditions.

The UK has made progress on several other trade agreements, including an agreement in principle with India and ongoing negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council. The UAE entered the top 10 export markets for the first time, reflecting successful supply chain development and growing demand in high quality British products. The implementation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in December 2024 has already led to significant export growth to Malaysia.



EXPORTS

- The value of UK exports has increased over 7%. Much of this may be down to price inflation, as volumes are either steady or down.
- UK businesses are taking advantage of the UK’s global trade outlook, with non-EU exports increasing by over 10%.
- Export growth to Ireland continues, aided by the removal of unnecessary GB ‘Not for EU’ labelling policy.
- The UAE has demonstrated impressive growth, entering our top 10 markets for the first time. Well established supply chains could strengthen further with ambitious FTA outcomes that remove tariffs on UK products.
- Exports to Turkey are up 69%. With many current tariff quotas vastly exceeded by the UK, there are opportunities to enhance the existing UK-Turkey agreement. The UK should also look to remove the agricultural levy that applies to exports, to reduce costs and unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Since CPTPP came into force in December 2024, businesses have taken advantage of new preferential access with Malaysia, with export growth in sugar confectionery (48%), soft drinks (103%), and chocolate (14%).
- DBT’s CPTPP [export guides](#) provide an effective template for future FTAs to encourage utilisation of new opportunities. Future guides should focus on imports as well as exports.

Data Sources: His Majesty's Customs & Excise




KEY INDICATORS

	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Change 2024 - 25
Food & non-alcoholic drink	£4.3bn	£4.0bn	7.3%
All food and drink	£6.0bn	£5.7bn	6.3%
EU	£3.4bn	£3.3bn	3.3%
Non-EU	£2.6bn	£2.3bn	10.5%
EU share	57.0%	58.6%	-1.6pp
Non-EU share	43.0%	41.4%	1.6pp

TOP TEN EXPORTS

	Q1 2025	Value change 2024 - 25	Volume change 2024 - 25
Whisky	£1.2bn	1.3%	-2.2%
Salmon	£296.1m	64.3%	75.0%
Cheese	£236.9m	9.7%	-6.4%
Chocolate	£230.7m	8.9%	-7.1%
Milk and cream	£218.1m	20.9%	-6.8%
Beef	£169.9m	13.6%	-11.0%
Lamb and mutton	£163.3m	7.6%	2.7%
Soft drinks	£157.2m	6.7%	N/A
Fish	£157.0m	-6.8%	-12.7%
Breakfast cereals	£147.2m	-5.8%	-17.2%

TOP PERFORMING PRODUCTS

		
Salmon	Butter	Infant food
Q1 2025 value £296.1m	Q1 2025 value £67.2m	Q1 2025 value £49.5m
Value change 64.3%	Value change 61.6%	Value change 45.7%
Volume change 75.0%	Volume change 23.9%	Volume change 8.9%

EXPORT VOLUMES

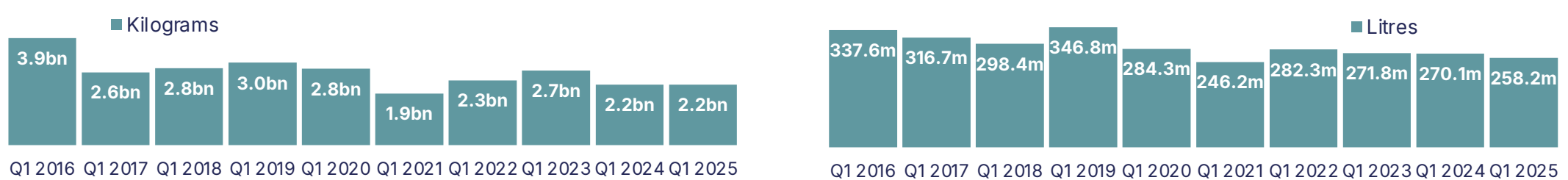
Unit of measurement	Q1 2025	Change 2023 - 2025	Change 2024 - 2025
Kilograms (KG)	2.2bn	-18.8%	0.1%
Litres (L)	258.2m	-5.0%	-4.4%
Litres of pure alcohol (LPA)	111.0m	-4.5%	2.1%

TOP TWENTY MARKETS

Ireland	£1.1bn	▲ 6.8%
USA	£735.1m	▲ 23.4%
France	£692.2m	▲ 7.0%
Netherlands	£424.6m	▼ -9.2%
Germany	£267.2m	▼ -2.6%
Belgium	£207.7m	▲ 13.9%
China	£184.9m	▲ 11.1%
Spain	£171.8m	▲ 6.5%
Italy	£124.6m	▲ 4.9%
UAE	£113.0m	▲ 12.7%
Singapore	£110.9m	▼ -10.3%
Poland	£107.0m	▼ -6.9%
Turkey	£101.9m	▲ 69.4%
Canada	£95.8m	▲ 5.3%
Australia	£89.3m	▼ -13.9%
Japan	£78.2m	▼ -15.4%
Sweden	£69.5m	▲ 19.3%
Taiwan	£67.9m	▼ -4.2%
Norway	£67.8m	▲ 19.8%
Denmark	£66.3m	▲ 6.3%

■ Q1 2025

EXPORT VOLUMES OVER TIME



IMPORTS

- Imports continue to grow in value, reaching £15.8bn in the first three months of the year. This was boosted by large increases in the imports of fruits, poultry and chocolate.
- China and Canada saw particularly strong increases in export value to the UK, up 35.1% and 70.4% respectively.
- An updated FTA with Turkey could boost UK manufacturing and consumer choice through the reduction of UK import tariffs on non-sensitive ingredients such as hazelnuts.
- Reducing the high preferential tariff on Turkish olive oil would enable the UK to further diversify its supply chains, making it easier to adapt and adjust to international shocks.
- The proposed UK-EU SPS agreement will impact the UK’s risk-based approach to non-EU imports. Any changes to current arrangements must be made with sufficient lead time, particularly where non-EU imports may be impacted by closer alignment to the EU SPS regime.
- The government should move forward with digital food and drink certification for non-EU exporters as originally planned.
- More than a year after charges were introduced on EU imports, the review of the Common User Charge offers a chance to ease the burden on SMEs, who are disproportionately affected by the current structure.

Data Sources: His Majesty's Customs & Excise

KEY INDICATORS

	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Change 2024 - 25
Food & non-alcoholic drink	£4.3bn	£4.0bn	7.3%
All food and drink	£15.8bn	£14.8bn	7.1%
EU	£10.7bn	£10.5bn	1.9%
Non-EU	£5.2bn	£4.3bn	19.8%
EU share	67.5%	70.9%	-1.6pp
Non-EU share	32.5%	29.1%	1.6pp

TOP TEN IMPORTS

	Q1 2025	Value change 2023 - 24	Volume change 2023 - 24
Fruits	£1.5bn	8.7%	9.8%
Vegetables	£1.0bn	0.8%	N/A
Poultry	£883.2m	15.2%	9.3%
Wine	£766.1m	-5.9%	-3.5%
Chocolate	£726.3m	13.6%	-10.1%
Fish	£529.0m	17.8%	7.6%
Cheese	£516.4m	14.7%	9.6%
Savoury snacks	£515.2m	1.3%	1.5%
Pork	£479.5m	-4.7%	-0.4%
Beef	£458.2m	8.8%	-5.8%

OLIVE OIL



Turkey is our 8th largest supplier of olive oil, seeing an increase of 20% to £0.4m compared to Q1 last year.



The upcoming FTA negotiations are an opportunity to reduce the high preferential tariff of £93/100kg that is in place.

IMPORT VOLUMES

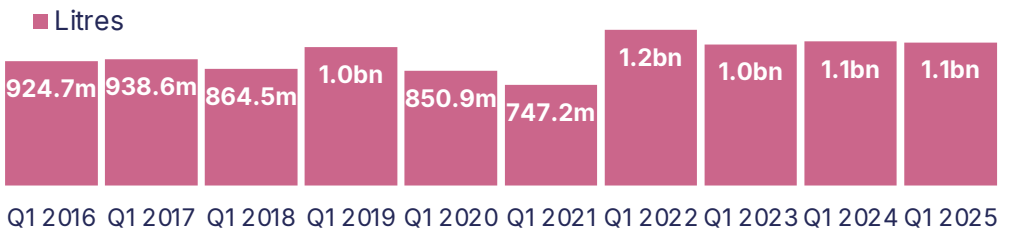
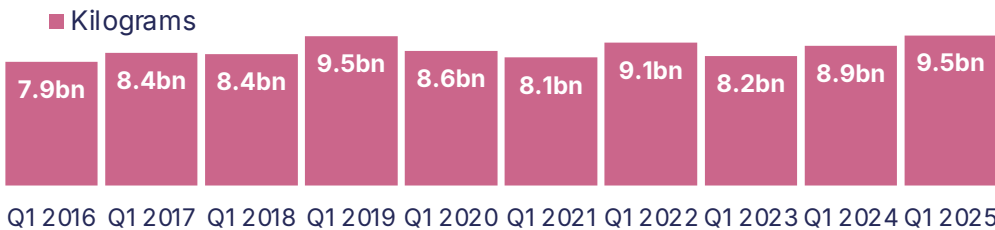
Unit of measurement	Q1 2025	Change 2023 - 2025	Change 2024 - 2025
Kilograms (KG)	9.5bn	15.8%	7.5%
Litres (L)	£1.1bn	1.3%	-0.6%
Litres of pure alcohol (LPA)	22.3m	0.6%	30.1%

TOP TWENTY MARKETS

Netherlands	£1.8bn	▲ 4.6%
France	£1.4bn	▼ -0.8%
Ireland	£1.4bn	▲ 6.4%
Belgium	£1.2bn	▲ 4.0%
Spain	£1.2bn	▲ 3.5%
Germany	£1.1bn	▼ -4.6%
Italy	£905.1m	▲ 3.2%
Poland	£827.7m	▲ 3.1%
USA	£376.1m	▲ 8.9%
China	£355.4m	▲ 35.1%
Brazil	£312.9m	▲ 14.5%
Denmark	£308.5m	▲ 0.9%
Thailand	£274.5m	▲ 25.1%
Cote d'Ivoire	£250.0m	▲ 164.2%
Morocco	£233.1m	▲ 3.1%
Turkey	£214.0m	▲ 8.4%
Canada	£214.0m	▲ 70.4%
South Africa	£209.9m	▼ -14.7%
Norway	£198.9m	▲ 8.4%
India	£193.2m	▲ 20.4%

■ Q1 2025

IMPORT VOLUMES OVER TIME





EUROPEAN UNION




- The UK and EU have agreed to negotiate a Common SPS Area to remove most checks and certificates required for food and drink trade.
- UK exporters have been particularly impacted, with estimates that an SPS agreement could boost exports by 22.5%. The impact on imports will be modest, as the UK regime impacts fewer products and checks on fresh produce have been delayed.
- Under the alignment-based agreement, the government must ensure that the UK is able to influence EU decision making where this impacts British business, considering UK specific factors, such as climatic conditions.
- Departments and agencies should avoid unnecessary divergence and assess the benefits of adopting EU regulations before the final agreement where it enhances investment, innovation or reduces trade friction.
- The Q1 State of Industry survey found several barriers to trade with the EU, with customs (63%) and logistics issues (38%) high up. A renewed focus on export support is required to ensure firms capitalise on new opportunities.
- Clear, consistent guidance is essential for a unified border approach and effective responses to emerging issues like foot and mouth disease. With an SPS agreement in place, sharp declines such as the 70% drop in pork imports from Germany in Q1 could be avoided.

Data Sources: His Majesty's Customs & Excise


		Top Exports		Top Imports	
European Union	Export	Whisky	£331.5m	Vegetables	£818.4m
	Import	Chocolate	£175.8m	Chocolate	£680.9m
	£3.4bn	Cheese	£169.5m	Poultry	£565.6m
£10.7bn					

		Top Exports		Top Imports	
Ireland	Export	Milk & cream	£113.9m	Beef	£326.4m
	Import	Chocolate	£70.6m	Cheese	£87.2m
	£1.1bn	Soft drinks	£68.0m	Savoury snacks	£80.9m
£1.4bn					

		Top Exports		Top Imports	
France	Export	Whisky	£106.9m	Wine	£240.3m
	Import	Salmon	£100.1m	Savoury snacks	£89.7m
	£692m	Lamb & mutton	£93.9m	Chocolate	£78.7m
£1.4bn					

		Top Exports		Top Imports	
Netherlands	Export	Fish	£32.7m	Poultry	£163.7m
	Import	Cheese	£32.0m	Potatoes	£129.5m
	£425m	Beef	£28.5m	Cocoa	£124.7m
£1.8bn					

		Top Exports		Top Imports	
Germany	Export	Whisky	£39.9m	Chocolate	£132.7m
	Import	Lamb & mutton	£27.5m	Savoury snacks	£70.3m
	£267m	Chocolate	£14.2m	Vegetables	£59.7m
£1.1bn					

		Top Exports		Top Imports	
Belgium	Export	Lamb & mutton	£19.5m	Chocolate	£142.9m
	Import	Animal & veg oil	£16.5m	Potatoes	£125.0m
	£208m	Chocolate	£16.5m	Soft drinks	£80.6m
£1.2bn					





PORK IMPORTS			
	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Change 2024 - 25
EU Total	£478.6m	£502.3m	-4.7%
Germany	£18.4m	£61.0m	-69.8%
Netherlands	£103.5m	£105.2m	-1.6%

VOLUMES TRADED WITH THE EU

Unit of measurement	Exports Q1 2025	Change 2024 - 2025	Imports Q1 2025	Change 2024 - 2025
Kilograms (KG)	1.7bn	-3.7%	5.4bn	-5.4%
Litres (L)	184.6m	-1.7%	886.7m	-1.2%
Litres of pure alcohol (LPA)	40.7m	-2.6%	13.9m	31.1%

COMPREHENSIVE SPS AGREEMENT

The **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)** agreement made on the 19th of May would seek to remove most checks and certificates currently required for most movements of animals, animal products, plants, and plant products between Great Britain and the European Union.



The UK would seek to dynamically align on all relevant EU legislation. Until then, all current arrangements will remain in place.

BARRIERS TO TRADE WITH THE EU

Customs (e.g. cost of agents)	63%
Rules of origin / tariffs	56%
Logistics and distribution issues (e.g. delays for short life products, right product groupage for SMEs)	38%
Health certificates	34%
Border checks	28%
Other	25%
Sustainability (e.g. complexity of adopting environmental labelling, packaging policy etc)	19%

USA

- Exports to the US are up by over 23% in Q1, a significant increase in trade flows before tariffs were implemented.
- The agreement signed with the US on 8 May is welcome and will hopefully create space for further discussions about the removal of the 10% tariff.
- The US tariffs have caused some businesses to stop or reduce exports. Focus should be on reducing tariffs on products that would result in large wins for businesses that are unlikely to compete with US industry.
- There has been steady export growth to the US over the last decade. To continue this growth, the focus should be on reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers in the UK and US mutual interests.
- The UK can also use this opportunity to reduce the UK tariffs on products with the US, especially on non-sensitive commodities which are important to UK manufacturing such as almonds, cranberries, and unroasted coffee.
- Where the UK has strong domestic production, close consultation on tariff concessions is required to avoid unintended consequences.
- EU-US trade disputes can impact the UK through trade diversion and higher costs. Retaliatory EU tariffs may increase the value of UK imports from the EU.
- A trade dispute could affect Northern Ireland, as a UK-EU tariff difference of over 3% on US goods may require businesses to pay the higher duty when importing into Northern Ireland.

Data Sources: His Majesty's Customs & Excise
ITC Trade Map

KEY INDICATORS			
	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Change 2024 - 25
Exports	£735.1m	£595.6m	23.4%
Imports	£376.1m	£345.5m	8.9%
Trade Balance	£358.9m	£250.1m	43.5%

TOP TEN EXPORTS			
	Q1 2025	Value change 2024 - 25	Volume change 2024 - 25
Whisky	£249.6m	0.4%	0.3%
Salmon	£125.0m	145.7%	163.0%
Gin	£48.2m	19.2%	5.4%
Wine	£36.1m	83.6%	214.3%
Infant food	£31.0m	64.7%	27.6%
Spirits	£30.3m	95.8%	20.2%
Beer	£26.7m	-3.2%	0.5%
Animal oils	£24.2m	25.2%	-0.1%
Soft drinks	£21.7m	37.2%	N/A
Cheese	£19.2m	27.1%	10.7%

TOP TEN IMPORTS			
	Q1 2025	Value change 2024 - 25	Volume change 2024 - 25
Oilseeds	£47.2m	4.2%	27.0%
Nuts	£42.7m	29.4%	-11.3%
Cereals grains	£30.1m	2502%	10234%
Wine	£29.3m	3.3%	-3.0%
Vegetables	£19.0m	19.5%	-1.5%
Whisky	£17.4m	10.0%	1.8%
Molasses	£12.4m	-10.2%	8.6%
Vodka	£10.0m	4.5%	36.6%
Chocolate	£8.3m	-21.1%	-34.3%
Savoury snacks	£7.9m	21.5%	27.7%

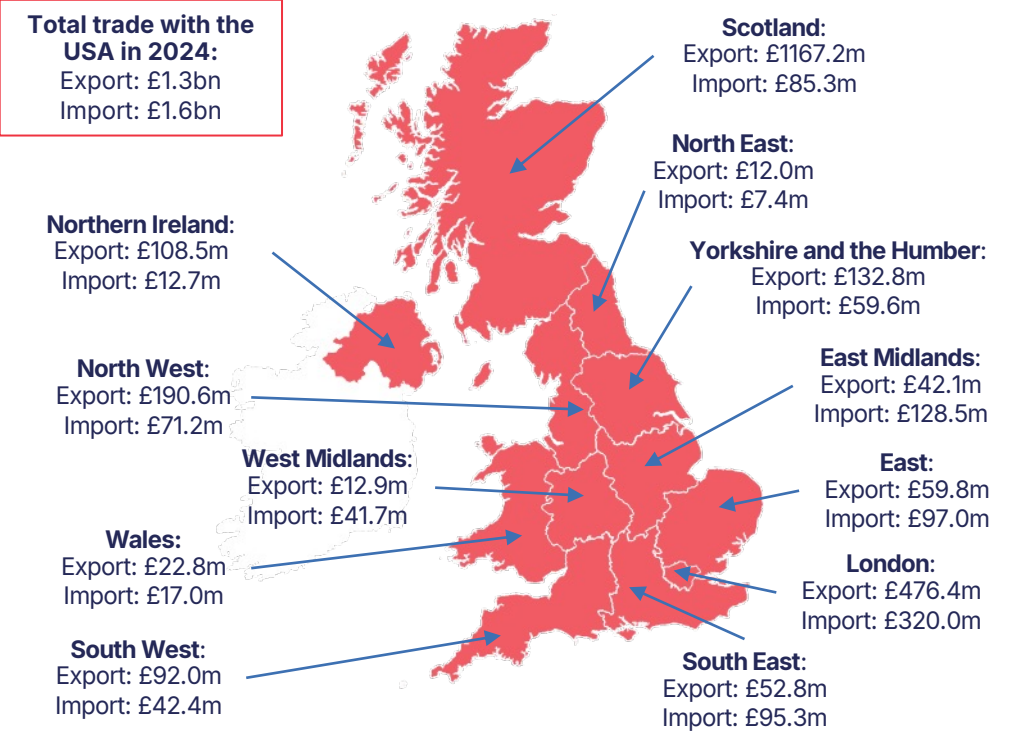
*Trade data to show the impact of the US's additional 10% tariff on UK goods which came into effect on 05 April is not available. H1 data will be released in our next Trade Snapshot in September.

VOLUMES TRADED WITH THE USA

Unit of measurement	Exports Q1 2025	Change 2024 - 2025	Imports Q1 2025	Change 2024 - 2025
Kilograms (KG)	64.5m	5.2%	584.7m	37.8%
Litres (L)	36.0m	2.6%	14.9m	0.3%
Litres of pure alcohol (LPA)	16.8m	23.7%	6.5m	27.2%

REGIONAL FOOD AND DRINK TRADE IN 2024

Total trade with the USA in 2024:
Export: £1.3bn
Import: £1.6bn



Scotland: Export: £1167.2m
Import: £85.3m

North East: Export: £12.0m
Import: £7.4m

Yorkshire and the Humber: Export: £132.8m
Import: £59.6m

East Midlands: Export: £42.1m
Import: £128.5m

East: Export: £59.8m
Import: £97.0m

London: Export: £476.4m
Import: £320.0m

South East: Export: £52.8m
Import: £95.3m

South West: Export: £92.0m
Import: £42.4m

Wales: Export: £22.8m
Import: £17.0m

West Midlands: Export: £12.9m
Import: £41.7m

North West: Export: £190.6m
Import: £71.2m

Northern Ireland: Export: £108.5m
Import: £12.7m

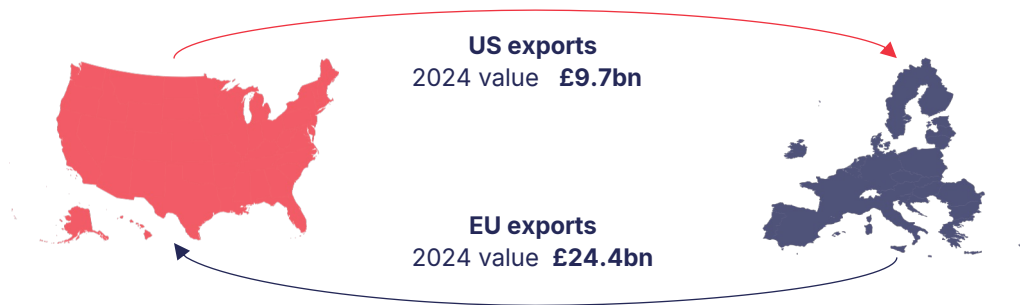
USA TRADE WITH THE EU

Oil seeds 2024 value £2.4bn

Fruit & nuts 2024 value £2.2bn

Beverages 2024 value £1.6bn

Fish 2024 value £665m



Beverages 2024 value £9.5bn

Animal & veg oils 2024 value £2.5bn

Cereal preps 2024 value £2.4bn

Veg preps 2024 value £1.5bn

INDIA

- Trade with India has grown steadily over the past decade, with exports rising by 156%. The new Free Trade Agreement and any resulting tariff reductions are expected to boost exports even further.
- India’s high prohibitive MFN tariffs make the confirmed tariff phased reductions on chocolate, sweet biscuits and soft drinks a welcome change that will improve the competitiveness of UK goods.
- Imports from India have grown over 20% in Q1. India is an important market for raw commodities that cannot be made in the UK such as tea and spices.
- To ensure UK businesses make the most of the opportunities of the new FTA, government should work with industry to produce comprehensive guidance which should be published before entry into force, so businesses can be ready to trade from day one.
- Maintaining MFN tariffs on milled rice while increasing tariff-free access to unmilled rice from India is a welcome win-win. This will protect the UK’s high value domestic industry and thousands of jobs.
- As well as milled rice, DBT has ensured that this FTA does not grant preferential market access for sugar, pork, chicken or eggs too.
- A few imports of spices from India are due to be subject to further certification requirements from January 2026. Government should work with industry to manage this transition and ensure that suppliers in India are aware of this.

Data Sources: His Majesty's Customs & Excise

INDIA FOOD AND DRINK TRADE

	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Change 2023 - 24
Exports	£64.4m	£67.8m	-5.0%
Imports	£193.2m	£160.5m	20.4%
Trade Balance	-£128.9m	-£92.7m	-39.0%

EXPORT PRODUCTS

	Q1 2025	Value change 2024 - 25	Volume change 2024 - 25
Whisky	£55.6m	-2.3%	2.2%
Breakfast cereals	£1.2m	151%	714%
Soft drinks	£0.5m	285%	N/A
Chocolate	£0.4m	-41.7%	-22.1%
Confectionery	£0.4m	-16.7%	-6.2%
Protein concentrates	£0.4m	-39.2%	-32.2%
Animal oils	£0.4m	213%	119%
Spirits	£0.3m	-4.7%	10.6%
Wine	£0.3m	161%	74.4%
Cheese	£0.3m	170%	149%

RICE

28% of this year's imported rice thus far is sourced from India, the UK's top supplier of rice.

There is increased tariff-free access for more varieties of brown basmati rice originating from India.

Tariffs on milled rice will remain to ensure fair competition, to support UK producers and preserve jobs.

EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Soft drinks

Q1 2025 value £0.5m
2024 value £1.4m
Previous Tariff 33%

Biscuits

Q1 2025 value £0.2m
2024 value £0.8m
Previous Tariff 33%

Chocolate

Q1 2025 value £0.4m
2024 value £3.6m
Previous Tariff 33%

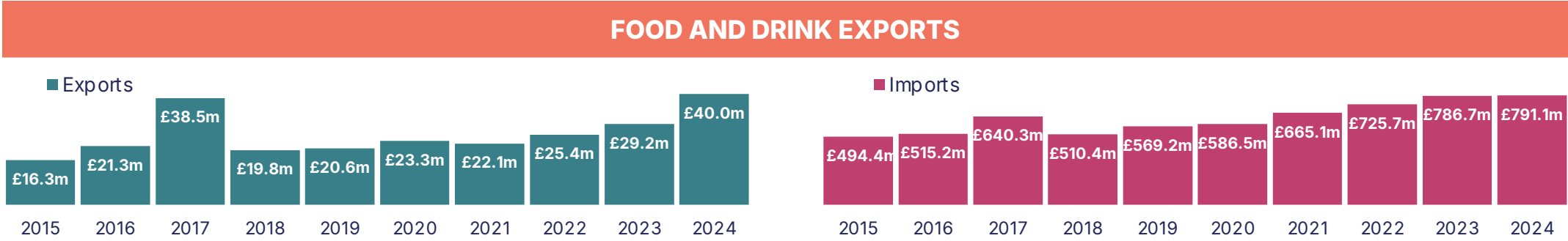
IMPORT PRODUCTS

	Q1 2025	Value change 2024 - 25	Volume change 2024 - 25
Rice	£36.2m	18.7%	39.1%
Spices	£17.6m	0.7%	13.0%
Shellfish	£15.2m	-6.2%	-12.3%
Tea	£14.9m	21.2%	16.3%
Pulses	£13.6m	31.2%	42.2%
Prepared vegetables	£13.4m	22.7%	N/A
Fruits	£8.6m	19.3%	27.3%
Vegetables	£8.5m	-2.9%	N/A
Prepared fruit and nuts	£6.5m	49.9%	N/A
Savoury snacks	£5.6m	14.8%	7.7%

BORDER NOTIFICATIONS

India had the highest number of failed safety checks, with 166 **rejections** over 2024. This is a significant number of rejections, higher than Nigeria and China combined.

89 of these rejections were of herbs & spices, followed by 25 rejections of fruits & vegetables. Imports of spices will now be subject to additional certification requirements.





The Food & Drink Federation (FDF) is the voice of the food and drink manufacturing industry – the UK's largest manufacturing sector.

We contribute over £38 billion to the country's economy, supporting half a million jobs in every region and nation, and producing products that are loved in the UK and beyond.

Find out more about our latest news and the work we do at:

FDF.org.uk
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