

International Agribusiness Center

Weekly Country Report, July 27-31, 2020

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GAINS Reports

France – Retail Foods – [link](#)

More than 70 percent of French household food purchases are made in supermarkets, discount stores, and smaller local stores. Different types of retailers have experienced growth and success over the last eighteen months, including local neighborhood stores and some larger discount stores offering innovative services such as internet purchases. The retail sector fared well during the COVID-19 pandemic. France's retail sector offers a variety of opportunities for U.S. food and food products, provided they conform to EU regulations.

COVID-19 triggers structural changes in the German restaurant sector – [link](#)

Propelled by COVID-19, Germany's restaurant sector is undergoing structural change. Five trends can be identified: 1) Delivery services will gain importance; 2) Chain restaurants invest in digitalization (apps for customers); 3) Automation in the kitchen and reduction of staff; 4) Chains will raise prices to invest; and 5) Small and independent businesses will be losers of this structural change.

Saudi Arabia – Retail Foods – [link](#)

U.S. exports of consumer-oriented food products to Saudi Arabia increased by approximately 11 percent in 2019 - to a record high of \$588 million. Since then, the effects of COVID 19 have strengthened the online and supermarket sectors, and severely weakened restaurants. Demand for delivery services and Saudi government financial support dramatically strengthened that sector. The 36 delivery apps that are now in operation processed more than 12 million orders in more than 200 cities by the first week of June. Online shopping is expected to remain an important grocery shopping method going forward. Saudi packaged food retail sales in 2019 were estimated at approximately 20 billion USD.

China Releases Second Exclusion List for Second Batch of US Products – [link](#)

On May 12, 2020, the State Council Tariff Commission (SCCTC) announced the 2nd exclusion list for the second batch of U.S. products imposed with additional tariffs. Only one agriculture-related product, D-glucitol (sorbitol) was included in the list of products from which the additional tariffs associated with the U.S. 301 Investigation will be exempted between May 19, 2020 and May 18, 2021. The additional tariffs already collected will be refunded. This GAIN report contains an unofficial translation of the SCCTC announcement.

Compliance Timeline Extended on Commercial Feeds and Feed Materials Standards – [link](#)

On July 24, 2020, the Government of India's (GOI) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) extended the compliance date for stakeholders to adopt standards established by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) related to the commercial feeds/feed materials intended for meat and milk producing animals. The new compliance date is January 1, 2021, and the timeline has been extended in order to accommodate requests from industry stakeholders as they deal with the current COVID-19 situation and subsequent lockdown orders issued by the GOI.



Government of Mexico Launches New Health Campaign Targeting Processed and Imported Foods – [link](#)

On June 22, Mexican President Andres Manuel Obrador announced the launch of a new health and nutrition campaign from the Secretariat of Consumer Protection (acronym PROFECO in Spanish) “La Nueva Mesa” (the New Table), with the goal of improving the nutrition of Mexicans and encouraging healthier eating habits by targeting processed and imported foods. A collaboration between the Secretariats of Agriculture, Economy, Education, Health, and Wellness, the campaign will launch in July on radio, television, and social media outlets.

Specialty Foods Magazine

Woodman's Markets Puts Robots in Stores – [link](#)

Woodman’s Markets throughout Wisconsin and Illinois are rolling out Badger Technologies’ multipurpose robots, with the goal of expanding the technology to all 18 Woodman’s locations by the end of 2020. The robots will monitor product availability, verify prices, and deliver precise location data for more than 100,000 items at each location.

“Most Woodman’s stores are over 240,000 square feet, nearly six times larger than the grocery industry average,” said Tim Rowland, CEO of Badger Technologies, in a statement. “Not only can our robots perform shelf scans in hours instead of days, but they collect and connect critical data with the Woodman’s mobile shopping app to take customer experiences to the next level.”

Food Processing Magazine

UK Debates How to Restrict Unhealthy Food – [link](#)

The United Kingdom is again roiled in a debate over how far to go in restricting advertising and other promotions for unhealthy food.

In a statement July 27, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced anti-obesity measures that include a ban on advertisements after 9 p.m. for foods or beverages that are high in fat, salt or sugar. Also banned would be buy-one-get-one deals for unhealthy products. Restaurants would have to list calorie counts on menus. Additional measures under consideration include changes to the front-of-pack nutrition labeling and requiring calorie counts for alcohol.

Industry, Unions Tussle Over Meat Line Speeds – [link](#)

As the meat and poultry industry struggles to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, processing line speeds are increasingly becoming a point of contention.

Unions representing meat-plant workers, and their allies in Congress, are pressing through legislation and litigation to roll back recent increases in permitted line speeds. The industry is pushing back, arguing that high line speeds are needed to meet the nation’s demand during the crisis.

At issue are USDA regulations that allow processors to run lines faster, either normally or as a response to the pandemic. The United Food and Commercial Workers Union filed a federal lawsuit July 28 to overturn a USDA waiver allowing faster speeds in poultry plants during the crisis.

Weekly China Skinny

China’s Millennials Drink More Milk to Boost Immune System: The government is pushing people to drink milk to get more protein, a vital ingredient in building the body’s immune system. Parents “should prepare enough milk and eggs every morning for your children...no congee should be allowed as breakfast,” said Zhang Wenhong, a doctor at the infectious diseases department at Shanghai’s Huashan Hospital and one of China’s most outspoken critics of the nation’s diet since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Disclaimer: This list is by no means complete, for more information please refer to the links above.