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Report Highlights:

While Cameroon has experienced steady economic growth over the past 20 years, and is the largest economy in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the country is challenged by low consumer purchasing power, high food inflation, and a difficult business enabling environment. Through November 2024, U.S. agricultural and related exports were valued at \$30.4 million. Best U.S. agricultural and related export prospects include animal and aquaculture feed ingredients, and bulk commodities, including corn, rice, soy, and wheat. This report serves as a guide for U.S. exporters seeking to export U.S. agricultural and related products to Cameroon. It provides a market overview, import food standards and regulations, import procedures, market trends, and key contacts.

Market Fact Sheet

Executive Summary

In 2024, Cameroon had a population of approximately 29 million people and a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1,650, though income and wealth were largely concentrated in the capital, Yaoundé, and in Douala, a major port and commercial center. The country's agricultural and related imports were challenged by low economic growth, high food inflation, inconsistent government policies, and weak consumer purchasing power. In 2023, the value of imported agricultural and related products was estimated at \$1.5 billion, representing a 10 percent increase from the previous year. U.S. agricultural and related exports to Cameroon reached \$58 million in 2023, roughly double the five-year average of \$33 million. However, exports from January to November 2024 declined by 46 percent compared to the same period in 2023, aligning with the five-year average. U.S. agricultural and related exports face strong competition from the European Union (EU), which can benefit from lower import duties and advantageous freight routes, while Asian (e.g., Turkey, China, India) exports are competitively priced. Key U.S. agricultural export prospects include animal and aquaculture feed ingredients, including corn and soy products, as well as basic food commodities, including wheat and rice.

Consumer-Oriented Food Products

In 2023, U.S. consumer-oriented food exports to Cameroon totaled \$432 million (Figure 1), an 18 percent increase from 2022. These exports accounted for 64 percent of U.S. agricultural and related exports by value, representing a 188 percent increase over the five-year average (2019–2023), with food preparations comprising the largest share. However, as of November 2024, U.S. exports of consumer-oriented food products had declined to align with the five-year average.

Bulk Commodities

Imported bulk commodities primarily consisted of wheat, rice, pulses, and corn. In 2023, bulk exports to Cameroon totaled \$482 million, a 19 percent decrease from 2022. The United States accounted for only about 3 percent, or \$13.5 million (Figure 2), with most of the U.S. exports consisting of food-aid shipments supporting agricultural development projects. U.S. bulk exports made up 23 percent of total U.S. agricultural and related exports to Cameroon by value in 2023, marking a 65 percent decrease from the \$38 million recorded in 2022.

Top Export Products Based on Growth Trends
Bulk: Wheat, rice, pulses, corn.
Intermediate: Milled grains and products, ethanol, essential oils, vegetable oils, animal feed ingredients.
Consumer-oriented: Canned foods, dairy products, beverages, bakery goods, cereals, and pasta.

Figure 1. Market Share of Consumer-Oriented Exports

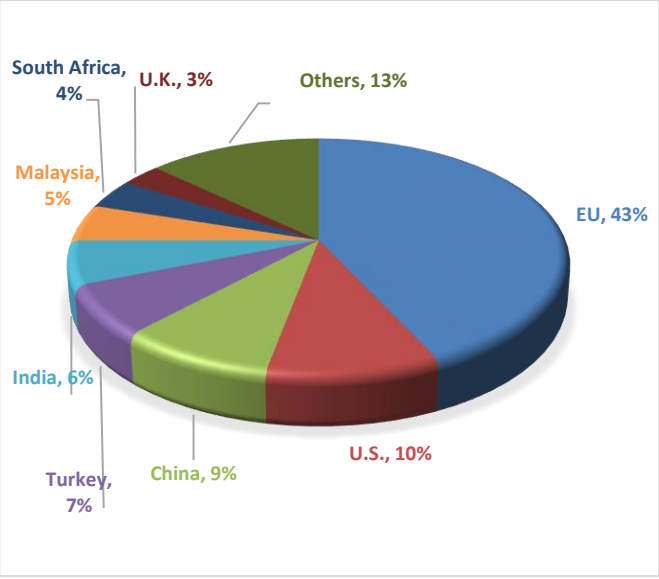
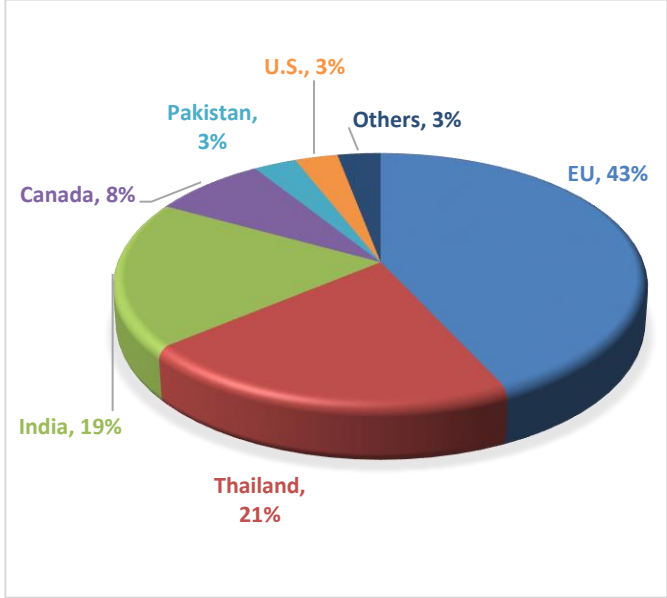


Figure 2. Market Share of Bulk Commodities



SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW

Population and Key Demographic Trends

Cameroon has a population of about 29 million people, with nearly half living in urban areas. The two largest cities, Douala and Yaoundé, are key economic and administrative centers respectively. Together these cities account for roughly 23 percent of the population. According to the World Bank, the country has a youthful demographic, with 60 percent of its population under the age of 25. The country's population is growing at 2.6 percent, roughly in line with average Sub-Saharan African population growth. French is the dominant language by number of speakers, however the Northwest and Southwest regions, which border Nigeria, are primarily Anglophone.

Economy

Cameroon is a lower-middle-income country. [The African Development Bank Group forecasted](#) GDP to increase 4.1 percent in 2024, and 4.4 percent in 2025, from about 3.3 percent in 2023. Oil and gas accounted for over half of Cameroon's exports by value, with significant contributions from key agricultural exports including cocoa, coffee, bananas, and timber. In September 2024, overall inflation reached 4.4 percent year-over-year surpassing the 3 percent inflation threshold set by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community. Inflation has remained relatively low due to the local currency, the Central African franc, being pegged to the euro. However, the [National Statistics Institute](#) noted relatively higher food inflation in the first half of 2024. The surge in food prices was caused in part by rising farm input costs, lower production, and high transport costs.

Overall Business Climate

In a [report](#) by the World Bank, Cameroon was ranked 167 out of 190 economies on the ease of doing business. The country continues to suffer from a myriad of institutional challenges hampering the country's business climate. The Northwest and Southwest suffer from insecurity due to activities of non-state armed groups. Public institutions are perceived by many to be corrupt and inefficient. Most economic levers are controlled by those in power and as such, government policies tend to benefit the few, and lead to restrictions on trade, investment, and the ease of doing business. Business contacts reported inconsistencies in government policies, nepotism, high tariffs, eroded household income, high bureaucratic hurdles, and corruption as factors making it difficult to do business in the food and agriculture sector.

Agricultural Trade

The agriculture sector's low performance is due to weak public and market infrastructure, inadequate access to credit, low adoption of technology, rising input costs, and land tenure issues. To boost domestic food production, the government has implemented import substitution policies aimed to replace imported goods with locally produced alternatives.

In 2023, the United States was the 7th largest exporter of agricultural and related products to Cameroon behind the EU, India, Brazil, Thailand, China, and Turkey. In 2023, agricultural and related imports from the world amounted to about \$1.5 billion, a 10 percent increase from the value recorded in 2022, with the EU being the largest exporter - accounting for \$553 million.

SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

- French is the most widely spoken business language, however many Cameroonians in business speak both French and English. It is advised to engage a business consultant with French language skills, and experience doing business in Cameroon, to best understand how to do business in the country.
- Most agricultural trading businesses are based in Douala. While Yaoundé is the political capital, many government agencies involved in agricultural trade and regulatory affairs also have offices in Douala.
- Note that the country has outsourced some trade-related regulatory, testing, and compliance procedures. [The Agency for Standardization and Quality](#) (*Agence des Normes et de la Qualité du Cameroun* or ANOR) is responsible for pre-shipment certificate of conformity (CoC) assessments for imported goods. SGS and TÜV Rheinland (private companies) issues attestations of conformity (AoC) as part of the [Pre-Shipment Evaluation of Conformity \(PECAE\) program](#). ANOR issues the CoC to the importer based on the AoC. For additional information about the PECAE program, [please see this handout](#).
- The Customs Service inspects all goods at the point of entry, verifies the AoC, and collects tariffs. The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) issue sanitary and phytosanitary certifications respectively.
- Clearing procedures are not always followed as written. Prior to exporting, U.S. exporters should partner with local firms to facilitate export documentation, approvals, inspections, and consignment clearance. Exporters can face unclear, bureaucratic, and unusual practices when dealing with officials.

SECTION III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS & REGULATIONS AND IMPORT PROCEDURES

Customs Clearance

The Customs Directorate, which is part of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, is responsible for overseeing customs clearance. Steps in customs clearance includes documentation, pre-shipment inspection, custom inspection, and payment of duties. General [import documents](#) required to receive clearance for goods imported into the country are the interpretative document, bill of lading or air waybill, final invoice, packing list, local insurance certificate, customs clearance, cargo manifest, phytosanitary certificate, and attestation of verification to import.

Shipments with free-on-board (FOB) value below 2,000,000 XAF (~\$3,000 USD) are exempted from the PECAE program. Partial or full container load shipments with values below €3,050 EUR must undergo the PECAE program conformity assessment process and obtain a CoC. Live animals are on the list of products not requiring a CoC under the program. To obtain the AoC, a pre-shipment verification of conformity process is initiated by the importer, who submits an import declaration and supporting documents to TÜV Rheinland. Alternatively, the process can also be started by the exporter in the country of origin by reaching out to the nearest TÜV Rheinland office. After the verification process is completed and results meet expectations, the AoC is issued, which is converted to a CoC by ANOR through the Guichet Unique (GUCE), which is the single window for foreign trade. The CoC is required for customs clearance. To apply for the CoC, exporters can use the three routes below:

- **Route A:** Applicable to manufacturers and suppliers that do not make regular shipments or that ship sensitive and/or high-risk products requiring regular quality control and compliance with applicable standards. Sensitive and/or high-risk agriculture and related products are defined by ANOR to include sugar, legumes, rice, corn, cereal flours, animal and fishery products (fresh and frozen – not processed), fresh dairy products, fresh horticultural products, and edible oils. The full list of these products can be found by HS code in [Annex 1 of the Pre-shipment Evaluation of Conformity report](#). These products can only use Route A certification.
- **Route B:** Recommended for frequent exporters of homogenous products. To be able to use this route, exporters must have made at least three shipments (using route A) of products that were found to be in conformity each time.
- **Route C:** For manufacturers of licensed products and whose regular compliance has been demonstrated.

The Ministry of Finance supervises the [import verification program \(IVP\)](#). While PECAE assesses the quality of imported goods, the IVP determines the customs value of the goods and the tariff classification. Like PECAE, IVP applies to all imports in which FOB value is greater than or equal to 2,000,000 XAF (~\$3,000 USD). Under the IVP, a report on value and tariff classification (RVC) is obtained and used for customs clearance. To obtain the RVC, a request for the issuance of import declarations (ID) is initiated on the GUCE platform. After obtaining the ID, the transmission of the final document (such as final invoice, packing list, bill of lading if available, certificates/authorizations and any other document deemed necessary) reserved exclusively to the seller will be made through [Société Générale de Surveillance \(SGS\) exporters portal](#). After receipt and validation of the documents received exclusively from the seller, SGS is obliged to issue the RVC. Living animals are among imports exempted under the IVP. Edible meat, wild or farmed fishery products, and sugar are among restricted products, but may be imported subject to a special authorization by the government. Nevertheless, goods not subject to the IVP, might still be subject to the PECAE.

Country Language Labeling Requirements

The labeling of pre-packaged foods is regulated by ANOR. ANOR requires all products to be labeled in French and English.

Tariffs and Free Trade Agreements

The tariff schedule has four categories: 0 percent duty for category I (primary necessary goods), 10 percent for category II (raw materials and equipment goods), 20 percent for category III (intermediate and miscellaneous goods), 30 percent for category IV (fast-moving consumer goods), and 35 percent on imports into strategic sectors. Exporters should visit the [Cameroon trade hub](#) website to determine the category of their product.

Cameroon is a signatory to four regional free trade agreements: the African Economic Community trade agreement, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa trade agreement, the Economic Community of Central African States trade agreement, and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Cameroon is a member of the World Trade Organization. The country has an Economic Partnership agreement with the EU which has been in force since August 2014. In line with the Economic Partnership agreement, some agricultural and related products imported from the EU have lower custom duties.

Trademarks and Patents

The Intellectual Property Office (*Office Africain de la Propriété Intellectuelle* or OAPI) is a regional organization responsible for registering and administering intellectual property rights and providing intellectual property information in member countries which include Cameroon. Customs enforces intellectual property rights at the border.

SECTION IV: MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

Consumers are extremely price sensitive and do most of their purchases at traditional markets. The country's growing urban population is driving demand for the modern retail sector leading to the expansion of higher end grocery stores and shopping malls in Douala and Yaoundé. However, street shops and open markets still dominate retail sales. Street vendors are common in urban areas selling a variety of items. Numerous independent and street vendors receive a commission from small retailers to sell along roadsides. The EU is the major source of imported consumer-oriented foods and beverages. According to retailers, breakfast cereals, dairy products, canned foods, and beverages are the most popular imported consumer-oriented items. However, U.S. bulk commodity and animal feed products have more export potential due to a growing population and animal husbandry sector. U.S. food and beverage imports typically account for about one percent of what is offered for sale in grocery stores.

International retail chains such as CFAO (French West African Company, in English) are expanding operations across the country with multiple Carrefour markets opened in Yaoundé and Douala. Popular local players in the modern retail sector are Super U, Santa Lucia, and Mahima. The modern retail

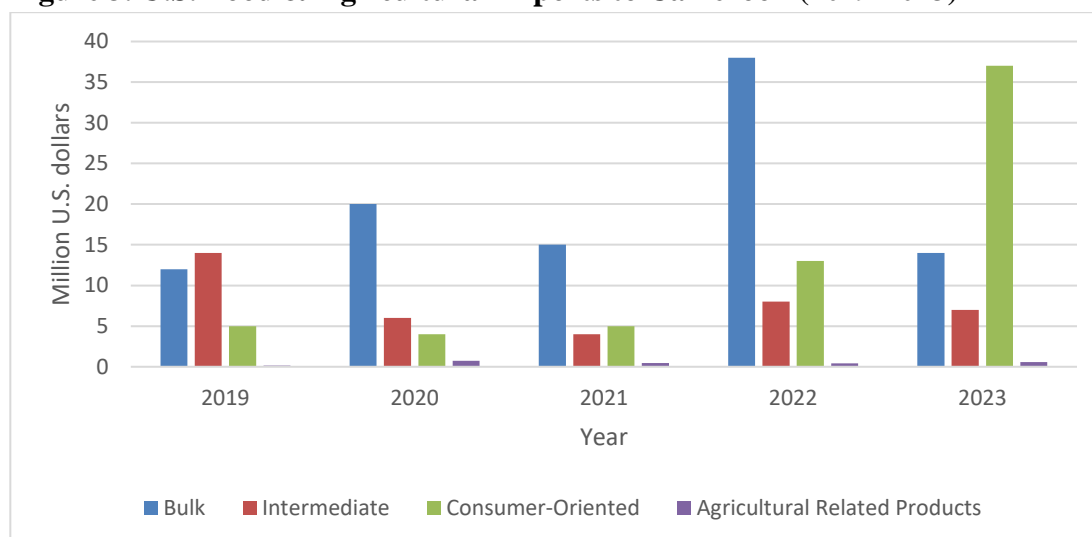
sector in Cameroon faces several challenges which include supply chain bottlenecks, eroding consumer purchasing power, increasing competition from the traditional market, high operating costs, and a weak regulatory environment. These challenges are partly responsible for the growth of informal markets, which sell smaller-sized portions to those with limited spending power.

Food service operations in the country are mostly traditional and unregulated. Street food vendors and local restaurants serving ethnic cuisine are the most popular. There are no major multinational quick-service-restaurant brands, though some international hotel chains and restaurants are present and offer a wide range of international cuisine. Despite limited payment options, particularly credit and debit cards, online shopping has experienced growth in recent years due to widespread use of mobile phones and increasing internet penetration among young people in urban areas. Canned foods, beverages, dairy products, condiments and sauces, and spices are top consumer-oriented products sold online. Online platforms such as FoodChow and Reeyo are coordinating with restaurants to meet online shopping food demand in the cities. FoodChow is primarily focused on Douala, while Reeyo delivers in Douala, Buea, and Limbe.

Given a growing population, good port facilities, and demand for animal, fishery, and dairy products, the animal and aquaculture sectors require feed products to meet animal and aquaculture industry demand. Many business contacts noted the scarcity of animal feed and the need to increase imports to meet feed demand. Wheat, rice, pulses, corn, and animal and aquaculture feed ingredients were found to be the best U.S. export prospects. However, the market share for the United States for these products was virtually zero percent for wheat between January – November 2024 (despite world exports valued at \$46 million), and 2 percent for rice. According to contacts, the country has about a 700,000 to 800,000 metric ton (MT) deficit in rice, a 800,000 MT deficit in corn, and a 700,000 MT deficit in soybean supplies. Wheat imports primarily come from Canada and Europe. Parboiled rice consumption accounts for 5 – 20 percent of total consumption, while the rest is white non parboiled.

SECTION V. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD IMPORTS

Figure 3. U.S. Food & Agricultural Exports to Cameroon (2019-2023)



Source: USDA Global Agricultural Trade System

U.S. Exports to Cameroon

U.S. agricultural and related exports to Cameroon declined by 2 percent in 2023 compared to 2022 due to a significant decrease of about 65 percent in bulk product exports (Figure 3). The decline can be attributed to weak economic growth and a strong U.S. dollar, combined with competition from exporters in Asia. Consumer-oriented exports accounted for 64 percent of U.S. agricultural and related exports by value in 2023, a 188 percent increase over the five-year average (2019 – 2023), with food preparations as the largest share of that category. However, through November 2024, U.S. exports declined back to five-year averages. Industry sources estimated that global consumer-oriented exports were higher than official values as some imports enter the market unrecorded, undervalued, or concealed. Informal entry is high due to the country’s porous borders and complex customs procedures.

Table 1. Selected Agricultural and Related Exports to Cameroon

	Global Exports (millions \$ USD)			U.S. Exports (millions \$ USD)			U.S. Market Share		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Bulk									
Rice	339	296	229	7	11	9	2%	4%	4%
Wheat	257	284	240	0	16	0	0%	6%	0%
Pulses	8	10	7	6	6	2	78%	63%	32%
Intermediate									
Milled grains &	69	91	104	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%

products									
Ethanol	25	42	53	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Essential oils	42	47	43	0	0	0	0%	1%	1%
Other feeds & fodders	22	26	25	0	0	1	1%	2%	2%
Vegetable oils	18	16	11	3	6	2	18%	38%	21%
Consumer-oriented									
Dairy products	97	105	113	0	0	3	0%	0%	3%
Soup & other food preparations	30	40	76	4	13	37	15%	32%	49%
Bakery goods, cereals & pasta	18	32	40	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Wines & related products	38	37	39	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Distilled spirits	15	15	24	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%

Sources: Trade Data Monitor LLC

SECTION VI. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

1) FAS Office in Lagos, Nigeria (covering Cameroon)

U.S. Consulate General
 2 Walter Carrington Crescent
 Lagos, Nigeria
 Tel: +234 01 460 3485
AgLagos@usda.gov

2) Key Government Contacts

- [Standards and Quality Agency, ANOR](#)
- [Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development](#)
- [Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries](#)

Attachments:

No Attachments.