

# Extra-EU trade in agricultural goods

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in March 2023.*

*Planned update: 8 May 2024.*

**" In 2022, extra-EU trade in agricultural products accounted for 7.6 % of the total extra-EU international trade in goods. "**

**" Between 2002 and 2022, EU trade in agricultural products tripled, equivalent to an average annual growth of 5.6 %. This is mostly due to sharply rising prices in 2022. "**

**" In 2022, the United Kingdom was the EU's largest export destination for agricultural products and the second largest origin of EU imports, behind Brazil. "**

[sitc](#) This article analyses data on trade in agricultural products, concentrating on exports and imports between the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and all countries outside the EU ([extra-EU](#)). In 2022, extra-EU [trade in agricultural products](#) accounted for 7.6 % of the total extra-EU international trade in goods. The share of agricultural products in total exports (8.9 %) was higher than in imports (6.5 %). Data on trade in agricultural products is central for two important EU policies: the [Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\)](#) and the common trade policy, which manages trade relations with non-EU countries. This article is part of an [online publication](#) providing recent statistics on international trade in goods, covering information on the EU's main partners, main products traded, specific characteristics of trade as well as background information.

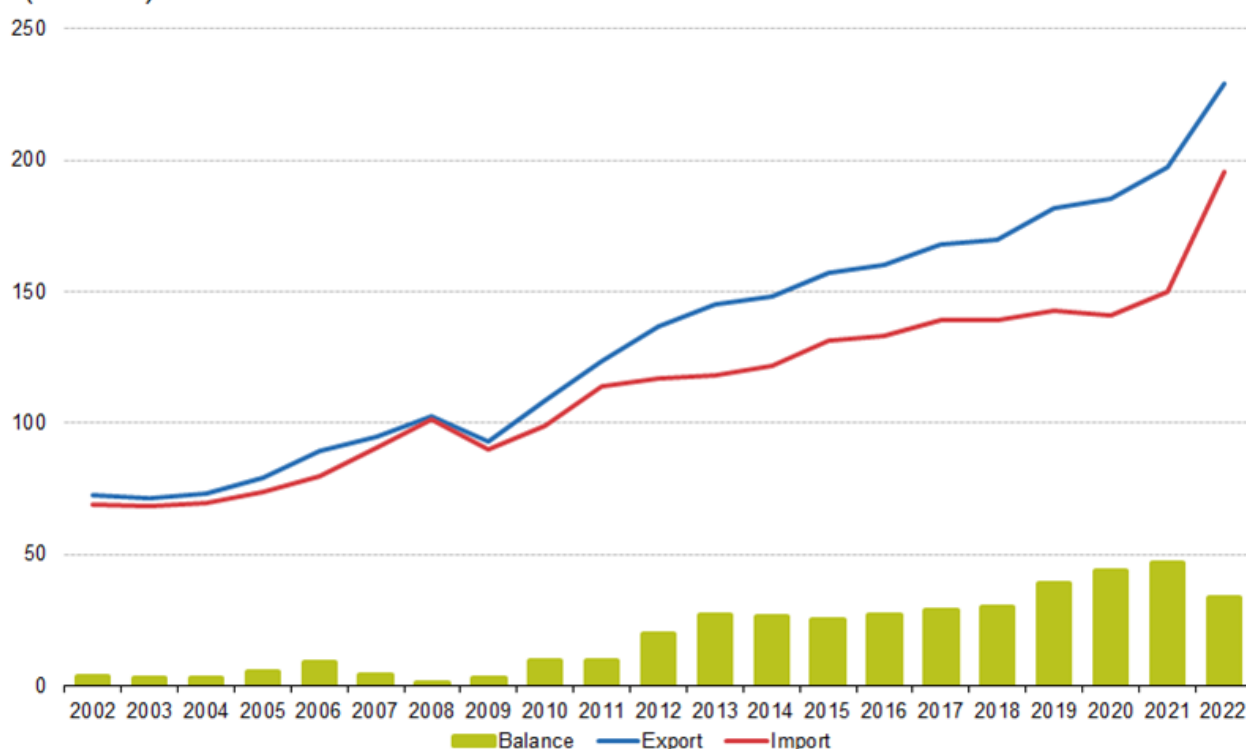
## EU trade in agricultural products: surplus of € 33 billion

In 2022, the value of total trade (imports plus exports) of agricultural goods between the EU and the rest of the world was € 425 [billion](#) (see Figure 1). Since exports (€ 229 billion) were higher than imports (€ 196 billion) there was a trade surplus of € 33 billion. Between 2002 and 2022, EU trade in agricultural products tripled, equivalent to an average annual growth of 5.6 %. In this period, exports (5.9 %) grew faster than imports (5.4 %).



## EU trade in agricultural products, 2002-2022

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

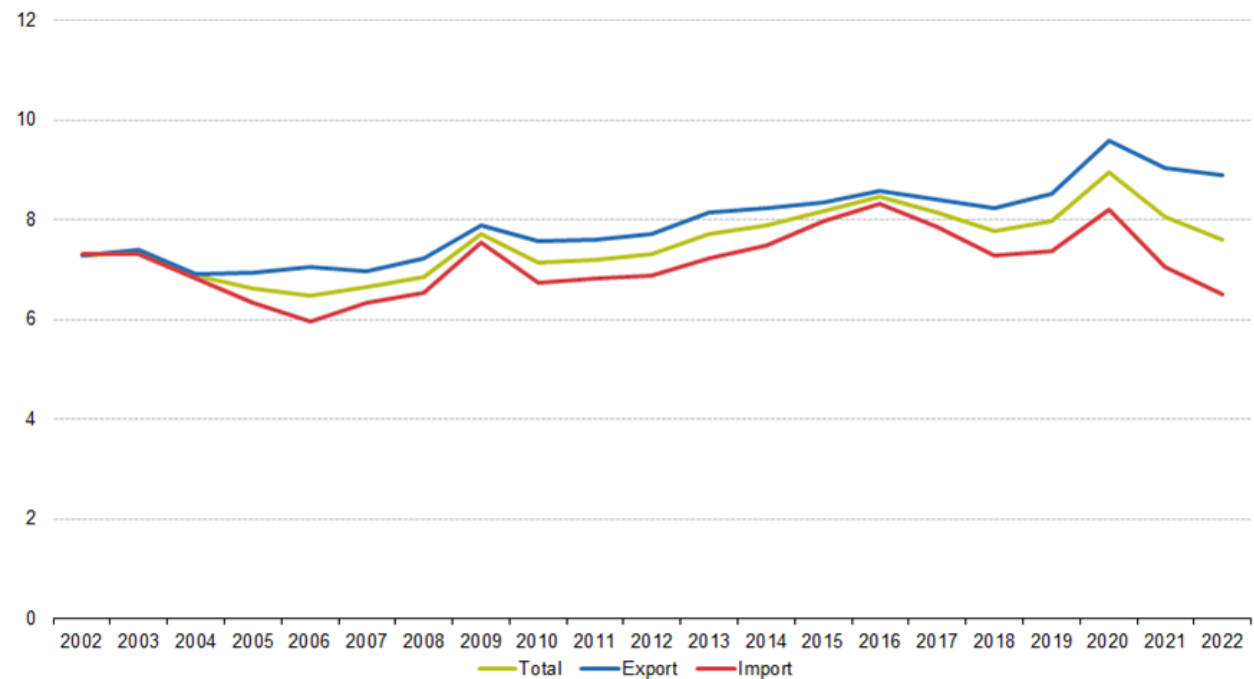
**Figure 1: EU trade in agricultural products, 2002-2022 (€ billion)** Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

In 2002, the EU share of agricultural products in total trade was 7.3 %, rising to 7.6 % in 2022 (see Figure 2). From 2002 to 2004, the share was roughly equal for exports and imports but since 2005 the share for exports was higher than for imports. This difference was largest in 2022, when it reached 2.4 [percentage points \(pp\)](#) , with exports (8.9 %) having a higher share than imports (6.5 %).



## EU share of agricultural products in total trade, 2002-2022

(%)



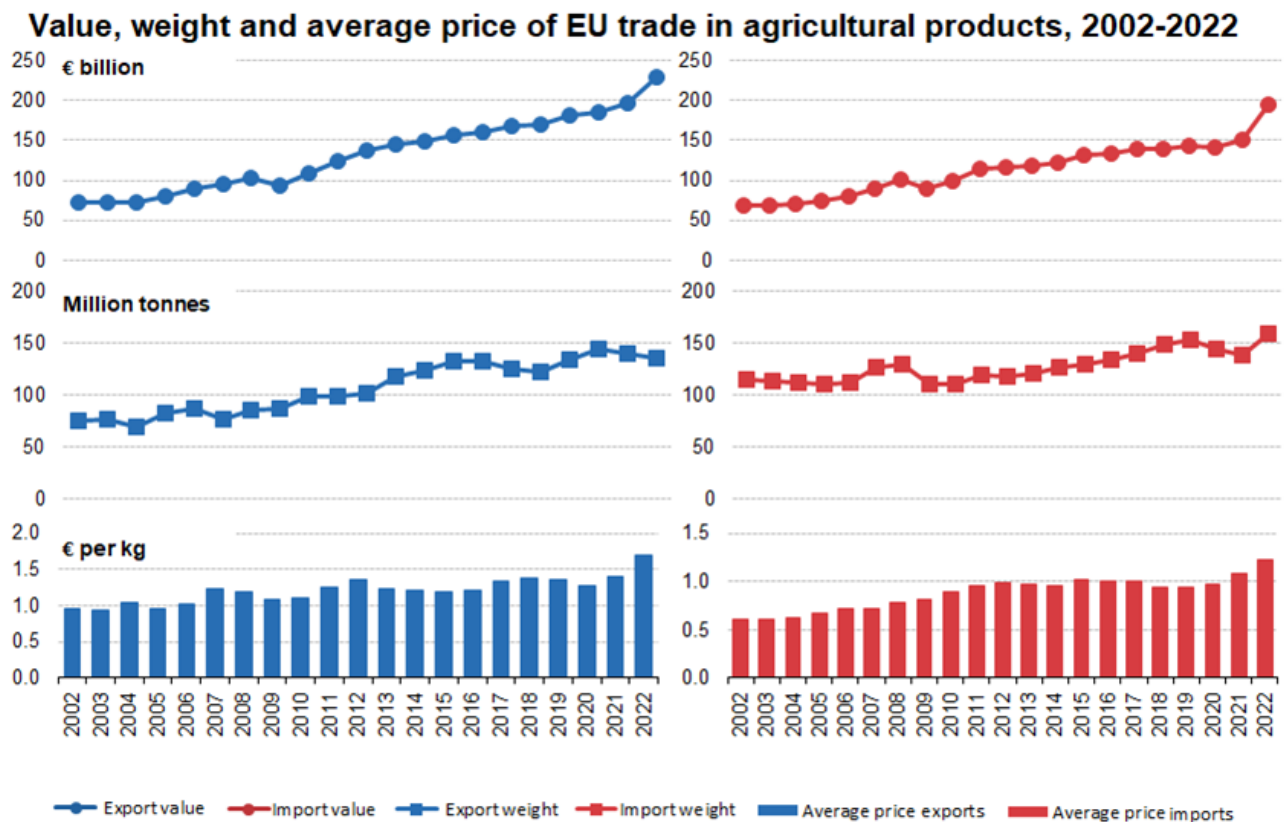
Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

**Figure 2: EU share of agricultural products in total trade, 2002-2022** Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

The EU imported 158 million tonnes of agricultural products in 2022, while it exported 136 million tonnes (see Figure 3). Between 2002 and 2022, the total trade volume had an average annual growth rate of 2.2 %. Here too, exports (3.0 %) grew faster than imports (1.6 %). The average annual increase in prices for imports (3.7 %) was higher than for exports (2.8 %).





Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

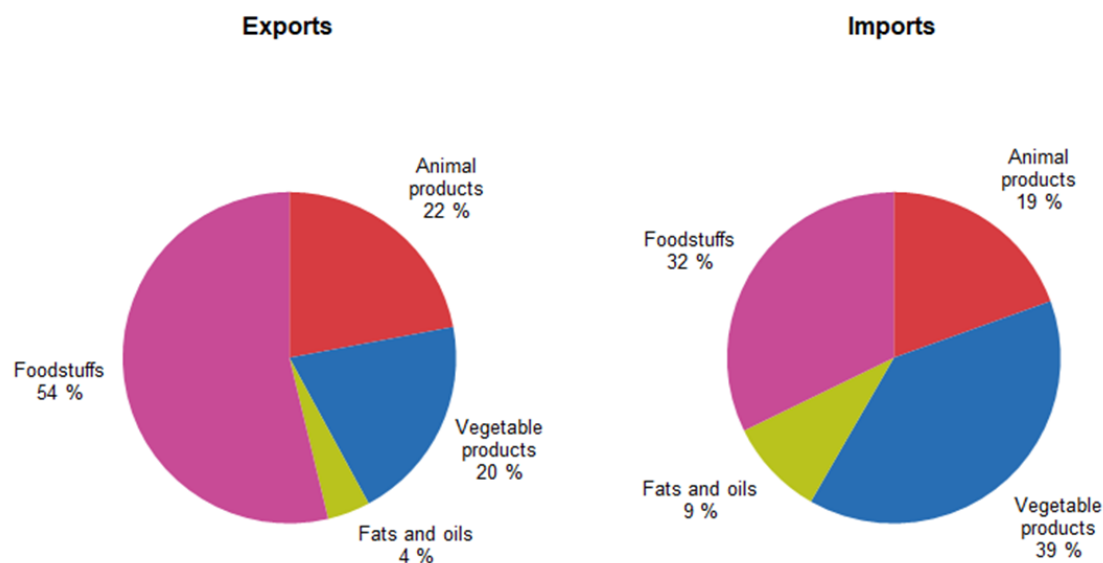
**Figure 3: Value, weight and average price of EU trade in agricultural products, 2002-2022** Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

### Agricultural products: four groups

Agricultural products can be subdivided into four groups: animal products, vegetable products, fats and oils and foodstuffs (see Figure 4). In 2022, the largest group in exports was foodstuffs (54 %) followed by animal products (22 %), vegetable products (20 %) and fats and oils (4 %). In imports, the largest group was vegetable products (39 %) followed by foodstuffs (32 %), animal products (19 %) and fats and oils (9 %).



## EU exports and imports of agricultural products by category, 2022



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

**Figure 4: EU trade of agricultural products by category, 2022** Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

Each of the categories discussed above can be subdivided into chapters (see Figure 5).

The animal products category consists of five chapters. In exports of animal products, the largest chapters were 'meat and edible meat offal' (38 %, € 18 billion) and 'dairy produce; birds' eggs; natural honey; edible products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified or included' (41 %, € 19 billion). In imports of animal products, the largest chapter was 'fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates' (71 %, € 26 billion).

There are nine chapters in the vegetable products category. In exports of vegetable products, the largest chapter was 'cereals' (32 %, € 15 billion). In imports of vegetable products, the largest chapter was 'edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruits or melons' (27 %, € 21 billion).

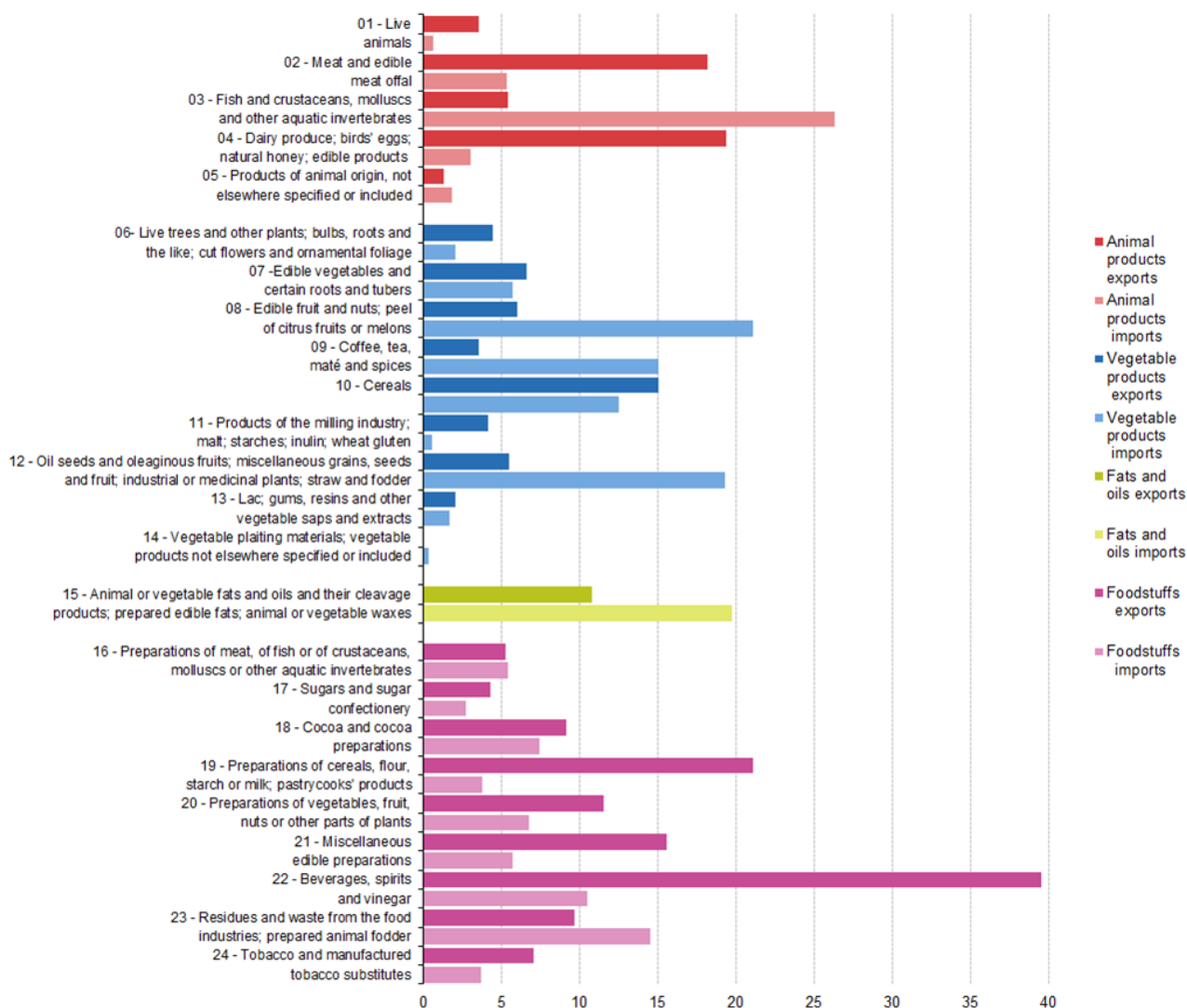
Fats and oils are a category on their own, imports were € 20 billion and exports € 11 billion.

Foodstuffs consist of various types of processed foods. The largest chapter in export of foodstuffs was 'beverages, spirits and vinegar' (32 %, € 39 billion). In imports of foodstuffs, the largest chapter was 'residues and waste from the food industries; prepared animal fodder' (24 %, € 15 billion)



## EU Agricultural exports and imports by product categories, 2022

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat

**Figure 5: EU exports and imports of agricultural products by product category, 2022 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)**

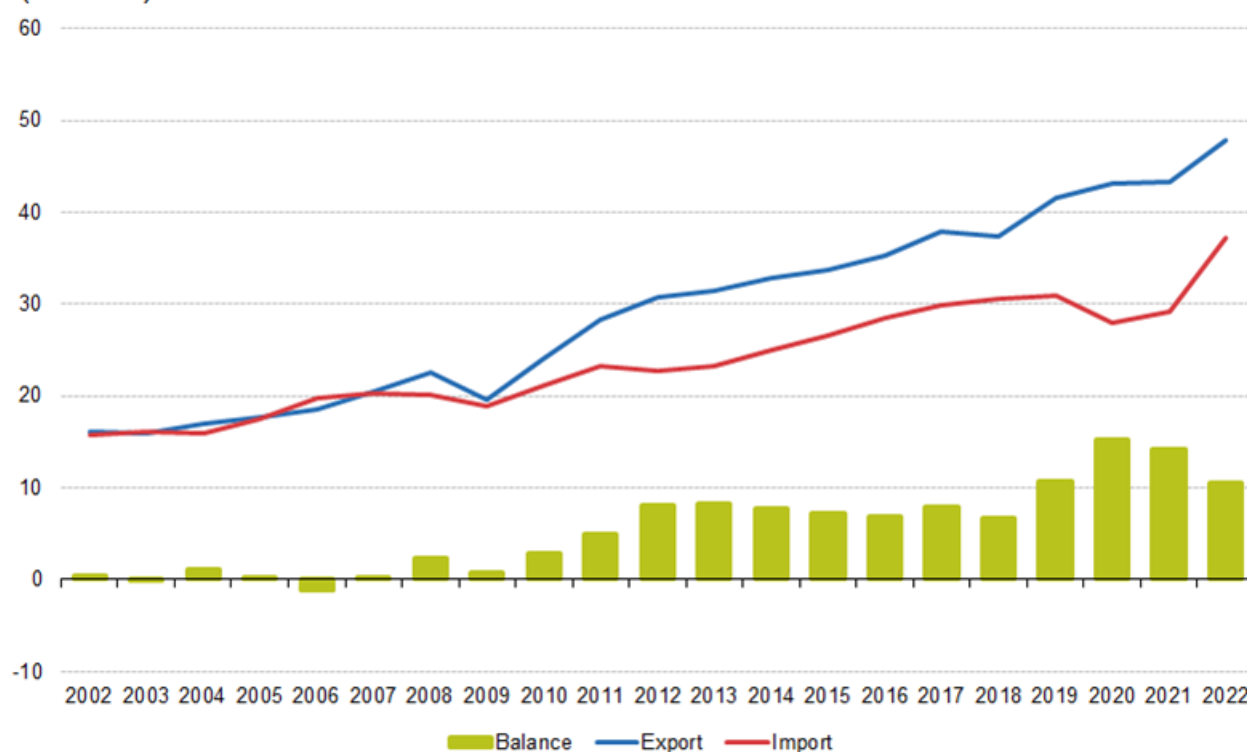
## Agricultural products - developments between 2002 and 2022

In 2022, the value of total trade (imports plus exports) of animal products between the EU and the rest of the world was € 85 billion (see Figure 6). Since exports (€ 48 billion) were higher than imports (€ 37 billion) there was a trade surplus of € 11 billion. Between 2002 and 2022, EU trade in animal products more than doubled, equivalent to an average annual growth of 5.0 %. In this period, exports (5.6 %) grew faster than imports (4.4 %).



## EU trade in animal products, 2002-2022

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

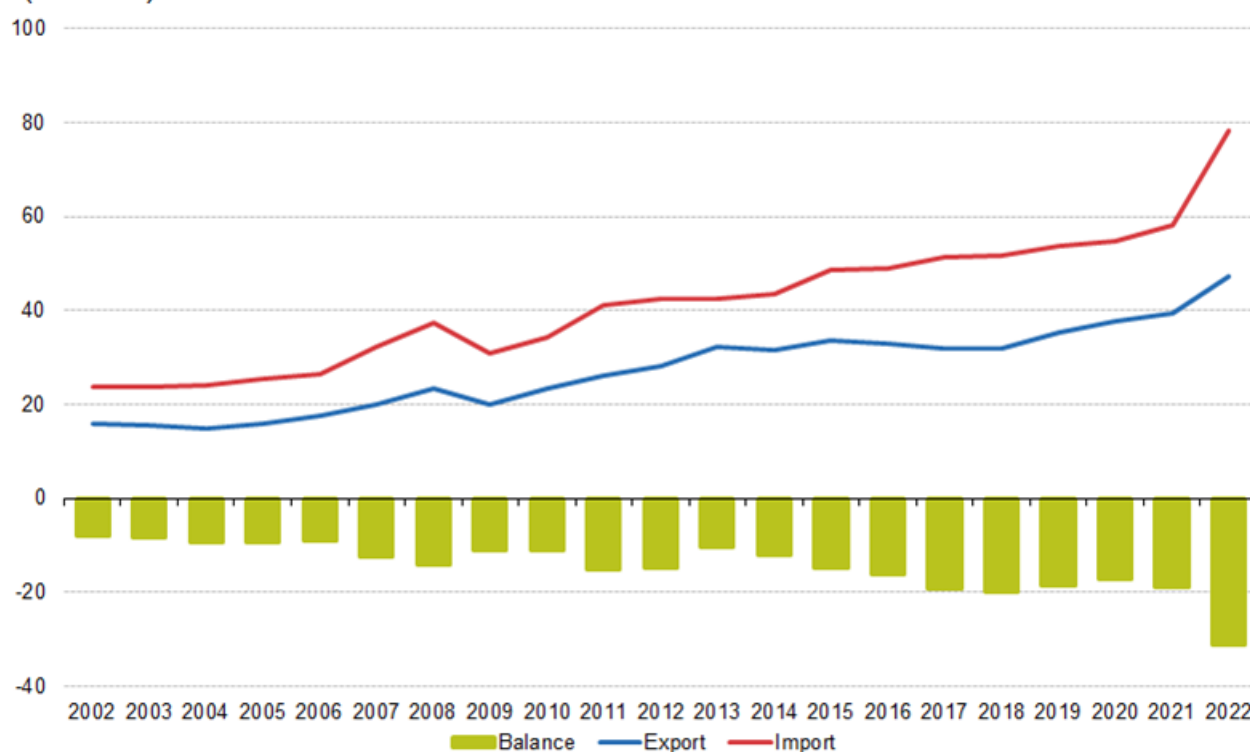
**Figure 6: EU trade in animal products, 2002-2022 (€ billion)** Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

In 2022, the value of total trade (imports plus exports) of vegetable products between the EU and the rest of the world was € 126 billion (see Figure 7). Since exports (€ 47 billion) were lower than imports (€ 78 billion) there was trade deficit of € 31 billion. Between 2002 and 2022, EU trade in vegetable products tripled, equivalent to an average annual growth of 5.9 %. In this period, exports (5.6 %) grew less than imports (6.1 %).



## EU trade in vegetable products, 2002-2022

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

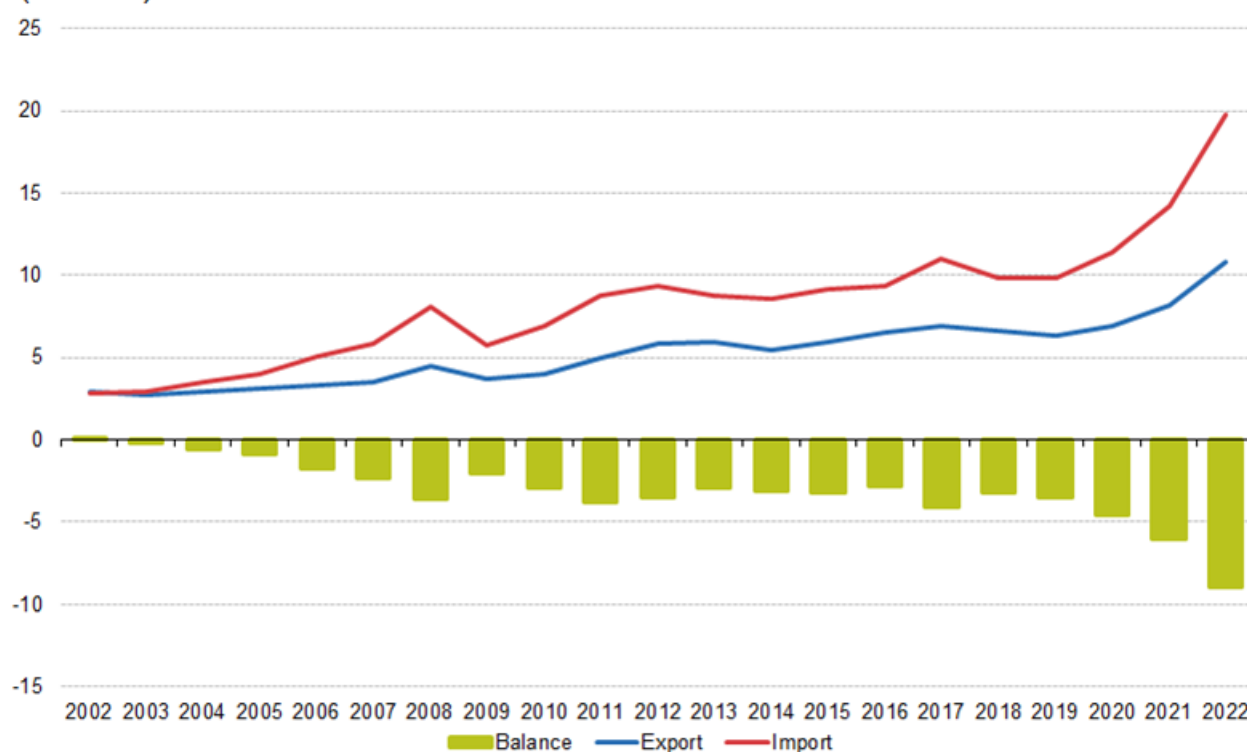
**Figure 7: EU trade in vegetable products, 2002-2022 (€ billion)** Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

In 2022, the value of total trade (imports plus exports) of fats and oils between the EU and the rest of the world was € 31 billion (see Figure 8). Since exports (€ 11 billion) were lower than imports (€ 20 billion) there was trade deficit of € 9 billion. Between 2002 and 2022, EU trade in vegetable products increased strongly with an average annual growth of 8.7 %. In this period, exports (6.8 %) grew less than imports (10.2 %).



## EU trade in oils and fats, 2002-2022

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

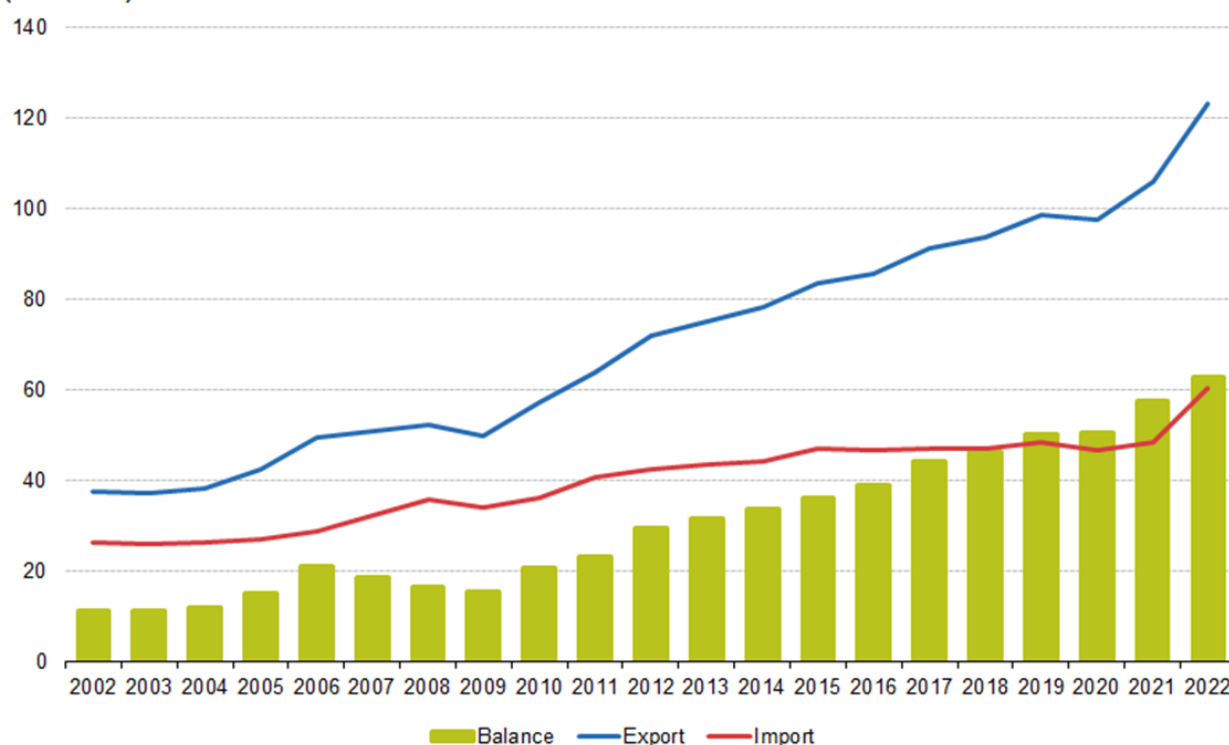
**Figure 8: EU trade in fats and oils, 2002-2022 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)**

In 2022, the value of total trade (imports plus exports) of foodstuffs between the EU and the rest of the world was € 184 billion (see Figure 9). Since exports (€ 123 billion) were higher than imports (€ 60 billion) there was a trade surplus of € 63 billion. Between 2002 and 2022, EU trade in foodstuffs almost tripled, equivalent to an average annual growth of 5.4 %. In this period, exports (6.1 %) grew faster than imports (4.2 %).



## EU trade in foodstuffs, 2002-2022

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat 

Figure 9: EU trade in foodstuffs, 2002-2022 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

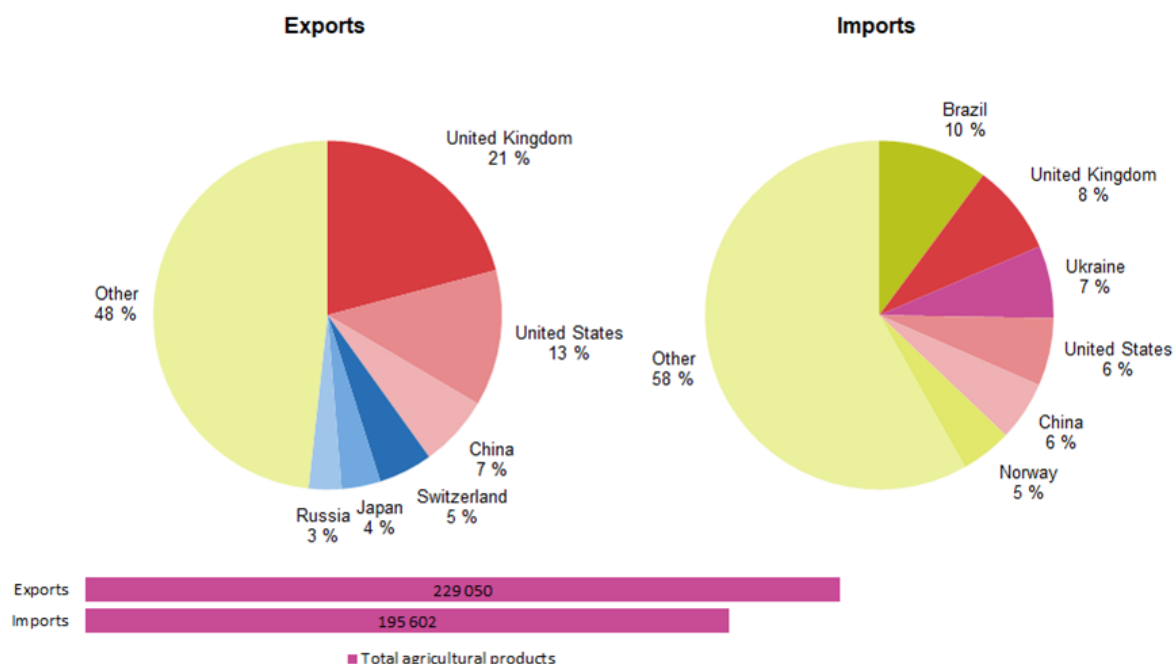
### Main trading partners for agricultural products

In 2022, the United Kingdom (see methodology section below) was the EU's largest export destination (€ 48 billion, 21 %) of agricultural products and the second largest origin of EU imports (€ 16 billion, 8 %), behind Brazil (€ 20 billion, 10 %) - see Figure 10.



## EU exports and imports of agricultural products by main partner, 2022

(shares and € million)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat

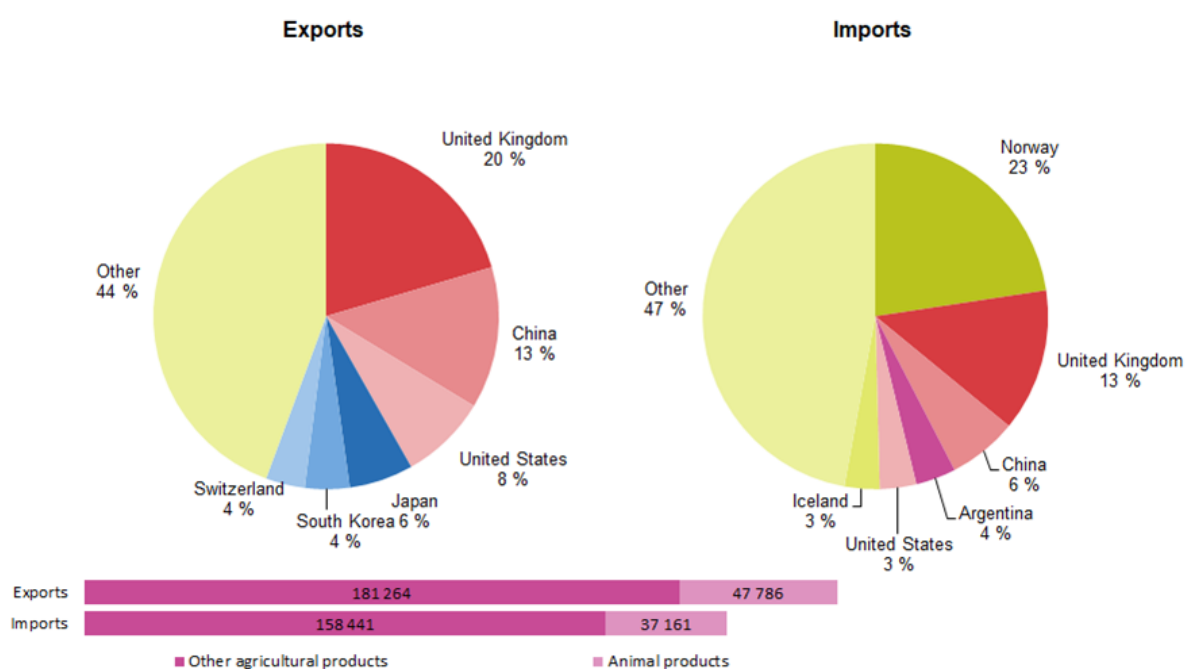
**Figure 10: EU exports and imports of agricultural products by main partner, 2022 (shares and € million)**  
**Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)**

In 2022, the United Kingdom (€ 10 billion, 20 %) was the EU's largest export destinations for animal products, while Norway (€ 8 billion, 23 %) was the largest origin of EU imports, mainly due to imports of fish products (see Figure 11).



## EU exports and imports of animal products by main partner, 2022

(shares and € million)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat

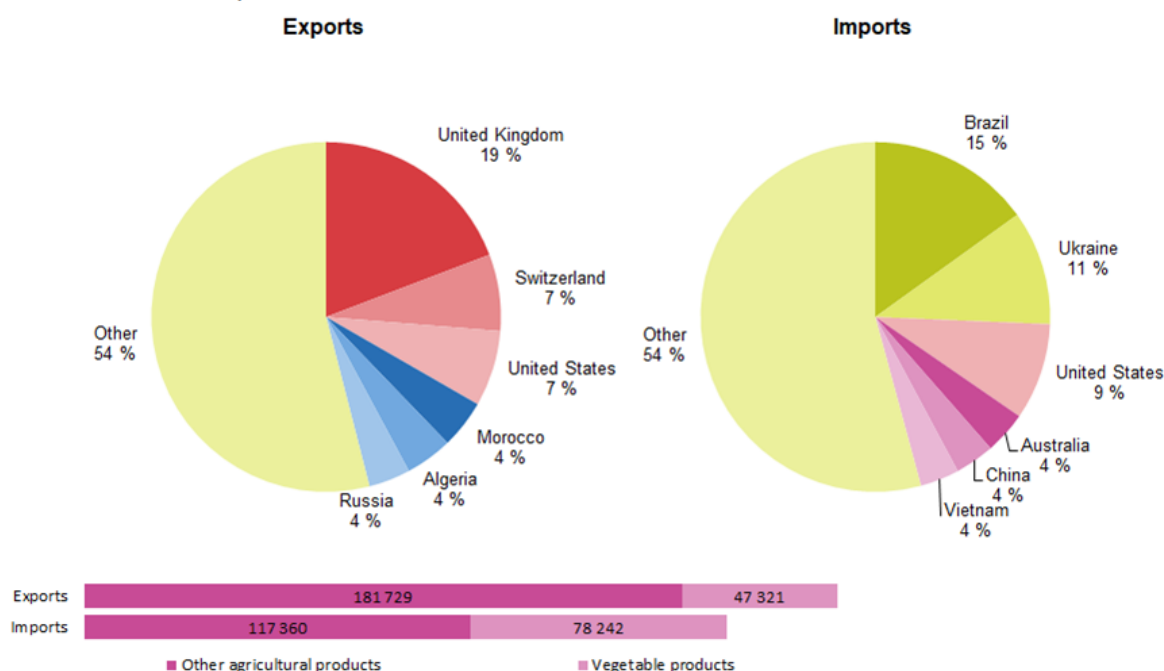
**Figure 11: EU exports and imports of animal products by main partner, 2022 (shares and € million) Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)**

In 2022, the United Kingdom (€ 9 billion, 19 %) was the EU's largest export destination for vegetable products, while Brazil (€ 12 billion, 15 %) was the largest origin of EU imports (see Figure 12).



## EU exports and imports of vegetable products by main partner, 2022

(shares and € million)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat

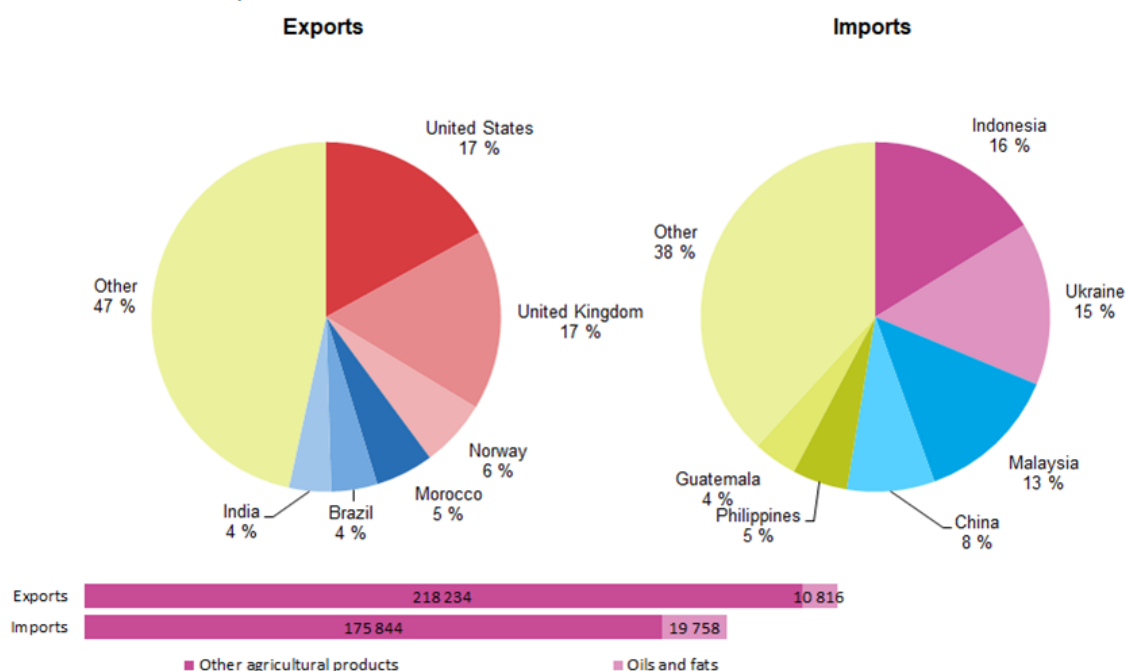
**Figure 12: EU exports and imports of vegetable products by main partner, 2022 (shares and € million)**  
**Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)**

In 2022, the United States and the United Kingdom (both € 2 billion, 17 %) were the EU's largest export destination for fats and oils, while Indonesia (€ 3 billion, 16 %) and Ukraine (€ 3 billion, 15 %) were the largest origins of EU imports (see Figure 13).



## EU exports and imports of oils and fats by main partner, 2022

(shares and € million)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat

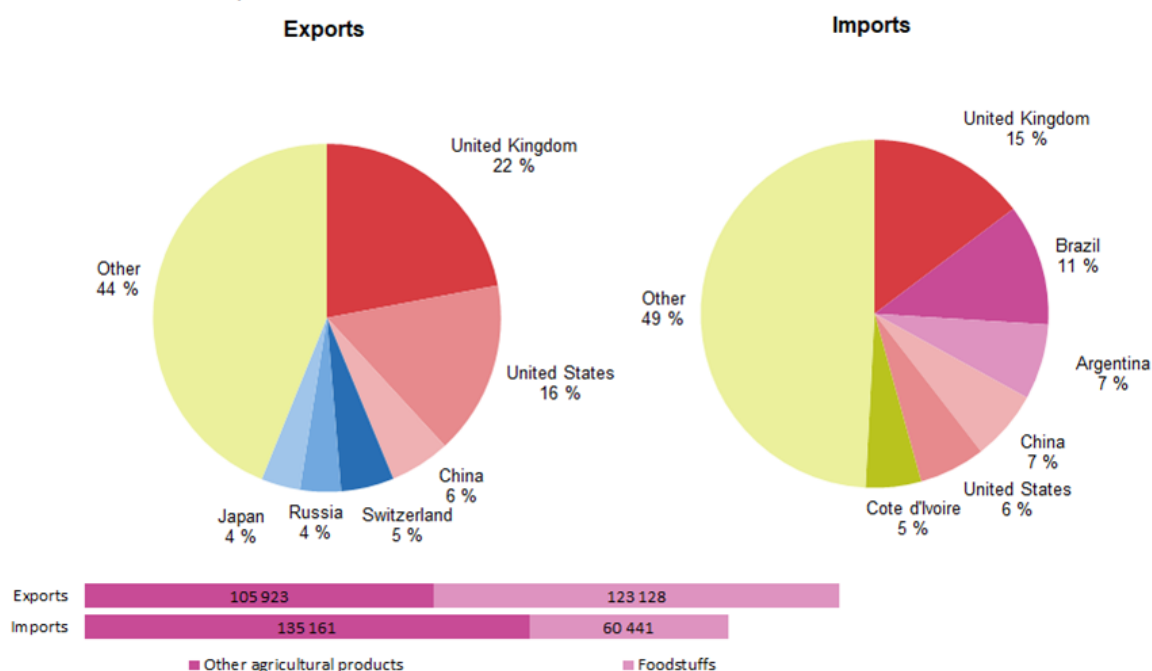
**Figure 13: EU exports and imports of fats and oils by main partner, 2022 (shares and € million) Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)**

In 2022, the United Kingdom was both the EU's largest export destination (€ 27 billion, 22 %) and the largest import origin (€ 9 billion, 15 %) of foodstuffs (see Figure 14).



## EU exports and imports of foodstuffs by main partner, 2022

(shares and € million)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-045409)

eurostat

**Figure 14: EU exports and imports of foodstuffs by main partner, 2022 (shares and € million)** Source: Eurostat (Comext data code: DS-045409)

### Source data for tables and graphs

[Extra-EU trade in agricultural goods Excel file](#)

### Data sources

EU data comes from [Eurostat's COMEXT](#) database. COMEXT is the Eurostat reference database for international trade in goods. It provides access not only to both recent and historical data from the [EU Member States](#) but also to statistics of a significant number of non-EU countries. International trade aggregated and detailed statistics disseminated from Eurostat website are compiled from COMEXT data according to a monthly process. Because COMEXT is updated on a daily basis, data published on the website may differ from data stored in COMEXT in case of recent revisions.

In this article, agricultural products are classified according to the sub-headings of the [Combined Nomenclature \(CN\)](#), based on the international classification known as the [Harmonised commodity description and coding system \(HS\)](#) administered by the [World Customs Organisation](#). The 24 chapters (2-digit codes) of agricultural products in the CN nomenclature are grouped into 3 major types: animal, vegetable and foodstuff products. Chapter 15 (animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products; prepared edible fats; animal or vegetable waxes) is included in vegetables.

EU data are compiled according to community guidelines and may, therefore, differ from national data published by Member States. Statistics on extra-EU trade are calculated as the sum of trade of each of the 27 EU Member States with countries outside the EU. In other words, the EU is considered as a single trading entity and trade flows are measured into and out of the area, but not within it.

As of January 2021 onwards, data on trade with the United Kingdom is based on a mixed concept. In application of the Withdrawal Agreement Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland, for trade with Northern Ireland the statistical concepts applicable are the same as those for trade between Member States while for trade with the United



Kingdom (excluding Northern Ireland) the same statistical concepts are applicable as for trade with any other extra-EU partner country. For these reasons, data on trade with the United Kingdom are not fully comparable with data on trade with other extra-EU trade partners, and for reference periods before and after the end of 2020.

## Classifications

In international trade statistics, several classifications are used. Apart from the harmonised commodity description and coding system (HS), managed by the World Customs Organisation, data on trade is also available in the United Nations' Standard International Trade Classification (SITC revision 4) and in the Broad Economic Categories (BEC) classification, the latter using end-use categories more adapted to economic analysis.

## Unit of measure

Trade values are expressed in millions (106) or in billions (109) of euros. They correspond to the statistical value, i.e. to the amount which would be invoiced in case of sale or purchase at the national border of the reporting country. It is called a **FOB** value (free on board) for exports and a **CIF** value (cost, insurance, freight) for imports.

## Context

The EU is the largest partner in international trade of agricultural products. While the EU imports mostly simple unprocessed agricultural goods, exports from the European Union are principally processed food products.

Data on international trade in agriculture products is used for two of the common EU policies: the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the common trade policy which manages trade relations with non-EU countries. These are major policy areas of the European Union on which decisions are taken at Community level.

Statistics on international trade in agricultural commodities are fundamental in the evaluation and understanding of problems related to several political agendas, such as trade negotiations, food security, cooperation and aid towards developing countries and global sustainability.

## Other articles

- [International trade in goods - other articles](#)

## Dedicated section

[International trade in goods - dedicated section](#)

## Database

[International trade in goods - database](#)

## Data visualisations

- [International trade in goods - visualisations](#)



## Methodology

[International trade in goods - methodology](#)

## Legislation

- [International trade in goods - legislation](#)

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- [European Commission - DG Trade](#)

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