

FOOD SAFETY



Australian Government
Australian Trade Commission



› OVERVIEW

KEY FACTS

INDUSTRY STRENGTHS

Australia is internationally recognised for producing food with high levels of safety and freedom from disease. Exceptional food security and safety standards are supported by a strong, safe and stable food system.

Food processors can source high quality produce at competitive costs from a large and diverse agricultural sector. Australia's regulatory structure provides industry-specific protection through quarantine, food safety regulations and food labelling.

The Australian food and beverage sector has a focus on export and the capacity to increase food production in response to international demand. Australia produces significantly more food than is required for domestic consumption.

Geographically, Australia is well positioned to meet Asia's growing demand for fresh and processed food products. By 2050, over 60 per cent of the world's food demand will come from Asia.

Trends in Asian markets include increased consumption of protein-based products such as meat, dairy and seafood, as well as fruit, nuts and vegetables. Asian consumers are also increasingly concerned with the safety and ethical production of food products.

This document provides an overview of Australian food safety governance and compliance frameworks and the enabling role they play in supporting Australian capability in the food and beverage industry.

Talk to your local Austrade representative for more tailored advice and information on connecting and partnering with the Australian food and beverage industry.



SETTING WORLD STANDARDS IN FOOD SAFETY

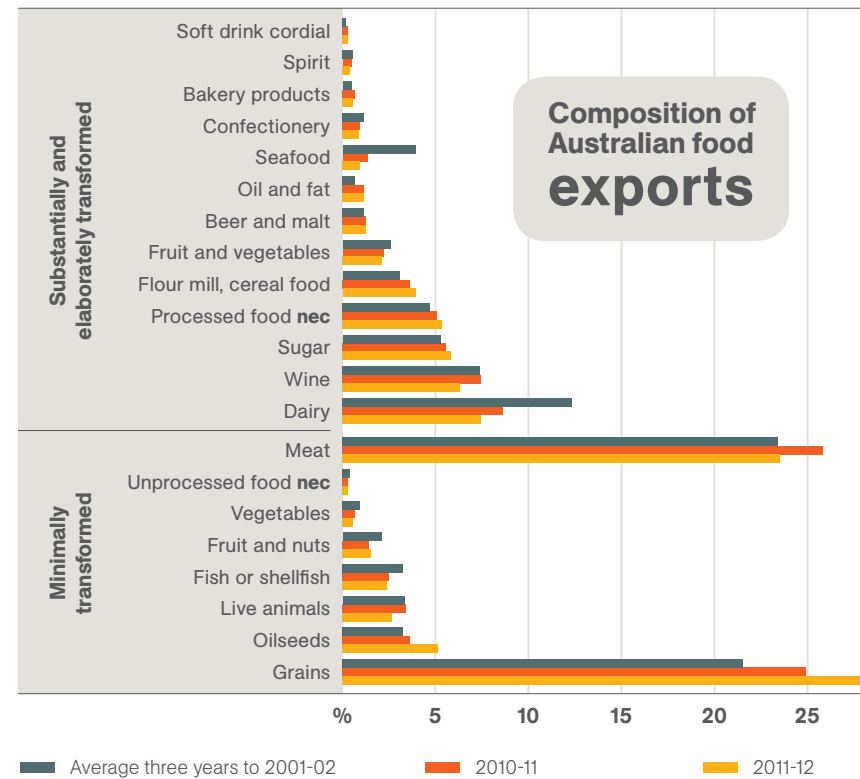
OVERVIEW

KEY FACTS

INDUSTRY STRENGTHS

The total value of Australian agrifood production was A\$42.6 billion in 2011-12, an increase of 3.4 per cent over the previous year.¹

In 2011-12 food exports increased by 12.3 per cent to A\$30.5 billion, the highest level since 2001-02. More than 50 per cent of Australia's food exports were to Asia in 2011-12.¹

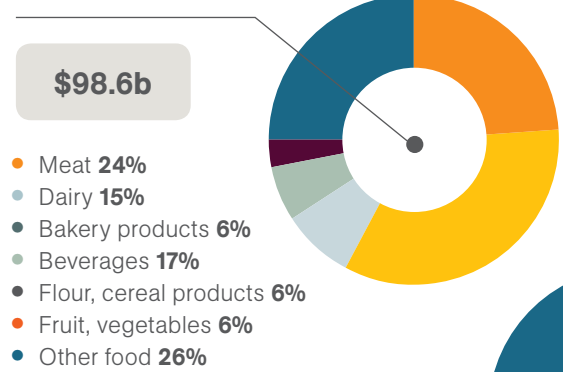


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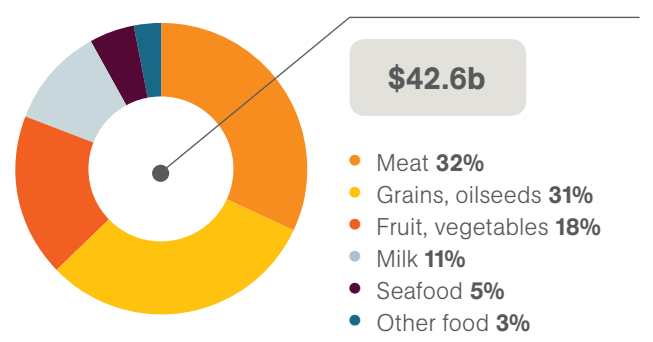
Source: DAFF; Australian Food Statistics 2011-12

OVERVIEW
 > KEY FACTS
 INDUSTRY STRENGTHS

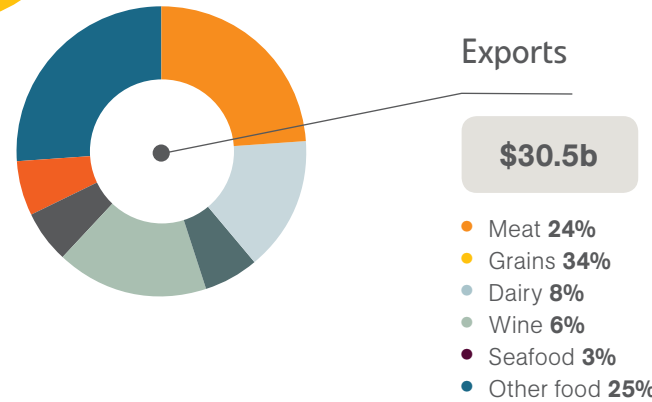
Processed food production – sales and service revenue 2011-12



Agrifood production



Exports



Source: DAFF; Australian Food Statistics 2011-12

OVERVIEW

KEY FACTS

› INDUSTRY STRENGTHS

Australia's agriculture and processed food system is globally competitive, with efficient and sustainable producers and businesses.

Australian food producers and processors are globally recognised for the innovative and reliable production of high quality 'clean and green' processed food and agricultural products, services and technology.

Governments and suppliers in Australia understand the importance of food security to the social and political stability of the region.

Policy development and science and research collaboration are key strengths for Australia. Areas of focus include animal and plant health and biotechnology, production practices, natural resource management and remediation, logistics and product safety.

All sections of the Australian food and agriculture industry play a role in safeguarding the food supply: government agencies, farmers, transporters, processors and manufacturers, storage personnel and retailers.

STRONG REGULATION AND HIGH SAFETY STANDARDS

The consistently high quality of Australian agriculture and food production is supported by rigorous regulatory standards.

Australia's food regulation policy framework is set by the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation. Food standards are developed within this policy framework.

The Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is responsible for policy and programs that support a globally competitive and sustainable Australian food industry.

Priorities include the development of a national food plan, food value chain policy, and the reduction of regulatory burden across the food supply chain and biosecurity.

DAFF administers rigorous quarantine controls at Australian borders to minimise the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering the country. It also provides import and export inspection and certification to help retain Australia's highly favourable animal, plant and human health status.

DAFF helps protect Australia's food producers and consumers by inspecting imported food (including imported ingredients used in processed food that is re-exported) Inspectors check that food meets Australian requirements for public health and safety and compliance with Australian food standards, as detailed in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) develops the food standards in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code with advice from other government agencies and input from stakeholders.

OVERVIEW

KEY FACTS

› INDUSTRY STRENGTHS

Food standards cover:

- the use of ingredients, processing aids, colourings, additives and minerals
- the composition of some foods, such as dairy, meat, beverages, new technologies and novel foods
- labelling for both packaged and unpackaged food, including specific mandatory warnings or advisory labels.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator regulates genetically modified (GM) organisms. If GM crops or animals are to be used in food then they must be approved by FSANZ.

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) places strict parameters around the use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals. Safe levels for chemical residues in food are published in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Food standards are enforced by Australian state and territory governments or by local government. These authorities regularly check food products for compliance with the Food Standards Code.²

QUALITY ASSURANCE AT EVERY STEP OF PRODUCTION

Product development

All new ingredients and additives developed by food companies are subject to extensive safety testing requirements in order to gain FSANZ approval. This ensures all new products meet Australia's high safety and quality standards.

Quality control

Farmers and food companies must abide by strict legal regulations covering the use of pesticides, husbandry practices, administration of animal drugs, farm and factory hygiene and sanitation, processing procedures and many other practices.

Australian farmers are making use of new and innovative scientific approaches to minimise cost and maximise quality.

These may include technologies and methods to minimise pest damage and improve crop yields and making use of veterinary input to improve herd health and production in the beef, dairy, pig, sheep and poultry industries.

Food companies also play an important role in establishing and maintaining Australia's high quality standards.

Virtually all food companies operating in Australia have quality and food safety programs. The best known is the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. HACCP is the systematic approach to identifying, evaluating and controlling food safety hazards to ensure the final product is safe and of high quality.

The overall safety of the Australian food supply is also measured by the FSANZ's Australian Total Diet Study (ATDS). This study estimates the level of dietary exposure of Australians to a range of pesticide residues, contaminants and other substances (such as aflatoxins) that can be found in the food supply.

The last ATDS demonstrated that pesticide residues, metals and selected antibiotics, and aflatoxins are either absent or present in low amounts well within the safety limits.³ This confirms Australia's high standards of safety.

¹ DAFF 2013. Australian Food Statistics 2011-12. Accessed from daff.gov.au

² FSANZ foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/aboutfsanz/australiassafefoods5400.cfm

³ FSANZ foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/monitoringandsurveillance/australiantotaldiets1914.cfm



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education promotion agency.**

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