

EU AGRI-FOOD TRADE A VITAL FACTOR IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

EUROPE IS A KEY PLAYER IN THE GLOBAL FOOD MARKET, OFTEN RELYING ON IMPORTED MATERIALS FROM OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD.

European consumers are able to enjoy coffee or chocolate due to strong trade relations and extensive supply chains. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine have highlighted the vital need for free, transparent, and resilient food supply chains in the EU and globally.

This is especially important in the current geopolitical landscape, as food insecurity, impacts of climate change and distribution issues pose a significant threat to the global food supply chain.

EU AGRI-FOOD TRADE

€407 BILLION*

imports

**€172
BILLION**

40%**

**OF THE EU AGRI-FOOD
HIGH VALUE & HIGH
QUALITY EXPORTS
RELY ON IMPORTS OF
RAW MATERIALS**

(e.g. for
chocolate or
coffee) or
feed items
(e.g. for
meat, milk).

exports

**€235
BILLION**



* Data for 2024: <https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/media/news/eu-agri-food-exports-reach-record-levels-eu2354-billion-2024-2025-04-08/en#:~:text=1%20min%20read-EU%20agri%20food%20exports%20reach%20record%20levels%20of%20%20%E2%82%AC235.4,report%20describes%20several%20positive%20developments>

** Calculated based on data available at <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/>

TRADE IS ESSENTIAL

For ensuring that EU citizens have access to a wide variety of high-quality, safe and tasty food. Global food supply chains, particularly for crops that cannot be grown in Europe, increase the availability of diverse ingredients and flavours for Europeans. Vanilla is one of them.

THAT'S THE POWER OF TRADE - BRINGING THE WORLD TO YOUR TABLE

> VANILLA

is one of the **most popular spices worldwide** and an important flavour used popular sweets and desserts.



~1,800
new food and drink products containing vanilla are launched in the EU annually.



The 5th Most Popular Flavour

Vanilla follows only chocolate, strawberry, apple, and hazelnut in EU new product developments

THE EU IMPORTS ALL THE VANILLA IT CONSUMES

The majority of it comes from **Madagascar and Indonesia.**¹



Madagascar



Indonesia

> A VULNERABLE SUPPLY CHAIN

The EU sets strict **Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs)** that all imported products must meet. Any shipment exceeding these limits cannot enter the European market.

In many tropical regions, farmers face intense pest and disease pressures that simply do not exist in Europe. To protect their crops, they rely on certain pesticides that are not authorised or registered in the EU because European farmers don't need them or they are registered according to different rules.



> WHY THIS MATTERS FOR VANILLA

For smallholder vanilla growers, access to a full toolbox of plant protection solutions is essential to keep crops healthy and ensure a stable global supply. Without these tools, production becomes more vulnerable, harvests drop, and the availability of vanilla for European consumers is threatened.



> ENSURING SAFE, RELIABLE TRADE

By recognising different agronomic realities worldwide, the EU can uphold high consumer protection standards while supporting resilient, sustainable supply chains for key imports like vanilla. Sudden MRL changes or unaligned standards can destabilise vanilla supply by reducing agricultural yields. Science-based, internationally aligned MRLs are essential to avoid fragmented rules, protect consumers, and support producers' sustainable livelihoods.

1. CBI Netherlands. (2023, May 02). The European market potential for vanilla. <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/spices-herbs/vanilla/market-potential>
2. WITS World Bank. (2023). Vanilla imports by country in 2023. <https://wits.worldbank.org/trade/comtrade/en/country/ALL/year/2023/tradeflow/Imports/partner/WLD/product/090500>
3. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. FAOSTAT. <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#home>