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**Report Highlights:**

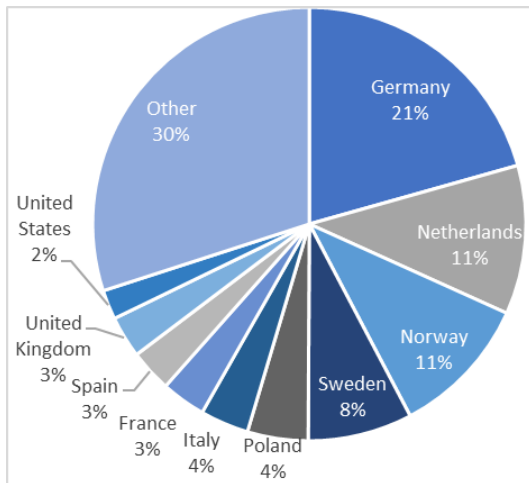
Although a small market in the European Union, Denmark offers export opportunities for U.S. exporters of wood pellets, wine, seafood, tree nuts, beer, and several other products. The exporter guide focuses on Agricultural and Fishery products and provides practical tips for U.S. exporters on how to conduct business in Denmark.

## Executive Summary

Denmark is a high-income country in Scandinavia. The country's small, open economy is highly dependent on foreign trade. The government supports a relatively liberal trade policy with exports and imports of goods and services accounting for 55 and 49 percent of GDP, respectively. In 2018, Denmark's GDP reached \$351.3 billion.

## Imports of Agricultural and related products

Danish imports of agricultural and related products totaled \$18.1 billion in 2018. Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden are Denmark's main trading partners. However, the United States is the leading non-EU supplier of agricultural and related products to the Danish market. Danish exports of agricultural and related products were valued \$23.7 billion in 2018, resulting in a net trade balance of \$5.6 billion.



## Food Processing Industry

Denmark's food and beverage industry was comprised of approximately 1,500 registered companies in 2017. These companies collectively generated a turnover of \$29.6 billion in 2018. Denmark is one of the world's leading exporters of pork. Other notable Danish exports include fish and shellfish, fur skin, cheese, eggs, and other dairy products. In 2018, exports of consumer-oriented products totaled \$12.1 billion.

## Food Retail Industry

Denmark's packaged food retail sales reached nearly \$8.8 billion in 2016. Food retail sales are forecasted to further increase to \$10.1 billion by 2021. The leading growth categories include baked goods, sweet biscuits, snack bars and fruit snacks, soup, breakfast cereals, ice cream and frozen desserts, baby food, ready-to-eat meals, and savory snacks.

### Quick Facts CY 2018

**Imports of Consumer-Oriented Products** \$7.9 billion  
**Exports of Consumer-Oriented Products** \$12.1 billion

**Imports of agricultural and related products** \$18.1 billion  
**Exports of agricultural and related products** \$23.7 billion

#### Top 10 Import Products in Denmark (imported from the world)

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Salmon               | 6. Food preparations        |
| 2. Soybean residues     | 7. Cheese                   |
| 3. Wood pellets         | 8. Bread and pastries       |
| 4. Wine of fresh grapes | 9. Animal feed preparations |
| 5. Bovine meat          | 10. Enzymes                 |

#### Top 10 Retailers

Netto	12.7%	6. Bilka	6.7%
Rema 1000	10.5%	7. Kvickly	6.4%
Superbrugsen	10.4%	8. Meny	5.4%
Føtex	8.7%	9. Dagli'Brugsen	3.9%
Fakta	6.8%	10. Aldi	2.8%

#### GDP/Population

Population: 5.8 million  
 GDP: \$351.3 billion  
 GDP per capita: \$61,049

## Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges

Strengths	Weaknesses
U.S. producers are professional, offer great variety, and deliver products with a consistent quality.	Shipping time and costs, import tariffs and EU labeling regulations make U.S. products more expensive.
Opportunities	Threats
A growing demand for food products with a special claim and sustainable or ethical production methods.	Fierce competition on price, quality, uniqueness and innovation from other EU member states and from third countries that have negotiated lower tariff rates (such as Canada and Mexico.)

**Data and Information Sources:** Trade Data Monitor, Economist Intelligence Unit, Eurostat, and © Euromonitor International.

## Introduction

Denmark is a small country in Northwest Europe and accounts for only one percent of the total population of the European Union (EU), but it has one of the highest GDP's in the world (coupled with a low rate of unemployment and inflation). In fact, the Danes are among the most affluent consumers in the EU. Due to its size and climate, Denmark depends on imports for compound feed ingredients and fresh produce (as well as certain additional goods). In addition to an overview of the macroeconomic situation, this report also provides a brief overview of the food retail landscape in Denmark. Section III provides detailed information on the best products prospects, including for wood pellets, wine, seafood, tree nuts, and beer.



## Table of Content

I.	Market Overview	2
II.	Exporter Business Tips	3
III.	Best Products Prospects	5
IV.	Key Contacts and Further Information	12
Appendix I	Leading Buying Groups in Denmark	13
Appendix II	Trade shows in Europe	14

## Market Overview

### Macroeconomic Situation

Denmark is a constitutional monarchy which shares a southern border with Germany and is connected, via a bridge, with Sweden. The country has been a member of the EU since 1973. However, Denmark has not elected to participate in the Euro. Nevertheless, the Danish Krone (DKK) is pegged to the Euro with a very narrow band (2.25 percent) of Central Bank intervention rates through the EU's exchange rate mechanism.<sup>1</sup>

Denmark is a social welfare state, with a thoroughly modern service-based market economy, that ensures low levels of poverty and inequality. Denmark consistently ranks as one of the world's least corrupt nations, and is also ranked towards the top for its ease of doing business, transparency, openness to foreign investment, and competitiveness. It also ranks as one of the happiest countries in the world. Denmark is a world leader in "green energy" industries, and sectors such as information and telecommunications, health and life sciences, and shipping.

The population totals 5.8 million, with a per-capita GDP of \$61,049 (2018). The economy is highly dependent on foreign trade, with exports accounting for the largest component of GDP. Denmark is a strong supporter of a liberalized trade policy, and the United States is Denmark's largest non-EU trade partner. In 2018, the United States exported an estimated \$8.9 billion<sup>2</sup> in goods to Denmark. While Denmark exported \$2.6 billion in goods to the United States.

<sup>1</sup> European Commission -- [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/euro-area/introducing-euro/adoption-fixed-euro-conversion-rate/erm-ii-eus-exchange-rate-mechanism\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/euro-area/introducing-euro/adoption-fixed-euro-conversion-rate/erm-ii-eus-exchange-rate-mechanism_en)

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau -- <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4099.html>

Denmark has a prosperous economy. Last year, the country recorded GDP growth of 2.1 percent, with forecasts of 1.8 percent and 2.0 percent for 2020 and 2021, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

**Advantages and Challenges for U.S. Exporters in Denmark**

<i>Advantages (product strengths and market opportunities)</i>	<i>Challenges (product weakness and competitive threats)</i>
American products are known for their good quality	Transatlantic transportation is costly and takes time.
Affluent and open-minded consumers.	Fierce competition on price, quality, uniqueness and innovation.
Growing demand for fresh and processed food products that contribute to a healthier lifestyle.	Sustainability standards are often a requirement of the Danish food retail industry (e.g. MSC, ACS, etc.).
Growing demand for sustainable and organic food products.	Competition from suppliers in EU Member States due to tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers and transportation costs.
Interest in experimenting with new and innovative products and/or concepts, e.g. healthy snacks, vegan products, etc.	Standard U.S. product labels often do not comply with Danish product label requirements.
Denmark often serves as a distribution point for other markets in the Nordics and Baltics.	Certain meat and meat products, products containing GMO derived ingredients that are not EU approved, and some seafood cannot be exported to Denmark.
	Denmark's value added tax (VAT) rate of 25 percent ranks as one of the highest in the world.

**Exporter Business Tips**

Most business people in Denmark speak English and have a high level of education (i.e., a Masters or Bachelor’s degree). They expect timely responses to their communications and are not hierarchical. Furthermore, the Danes are punctual, straightforward, and business-minded. They like to be well-informed about a product, its price, and their business partner. As a result, they can be quick decision makers while valuing long-term partnerships.

**Danish Retail Sector**

In 2018, food retail sales were valued at DKK 30.1 billion (\$4.4 billion).<sup>4</sup> Supermarket chains (full-service supermarkets, discounters, and convenience stores) dominate the food retail landscape. In Denmark there are few independent grocery stores or large hyper-markets. In cities like Copenhagen, where shopping is quite dense, there are generally several supermarkets within walking distance anywhere in the city, many with long hours of operation. In addition to well-known A-brands, most supermarkets have their own private labels (often a low-cost brand as well as a high-end brand).

The price for Danish food and non-alcoholic beverages are 30 percent higher than the EU average.<sup>5</sup> In general, Danes are price conscious and seek out ‘value for money’ and products ‘on sale,’ which explains why discount retailers like Fakta, Netto, Kiwi, Aldi, and Lidl are faring well in Denmark.

Figure 1. Selection of U.S. products

<sup>3</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit -- <https://country.eiu.com/denmark>

<sup>4</sup> © Euromonitor International (2019, January).

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat -- <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-press-releases/-/2-20062019-AP>



Source: FAS/The Hague

The food retail market in Denmark is highly consolidated. The top 3 leading grocery retailers, FDB Group, Salling Group (formerly Dansk Supermarked) and Dagrofa, have a collective market share of more than 68 percent. However, the supermarket with the highest number of outlets is Netto, with more than 500 stores in the country. A detailed list of all of the leading Danish grocery retailers can be found in Appendix I.

The average Danish supermarket has a selection of U.S. wines and a few brands of U.S. craft beer. In addition, you will find, almonds, raisins, sweet potatoes, Alaska Pollack, pulses, dressings and sauces, and more from the United States.

Denmark also has the highest consumption of organic food products in the world. Organic food sales account for 11.5 percent of total Danish food consumption<sup>6</sup> - the highest percentage in Europe. Last year, Danish organic retail sales totaled \$1.935 million. Additional information on the Danish market for organic food can be found in the Report: DA2020-0001, The Organic Food Market in Denmark, dated January 10, 2020, which can be accessed online at <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/search>.

### Entry Strategy

Success in introducing a product in the Danish market predominantly depends on an exporter's level of knowledge of the market and the relationship they have with an importer who knows the market, the trade barriers, and the required documentation. Prior to shipping any product, invest time in researching the Danish food culture (e.g., concepts, flavors, prices, etc.). There are four State Regional Trade Groups (SUSTA, WUSATA, Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast) that offer tailor-made analysis on specific Danish market segments. Also be aware of non-tariff trade barriers that can complicate or even prevent exporting to Denmark, like U.S. beef, poultry and food with genetically modified ingredients. The EU also has several free trade agreements (FTAs) which may advantage third-country competitors.

The EU Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report lists the import regulations and standards that are harmonized within the EU (see E42019-0052, FAIRS Export Certificate Report, dated February 6, 2020). The vast majority of import requirements are harmonized within the EU. Nevertheless, it is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their Danish buyer, who is in the best position to research such matters with local authorities, before shipping any goods. Final approval of any product is subject to the Danish rules and regulations as interpreted by border officials at the time of product entry.

<sup>6</sup> Organic Denmark -- <https://www.organicdenmark.com/facts-figures-about-danish-organics>

Although the Wine Institute is the only U.S. agricultural non-profit trade association, often referred to as a “cooperator,” that has a local representative in Denmark, other U.S. cooperators remain active in the market. Cooperators, including those that are not physically represented in the Danish markets, have specific information and experience in helping U.S. companies in their effort to expand business in Denmark.

The local State Departments of Agriculture can also be a source of assistance in promoting your product in Denmark. An overview of the local State Departments of Agriculture can be found at: [www.nasda.org/9383/States.aspx](http://www.nasda.org/9383/States.aspx).

Trade shows are excellent venues for U.S. exporters to meet potential Danish buyers, to conduct product introductions, and to gauge buyer interest. Depending on the products, U.S. exporters should consider visiting or exhibiting at one of the many trade shows in Europe. A detailed overview of trade shows can be found in Appendix II.

Another excellent tool to find Danish buyers is to participate in a Buyers Mission. Several State and Regional Trade Groups and commodity groups organize Inbound Trade Missions.

### Best Products Prospects

U.S. exports of agricultural, fish, and forestry products to the EU in 2018 totaled \$17 billion, of which 2 percent, or \$325.6 million, was exported to Denmark.<sup>7</sup> Although a relatively small market, Denmark is affluent and offers export opportunities for a myriad of U.S. agricultural products. More trade statistics on U.S. trade to the EU and Denmark can be found online at <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/gats/default.aspx>.

#### Denmark, The Best High-Value Products Prospects, 1,000 \$ (2018)

Product	Imports	Imports from U.S.	U.S. Market Share	Key Constraints Over Market Development	Market Attractiveness for USA
Wood Pellets <sup>8</sup>	\$613,641	\$120,006	19.6%	Discussions over the sustainability of wood pellet conversion for energy consumption	Growing demand for renewable energy consumption
Wine <sup>9</sup>	\$728,372	\$44,935	6.2%	Wines from Italy, France, Spain, and Germany are very popular	Denmark fully depends on imported wines, and the Danes are among the most affluent consumers within the EU. U.S. and Chilean wines are popular New World wines
Seafood <sup>10</sup>	\$3,007,597	\$36,385	1.2%	Competition from neighboring Norway, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands	Growing demand for seafood by the food processing industry and high-end foodservice

<sup>7</sup> <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/gats/BicoReport.aspx?type=country>

<sup>8</sup> HS Code: 440131

<sup>9</sup> HS Codes: 2204 & 2205

<sup>10</sup> HS Codes: 0302, 0303, 0304, 0305, 0306, 0307, 0308

Tree nuts	\$132,388	\$27,287	20.6%	Re-exports from the Netherlands and Germany	Strong demand from food manufacturers, large bakeries, confectionary, and the snack industry
Beer <sup>11</sup>	\$63,026	\$5,399	8.6%	Competition from Denmark, Belgium, and Germany	Strong demand for specialty craft beers from microbreweries and non-alcoholic beers

Source: Trade Data Monitor

### Wood Pellets

Denmark has set high targets for renewable energy use. As a result of the Danish government's policy to achieve 30 percent renewable energy use by the end of 2020, Danish wood pellet imports have increased significantly over the last 10 years. To achieve this target, the Danish power sector has been phasing out coal and several plants have converted to using wood pellets for energy production. Denmark is the EU's second largest importer of wood pellets, with imports totaling 3.8 million metric tons in 2018. The United States is, after Latvia, the second largest supplier of wood pellets to Denmark, and responsible for 19.6 percent of total Danish wood pellet imports. The import value of wood pellets supplied from the United States increased rapidly, from \$5.3 million in 2015 to over \$120 million in 2018. Denmark has one power plant which is located at the deep seaport of Studstrup and is supplied from North America. Additional information on the EU market for biofuels can be found in the Report: NL9022, EU Biofuels Annual, dated July 15, 2019, which can be accessed online at <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>.

### Wine

Denmark is a very competitive market for wine. In 2018, total Danish wine imports were valued at \$728 million, and every other bottle sold in Denmark originated from either Italy or France. Their combined exports to Denmark totaled \$346 million. While not equal in volume, wines from Spain, Germany, the United States, and Chile are also popular. Exports from the United States and Chile hold a similar place in the market, each with an import value of \$45 million (and six percent of the market). Industry sources report roughly eight percent of Danish wine imports are being re-exported, with Germany and Sweden as the main re-export destinations.

The vast majority of wine is sold via supermarkets (80 percent) with the remaining sold by liquor stores and wine boutiques. The average price range for wines is DKK 50 - DKK 90 (\$7.40 - \$13.30). Special offers are important in this price conscious market as the Danes reportedly buy 70 to 80 percent of their wine when it is on sale.

Due to the 25 percent VAT in Denmark, an estimated one quarter of all consumers purchase their wines across the border in Germany, since it has one of the lowest taxes on alcohol (and is relatively close). Wine consumption, however, is relatively flat in Denmark and faces stiff competition from beer, especially craft beers. Nevertheless, among those that do drink wine, consumers reportedly have a preference for red, with a market share of 62 percent.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> HS Code: 220300

<sup>12</sup> © Euromonitor International (2019, July)

Figure 2. A selection of U.S. wines in Copenhagen



Source: FAS/The Hague

Denmark is home to 1,500 importers of wine.<sup>13</sup> Most of these importers import wine as a part time occupation, and most import from other EU Member States.

Retailers offer several labels of U.S. wines, ranging from roughly five labels in supermarkets up to approximately 15 in wine boutiques and liquor stores. Wines sold at wine boutiques range in price from DKK 150 – DKK 350 (\$23 - \$53). In addition to wines from California, consumers will also find several Washington State wines, a number of wines from New York, and a few from Oregon, Idaho and Virginia.

### Seafood

Denmark increasingly depends on seafood imports as domestic consumption is growing and its EU Total Allowable Catch (TAC) quota is down. Denmark's seafood imports were valued at more than \$3 billion in 2018, with Norway being responsible for more than half (\$1.6 billion) of Danish seafood imports. Greenland and the Faroe Islands collectively exported \$635 million of seafood products to Denmark. In the same year, U.S. seafood exports to Denmark were valued at \$36 million (1.2 percent of total Danish seafood imports). Danish imports of U.S. seafood products were lower in 2018 compared to preceding years, but trade data suggests that U.S. exports recovered in 2019.

Imports of Alaska Pollock, destined for the Danish seafood processing industry, accounted for the majority of seafood product imports from the United States (63 percent) in 2018. Denmark also offers a market for high-value U.S. seafood like cod (14.1 percent), salmon (11.4 percent), and molluscs (7.4 percent). In 2018, the market also improved, albeit in small quantities, for fish livers.

Figure 3. Alaska Pollock Offered for Sale in Denmark



Source: FAS/The Hague

According to a report by The European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA), Danish per-capita consumption of seafood was estimated at 24.7 kg<sup>14</sup> in 2016. In terms of seafood consumption (using the most recent data available), the Danes are in ninth place in the EU, slightly above the EU average-per-capita (24.3 kg). Danish consumers are familiar with the MSC/ASC labels and are frequently buying products sold under sustainability schemes (MSC continues to be the most recognizable).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> EUMOFA (2018). *The EU Fish Market*. 2018 Edition. pp. 30



In 2010, the Danish Seafood Association (DSA) was formed. The association represents Danish fishermen, traders, and processors. Sourcing sustainable seafood is high on the DSA's agenda, and their ambition is to have all catch from Danish waters certified. The Danish supermarket chains are also demanding seafood products be certified as sustainable and labeled accordingly. This will have an impact on U.S. seafood exports to Denmark as products will be required to meet these certification requirements. For more information about the most popular program – the Marine Stewardship Council label -- please visit: <https://www.msc.org/en-us/>. The Aquaculture Stewardship Council label is considered complimentary to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label. For more information about the ASC label, please visit: <https://www.asc-aqua.org/news/latest-news/ascs-new-consumer-label-for-responsibly-farmed-fish/>

## Beer

After Germany, Belgium, and Sweden, the United States is the fourth largest supplier of foreign beer to the Danish market. Denmark's beer imports in 2018 were valued at \$63.1 million, with imports of beer representing roughly 5.4 percent of the total market.

Carlsberg is Denmark's largest brewery and has a 58.8 percent market share. However, Carlsberg also imports craft beer from U.S. Brooklyn Brewery. Royal Unibrew is Denmark's second largest brewery (22.4 percent market share), followed by Harboe, Vestfyen, and several other microbreweries (who, together, have a market share of roughly 10 percent).<sup>15</sup> Danish micro brewers fall into the super premium segment, while lagers land in the mainstream segment, followed by discount beers. Industry sources believe craft beer retail sales represent roughly ten percent of the Danish beer market.

While once the leading category of beer consumed in Denmark, per-capita consumption of lager beer has reportedly dropped by almost half (from 120 liters in 1995 to 62 liters in 2018). Danes often travel just over the border in Germany to buy beer with a much lower VAT. The current excise level per-liter of pure alcohol in Denmark is DKK 48.74 (\$7.25) which is also applied to beer that is being imported into Denmark.

There is strong interest among consumers in trying new products and varieties, which has led to increasing consumption of craft beer, or so-called premium and super premium beer. The value of the market is growing as consumers increasingly want to drink craft beer. Although much like wine, consumers are very price conscious and there is a culture of special offers. Consumers are also interested in wine and beer with labels that are conversation pieces or that have bold names or images on the label.

Figure 4. U.S. craft beer offered for sale in Copenhagen



Source: FAS/The Hague

Denmark has seen a sharp increase in the number of new players in the beer brewing sector in recent years; from ten breweries in 2005 to 206 breweries in 2018.<sup>16</sup> The number of new beers being introduced every year on the

<sup>15</sup> © Euromonitor International. (2019, July)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Danish market is quite high. For example, in 2018, Denmark witnessed the introduction of 1,825 new beers. However, 95 percent of these beers will reportedly no longer exist the following year (a testament to the Danish consumers interest in trying something new). The Danish Brewers Association estimated that a record 2,000 new labels entered the market in 2019.

Although, consumption of craft beer has declined slightly in 2018, and is likely to further decline in 2019 due to the warm summers (when Danish consumers prefer wine), craft beers that use natural ingredients, are alcohol free, or have low alcohol content are performing well in the market. Additionally, there is a growing demand for organic beer, gluten free beer, and new beer styles like hazy IPA.

In 2017, there were 41 organic beers in Denmark. In 2018, 119 new organic beers were introduced onto the Danish market, following the general trend of increasing consumer demand for organic products.

Non-alcoholic beer had the strongest growth in the market, with a total volume growth of 26 percent (to reach sales of five million liters in 2018).<sup>17</sup>

### **Tree Nuts**

The United States is the second largest supplier of tree nuts to the Danish market, after Germany. However, Germany does not grow tree nuts itself, but re-exports many imported tree nuts.

Like many other EU Member States, Denmark largely depends on the United States for its almond supply. Almond imports from the United States were valued at \$22.9 million in 2018. Actual use of U.S. almonds is expected to be much higher, however, since almonds are also imported from Germany and Sweden (the same is also true for walnuts).

Since 2016, Danish imports of U.S. walnuts have steadily increased. Whereas in 2015 virtually no walnuts were imported from the United States, three years later Danish imports of U.S. walnuts reached a total value of \$3.4 million (accounting for 12.6 percent of total Danish tree nut imports from the United States). The largest Danish importers are food manufacturers, large bakeries, and snack companies.

### **Other Products of Note**

Denmark also provides good opportunities for other products, including, but not limited to, dried fruits, spirits, and sweet potatoes.

### **Dried fruits**

In 2018, Danish imports of dried fruits from the United States were valued at \$4.1 million – of which 80 percent were raisins. Overall, the United States was responsible for 17.4 percent of Danish raisin imports. Additionally, the United States also exported nearly 200 tons of dried prunes to Denmark in 2018.

The United States began exporting cranberries<sup>18</sup> to Denmark eight years ago. Whereas in 2011 virtually no cranberries were exported from the United States, in 2018, U.S. cranberry exports to Denmark were valued \$1 million. However, industry press reports that U.S. cranberry exports to Denmark decreased in 2019, due to the rainy start of the growing season in the United States.

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<sup>17</sup> © Euromonitor International. (2019, July).

<sup>18</sup> HS Code: 200893

### **Spirits**

The United States is the seventh largest exporter of whiskies<sup>19</sup> to the Danish market, just behind France and Sweden. Danish imports of U.S. whiskies were valued at \$2.4 million in 2018, and the 2019 market increased slightly.

### **Sweet potatoes**

U.S. sweet potato<sup>20</sup> exports have rapidly increased in recent years, from \$110 million in 2014 to \$191 million in 2018. Danish imports of U.S. sweet potatoes exceeded \$800,000 in 2018 (imports of U.S. sweet potatoes were virtually non-existent in 2015). In 2018, the United States was the second largest exporter of sweet potatoes to the Danish market, following Germany. However, this data may not be comprehensive as it is likely that Denmark also imported sweet potatoes via the Netherlands and Germany, which may not be captured by U.S. trade data. Imports of U.S. sweet potatoes during the first 11 months of 2019 were nearly 50 percent higher than during the same period in 2018 (January to November).

### **FAS/The Hague Stands Ready to Assist**

FAS/The Hague maintains a list of buyers for various food products and is happy to assist U.S. exporters interested in the Danish market. For inquiries, please email us at [agthehague@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agthehague@fas.usda.gov).

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments.

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<sup>19</sup> HS Code: 2208

<sup>20</sup> HS Code 071420 – Sweet potatoes