

Food Industry

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Throughout their long history, Latvians have always been a nation of skilled farmers and livestock keepers for whom the rhythms of life were dictated by the changing seasons and daily farm chores. The country's proximity to the sea created a climate and conditions favourable for farming and motivated coastal dwellers to become excellent fishermen.

Latvia's food producers have embraced the challenge of meeting the demand for food that is fresh and natural, while taking advantage of modern technologies to ensure consistency, availability, and safety.

The food and beverage industry is the second largest industrial sector in Latvia, producing around 22 % of the total output in manufacturing in 2019. About 1260 companies and registered private merchants are active in the food processing industry.

Each year about 100 food specialists graduate from colleges and universities in Latvia, supplying our food processing companies with a highly qualified workforce.

In 2019, 19 % of all the people employed in manufacturing worked in the food industry.

Sector output in 2019 – EUR 1.9 billion.

Export proportion of total sector's turnover in 2019 – 38 %.

As shown in this graphic, Latvia's food sector has enjoyed steady and stable growth over an extended period. However, the global financial crisis was also felt in the food industry, which clearly affected industry output in 2009. More recently, in 2015, the industry was badly affected by Russia's import embargo. Today, we can see slow but steady recovery from both of these crises. While experienced companies have managed to restructure their product lines and export markets, numerous young and dynamic companies have also been founded and are supplying new, healthy products to both local and foreign markets.

Sector exports

For obvious geographic reasons, the main export markets for Latvian food-processing companies are Lithuania and Estonia. Europe is a large market that consumes many Latvian products: cheeses, butter, milk and milk powders, canned fish, fruit and berry preparations, pickles, various grains, meat products, confectionery, and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

In addition to the export markets above, Latvian products are also sold in the UAE, South Africa, US, Israel, etc. Our products can be found all over the world under our own labels, different private labels, and as ingredients in diverse foods.

In recent years, strong farmer co-ops such as *Latvijas piens* (Milk of Latvia) and *Piena ceļš* (Milky Way) have been established. Both of these co-ops own their own processing factories, where high-quality cheeses, sour cream, and curd are produced and exported all over the world.

Catalogue of food products in Latvia

www.foodlatvia.lv

Additional information

[Latvian companies in industry](#)

[Database of Latvian exporters](#)

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia: www.csb.gov.lv

Ministry of Agriculture of Latvia: www.zm.gov.lv

Latvian Federation of Food Enterprises: www.lpuf.lv

Latvian Traders Association: www.lta.lv

Food and Veterinary Service: www.pvd.gov.lv

Rural Development Service: www.lad.gov.lv

Latvian Institute of Agrarian Economics: www.lvaei.lv

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/trade/industries/food>