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1	F&B Sector Overview.....	4
1.1	Consumer Structure	6
1.2	Food Security.....	7
1.3	Import Dependency.....	7
1.4	Disruption: the Blockade.....	8
2	Qatari F&B Imports	8
2.1	Pre-Blockade Food Imports of Qatar	8
2.2	Qatari F&B Imports in 2019.....	10
2.3	Major Imports by Product	11
2.4	F&B Imports from Austria.....	12
3	Local Production & Companies	14
3.1	Food Security Initiatives by the Qatari Government	14
3.2	Fishery and Agriculture	14
3.3	Livestock	15
3.4	Poultry.....	16
3.5	Dairy Products	17
3.6	Agriculture and Aquaponics.....	17
3.7	Frozen Food.....	19
3.8	Beverage Industry	19
3.9	Juices	20
3.10	Various Industry	20
4	F&B Outlets, Stores and Wholesalers.....	23
4.1	Retail & Supermarkets	23
4.2	F&B Outlets	24
4.3	Wholesale	24
4.4	Survey.....	26
5	Regulatory Framework.....	27
5.1	Import Regulations	27
5.2	Import Procedures.....	28
5.3	Taxes & Duties	30
5.4	Halal	30
6	Trends, Business Opportunities & SWOT of the Qatari F&B Sector	32
7	Fairs and Events	33
8	APPENDIX.....	34

QATAR

The sovereign State of Qatar, ruled by the Al Thani Family is situated midway along the Western Coast of the Arabian Gulf. In terms of population and geographical size Qatar is one of the smaller Arab Emirates; it occupies about 11.437 km² with approximately 2,9 million people living and working in Qatar.

Qatar is overall a politically stable, rich country (it had the highest income per capita in the world in 2018 according to the World Bank). It is estimated that 85% of the inhabitants are expatriates, whose rights are limited. In the past few years, however, there was a significant move from Qatar to set new standards and build reforms to protect workers' rights.

The Qatari economy has proven to be resilient in the face of crisis. In 2017 the country was hit by an air, land and sea blockade by its neighbors and the small Emirate has learned its lessons and showed strong capacity to manage crisis until its end in January 2021 - which also helped them cope with the current Covid-19 crisis.

In 2018, the **Qatar Free Zone Authority (QFZA)** was established to oversee and regulate the new free zones in Qatar, offering opportunities and benefits for businesses seeking to enter the Qatari markets. According to QFZA, Qatar is on its way to compete with i.e. Dubai as one of the most attractive markets in the Middle East. Please refer to appendix (1).

Many reports reveal that Qatar's F&B segment benefits from the presence of a resilient business environment and a wealthy consumer base. The high disposable incomes of Qatari consumers along with food being the major source of entertainment are other driving factors behind F&B sectoral growth.

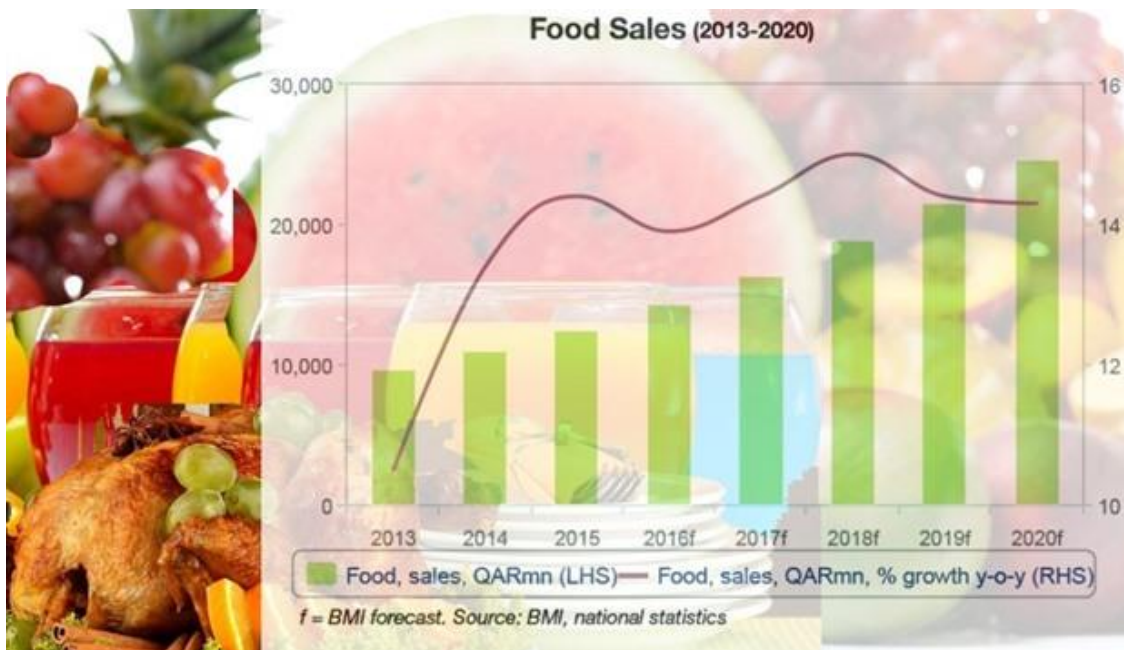
Classical entertainment options in Qatar may be limited, but there is a huge demand for food events and food festivals in the city where hundreds of food stalls are ready to offer a wide range of cuisines. Another growing market are food trucks visiting university campuses and schools offering mainly fast food products or coffee and sweets.

1 F&B Sector Overview

The food and beverage sector (F&B) in the GCC is rapidly developing, due to consumers' changing tastes, a growing population, higher per capita income, a developing tourism market, an increasing penetration of organized retail and the government push for healthier diets. While governments in the GCC look to increase local production and investments abroad to increase food security, the Gulf-countries will continue to rely on European and American quality products. Due to limited arable land, hot and arid climate as well as freshwater shortages, the countries will remain heavily dependent on imports.

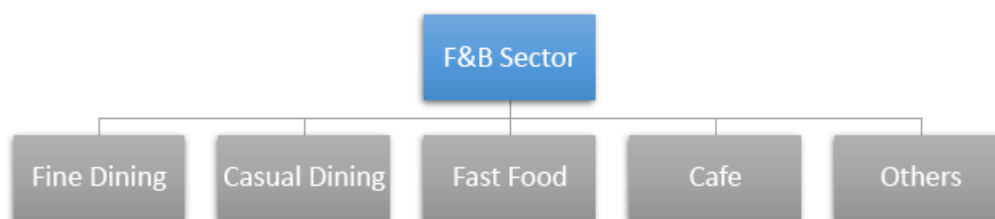
Qatar has without a doubt one of the fastest growing economies in the Middle East. The country's economy is mainly driven by the exploitation of natural gas and petroleum resources. The country owns about 12% of the world's proven reserves of natural gas, the third largest reserves in the world. With its National Vision 2030 Qatar is determined to make use of its resources to diversify and assure its future beyond being merely a provider of fuel.

The F&B sector of Qatar has thrived over the years due to the cultural diversity of the country's population as well as the growth in tourism that has given rise to the demand in diversified and premium products. Thus, these changes offer significant business opportunities for Austrian exporters. The high disposable income of Qatari consumers along with food being the major source of entertainment are other driving factors behind F&B sectoral growth.



The F&B sector of Qatar can be divided into five segments with each segment catering to a different target market across nationalities & income groups.

The market segments are as follows:

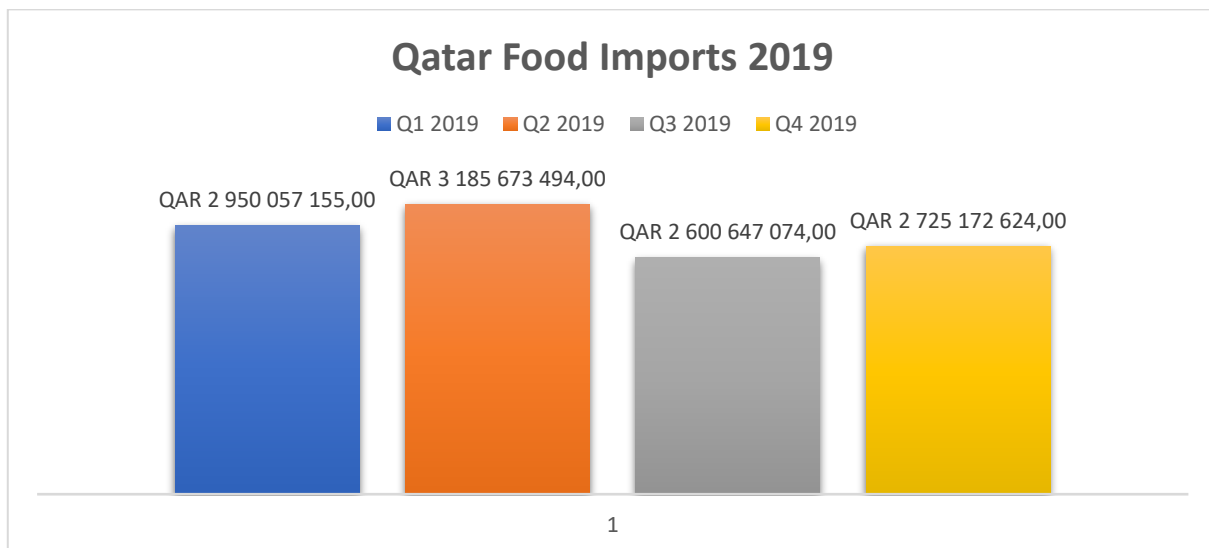


According to BMI research, Qatar will experience sustained growth in its F&B sector, especially through premiumisation, even though its consumer outlook for the country has deteriorated recently. Nonetheless, the small consumer base will limit the attractiveness of the Qatari market for F&B manufacturers, as well as mass grocery retailers.

Hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2022 is expected to be a major boost for the sector. According to the latest sector analysis by the Middle East Credit Rating Agency (MERatings) this major sports event is expected to generate additional revenue of USD 1,77bn (QR6.43bn) in the F&B sector.

The trend of major sports events being a boost for the F&B sector will continue even after 2022, as Qatar announced its intention to host the Asian Cup 2027 and has recently won the bid (against Saudi Arabia) to host the Asian Games in 2030.

According to [the Qatari Ministry of Statistics](#), in 2019, the country imported around USD 3.157bn worth of F&B products. Some studies conclude that – despite the current initiatives to reduce the country import dependency – around 90% of the needed goods are sourced outside of Qatar.



1.1 Consumer Structure

According to official statistics, Qatar has a population of 2,9 million inhabitants. A minority of 15% are considered as Qatari nationals, while other Arabs represent 12,3%. A significant percentage of 68,3% represent other Asian nationalities, some 40,8% are blue collar workers. The largest Asian community are Indians (650.000 inhabitants), representing 35,2% of all Asians and 23,1% of Qatar's total population. The rest of the represented groups are Africans (5,1%), Western expatriates (European, North American and Oceanian with a percentage of approximately 3%) and Central and South American expatriates (0,1%). Qatar population's compound annual growth rate (CAGR) was higher than the average within the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council countries) between 2010 and 2014 (8,1% vs. 3,2%), reflecting the rapid increase of the population and explaining its high expatriate proportion.¹

Origin	Percentage
Qataris	11,1%
Other Arabs	12,3%
Other Asians	68,3% (40,8% of them; 27,9% of total - blue collar workers)
Africans	5,1%
Western (European, North American and Oceanian)	3%
Central and South American	0,1%

Nonetheless, the IMF forecasts the growth of Qatar's population to remain relatively stable over the next five years – once the economic impact of the pandemic has been overcome. One reason for this is the lower oil price that has dominated in recent years, leading to a number of job cuts and reductions in benefits for expatriates. These have led, in turn, to a change in the structure of this segment of the population, as the new expatriate arrivals tend to feature a slightly lower purchasing power, due to their intention of saving money rather than spending.

Qatari citizens amount to the highest average income in the world (according to purchase power parity per-capita GDP) since 1998. In 2019, the GDP/head was USD 91.000. Consequently, Qatar's more residents

¹ GCC Retail Sector: Firing on All Cylinders, Ardents Advisory and Accounting, p. 33

affluent spend more on luxury goods and experiences than those from the rest of the GCC countries. This is one of the factors leading to the recent surge of the country's retail sector compared to its neighboring countries. In addition, the great proportion of expatriates living in the country (88.9%) modifies the way that the sector is developed, giving a greater variety to the consumer demand. This is the case, for example, in the food sector, as the expatriates' preferences increase the demand for processed foods, fast foods and dining out options. The sector then subsequently adapts to the satisfaction of these demands.

The Qatari consumer base is characterized by high income, young & urban-based and a growing expatriate population. In the long run, rising income translates into higher demand for healthy eating options & premium goods. This will encourage consumptions of certain market segments such as Organic/Vegan/Gluten free Food, as well as Diet Food etc. Rising health consciousness in the F&B sector is expected to increase opportunities for food and drink producers that can introduce healthy options in Qatar. The demand for organic food is steadily increasing in the country with a shift to natural ingredients and functional drinks for hydration, as the food-processing industry becomes more segmented. The development of new malls & hotels would significantly contribute to the opening of new F&B outlets. Approximately 16 new malls and two real estate developments in Lusail and Msheireb are scheduled to commence operations within the next few years giving rise to an estimated 1,870 new F&B outlets.

1.2 Food Security

Contrary to most countries in the GCC region, Qatar's strategy encourages local production by boosting crop yields through massive investments and converting semi desert spaces into arable land. The Qatar National Food Security Program (QNFSPP) was launched in 2011. The program aims at developing strategies to meet about 60% of its food needs through domestic production. By modernizing agricultural practices, implementing the latest technologies, subsidies to attract private investors and increasing the dedicated water reserves for agriculture. Qatar has made significant progress in domestic agricultural production. About 25% of vegetables consumed in Qatar are now produced locally. Using its revenue from the oil and gas exports, Qatar is able to finance its expensive ambitions, given the high cost of water desalination and making land cultivable by using fertilizers.^{2 3}

The annual Global Food Security Index (GFSI) 2019 published by The Economist Intelligence Unit, has revealed Qatar to be the number one nation for food security among 15 Middle Eastern and North African countries. See: Qatar ranked first in the Arab World in indicators of achieving food security.⁴

In January 2020 the Ministry of Municipality and Environment published the New Qatar National Food Security Strategy 2018-2023⁵.

1.3 Import Dependency

Despite efforts to increase domestic agricultural and livestock production, Qatar will remain heavily dependent on food imports. For example, the growing dairy industry does not automatically mean that the country will be able to reduce its dependence on food imports, since animal feed still must be imported. Driven by abundance over the last decade, the local consumer demands a variety of food and beverage options that are not produced locally.

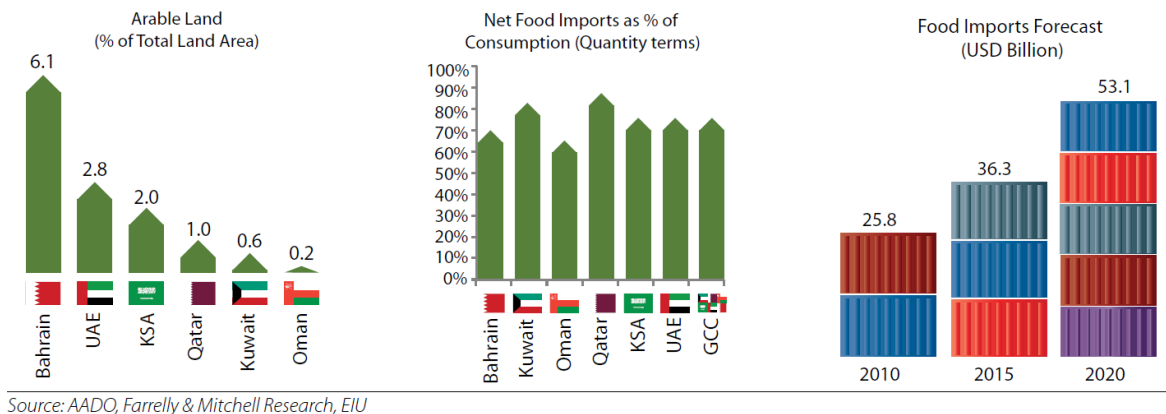
²<https://portal.www.gov.qa/wps/portal/topics/Environment+and+Agriculture/nationalfoodsecurityprogram>

³ Food Security Strategy in Qatar: <https://www.ecomena.org/food-security-qatar/>

⁴ Qatar on right track for national food security: <https://m.gulf-times.com/story/626400/Qatar-on-right-track-for-national-food-security>

⁵ <http://www.mme.gov.qa/pdocs/cview?siteID=2&docID=19772&year=2020>

We do not expect the main strategies to reduce the dependency of food imports, namely stockpiling, investing in food-producing companies, and acquiring foreign land to have a significant impact on the business opportunities for Austrian exporters. Those strategies mainly aim at increasing food security and satisfying the general demand for basic foodstuff.



1.4 Disruption: the Blockade

According to a report by Emerge 85 (2018), prior to the blockade, about 25% of the total value of agricultural products and 60% of dairy products imported by Qatar came from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. About 80% of Qatar's food imports passed through a neighboring country, with 40% passing via the land border (Saudi Arabia). After Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt cut all diplomatic and economic relations with Qatar in June 2017, the country lost its main suppliers: the land border was closed, the usage of the airspace was restricted, Qatari and Qatar-bound vessels were not allowed to dock at the regions shipping-lane-hub Jebel Ali (Dubai) anymore.

As a result, Qatar's Food strategy started to focus on new suppliers and trading routes (especially Turkey and Iran), offering significant business opportunities for Austrian exporters – especially in areas that were previously covered by the blockading countries and products for which a local production is not feasible.⁶ Despite the lifting of the blockade in January 2021, many of the newly found supply routes seem to stay and it remains to be seen if the pre-blockade supply chains get fully reactivated again, or not.

2 Qatari F&B Imports

2.1 Pre-Blockade Food Imports of Qatar

The Middle East Institute⁷ research insight has analyzed the composition of the Qatari imports over the last 20 years before and shown that significant parts of the country's F&B needs were sourced in the neighboring

⁶ Impact of blockade pales over Qatar's growth: <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/657047/Impact-of-blockade-pales-over-Qatar-s-growth>

How Qatar's Food System Has Adapted to the Blockade: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/how-qatar-s-food-system-has-adapted-blockade>

Two years on, how has Qatar adapted to the blockade: <https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/news/two-years-how-has-qatar-adapted-blockade>

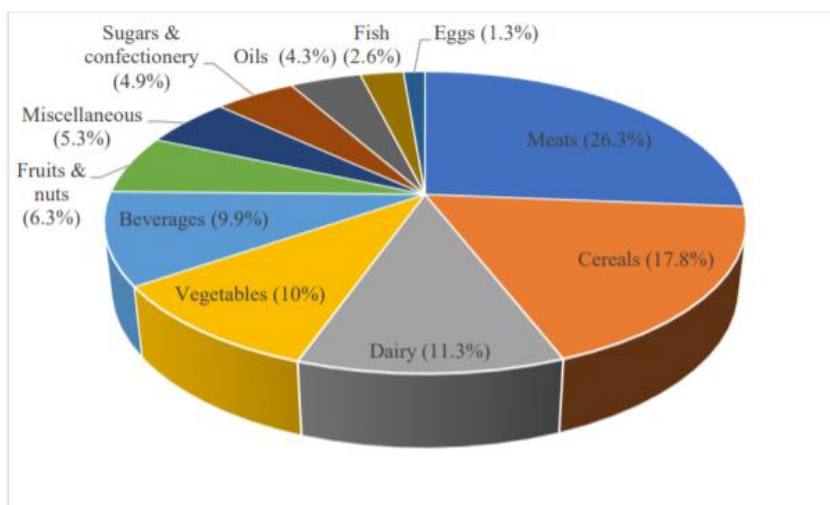
⁷ Hela Miniaoui, Patrick Irungu & Simeon Kaitibie (2018): Middle East Institute - Contemporary issues in Qatar's food security

GCC Countries. Saudi Arabia and the UAE alone accounted for 27,5 % of the total food imports, while 40 % of the imports came overland via the Saudi border.

The following table demonstrates the huge diversity of food sources for Qatar during the survey period of 1998-2017. Notably, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) rank among the most important sources of poultry, milk, onions, and potatoes (Saudi Arabia), and goat and barley (UAE).

Food category	Commodity	Import value within food category (%)	Main sources
Meats	Poultry	53.6	Brazil, Saudi Arabia, USA
	Sheep	23.5	Australia, India, New Zealand
	Beef	14.1	Australia, India, USA
	Goat	4.9	Australia, India, UAE
Cereals	Rice	64.2	India, Pakistan, Thailand
	Wheat	17.8	Australia, Russia, Canada
	Barley	10.3	Ukraine, Australia, UAE
	Corn	2.8	Argentina, Brazil, India
Dairy	Milk	50.8	Saudi Arabia, Netherlands, Germany
	Cheese	23.4	Saudi Arabia, France, Egypt
	Yoghurt	16.0	Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey
	Butter	5.0	Denmark, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia
	Cream	2.3	United Kingdom, Brazil, Denmark
Vegetables	Leeks	15.6	India, Netherlands, Lebanon
	Parsley	13.0	India, Netherlands, Lebanon
	Onions	9.6	India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia
	Potatoes	9.5	Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon
	Tomatoes	8.7	Jordan, Syria, Morocco

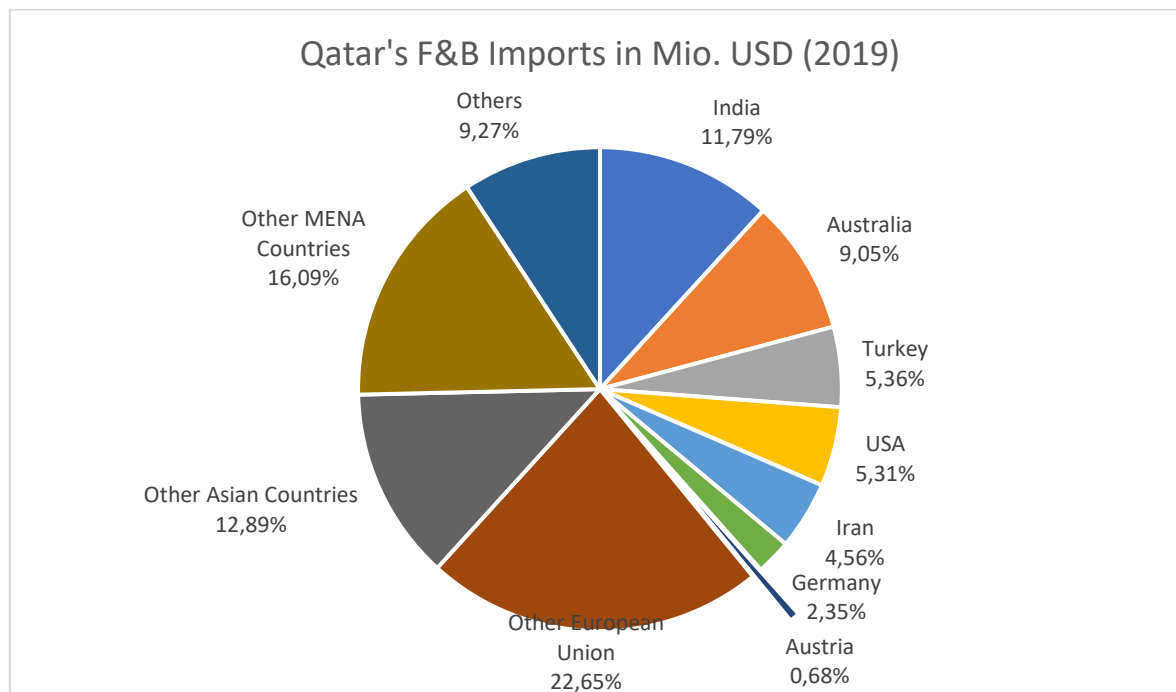
Food Imports of Qatar 1998-2017 (Source: Middle East Institute 2018)



Composition of Qatari Imports 1998-2017 Source: Middle East Institute (2018)

2.2 Qatari F&B Imports in 2019

While Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt were among the major suppliers of F&B for Qatar, the political and economic blockade from 2017 - 2021 forced Qatar to switch to other suppliers. The below graph shows the biggest suppliers of F&B products of Qatar. Turkey and Iran have moved up among the top-5 partner-countries, while the exports of the former blockading countries significantly decreased.



Source: Ministry of Statistics – State of Qatar (2019)

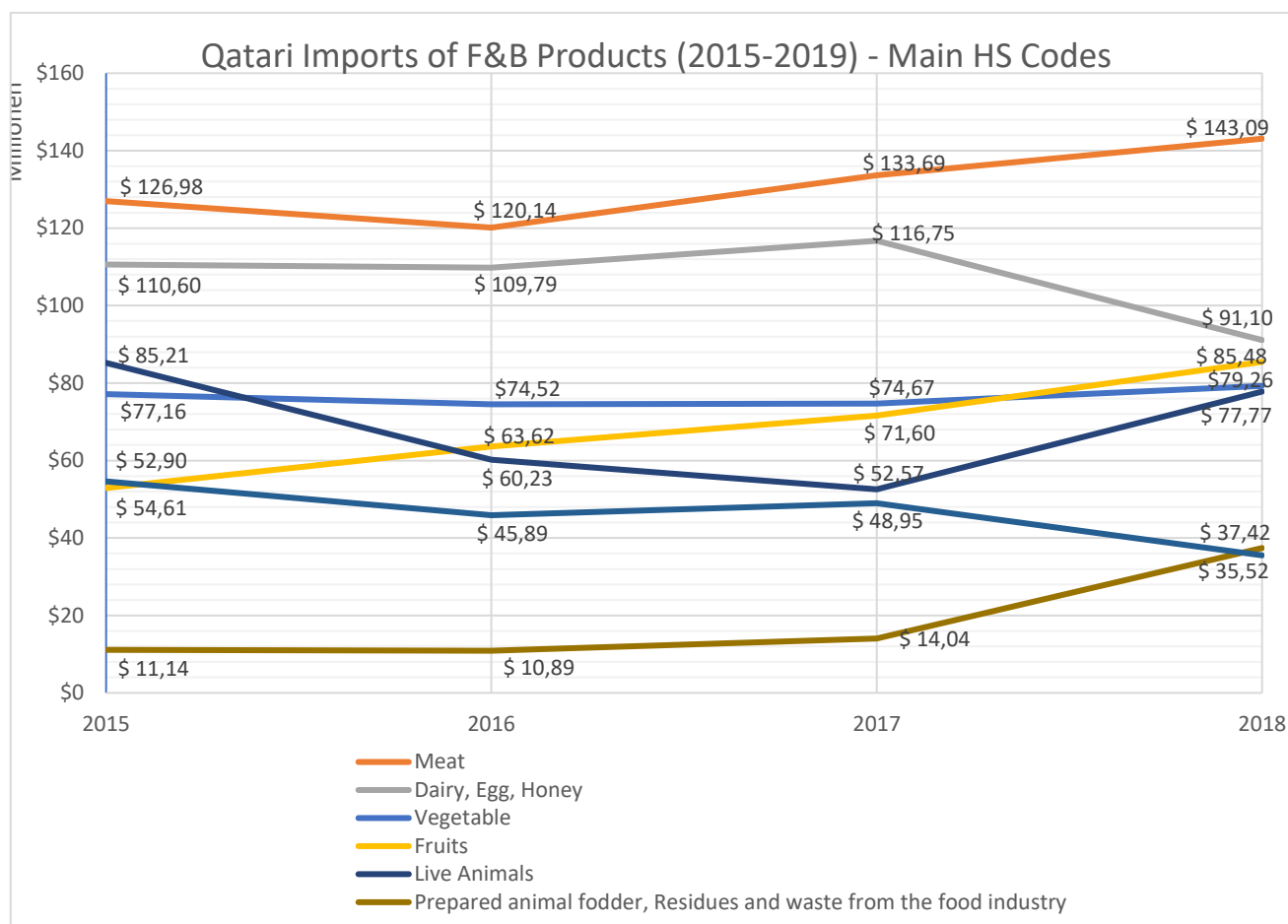
Country	Sum of Value QR	Sum of Value USD	Ranking	Group
India	QAR 130 681 037,30	\$358 030 239,5	1	India
Australia	QAR 1 160 406 691,10	\$317 919 641,48	2	Australia
Turkey	QAR 569 352 577,00	\$155 352 577,40	3	Turkey
USA	QAR 465 448 781,69	\$127 520 213,76	4	USA
Iran	QAR 401 8908 31	\$110 107 7076,5	5	Iran
Germany	QAR 95 7020 80,10	\$26 219 747,97	15	Germany
Austria	QAR 20 610 098.60	\$5 646 602.36		Austria
Other European Union	QAR 2 040 706 298.80	\$559 097 613,64		EU
Other Asian Countries	QAR 1 661 416 589,17	\$456 433 128,89	N/A	Asia
Other MENA Countries	QAR 1 192 932 535,00	\$326 830 831,51		Arab Region
Others	QAR 1 195 036 907,87	\$328 306 842,82	N/A	Others

Source: Ministry of Planning and Statistics – State of Qatar 2019

The data from the Qatari Ministry of Planning and Statistics shows that approximately 1/4 of all F&B imports are coming from members of the European Union.

The European Union group is the most important trade partner of Qatar as the relative share ratio of the Qatari imports from this group holds the first position among the country's export from all other economic blocs. Qatari exports from North America, most of which come from the United States of America, take the fourth place in terms of their relative ratio.

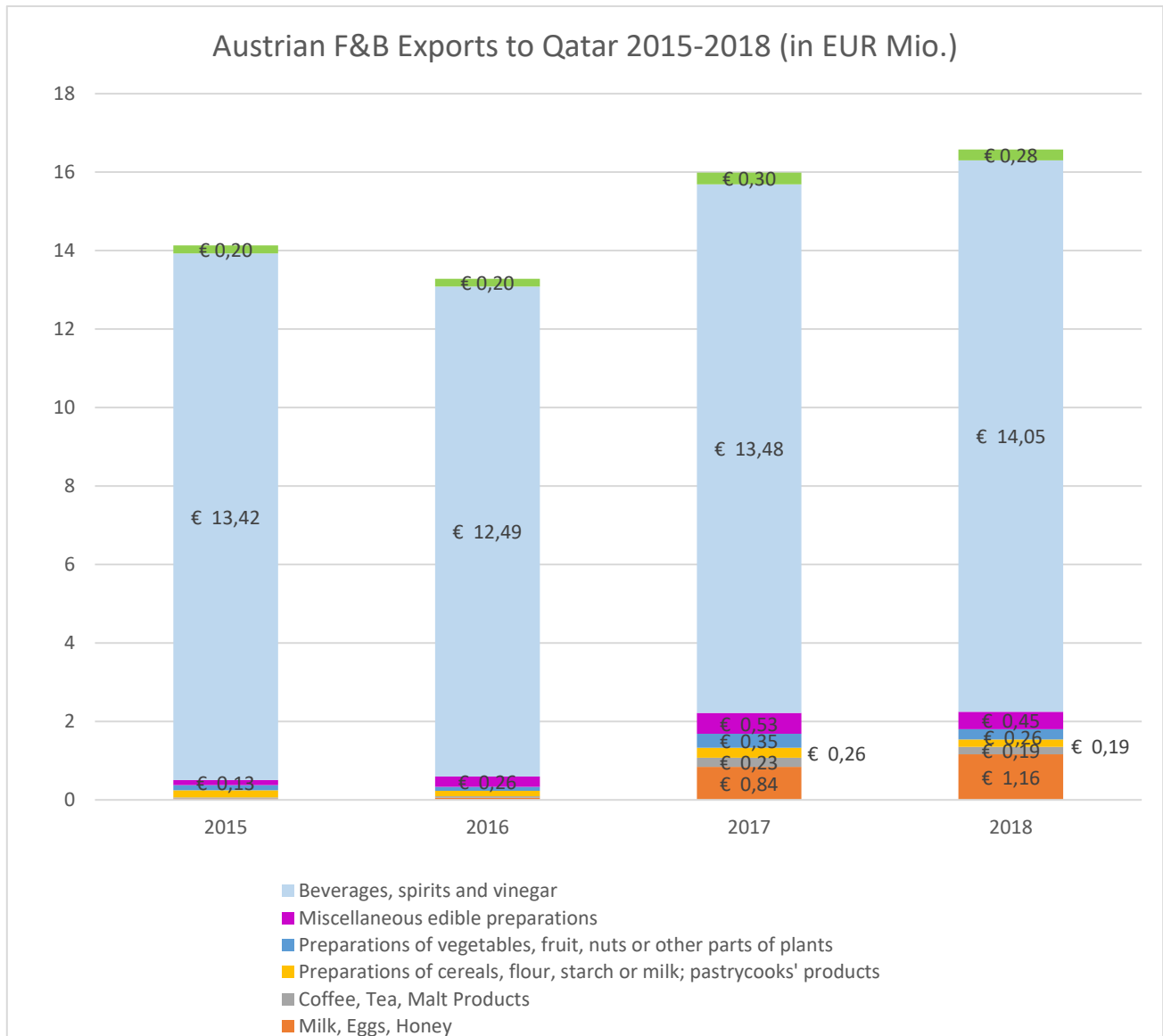
2.3 Major Imports by Product



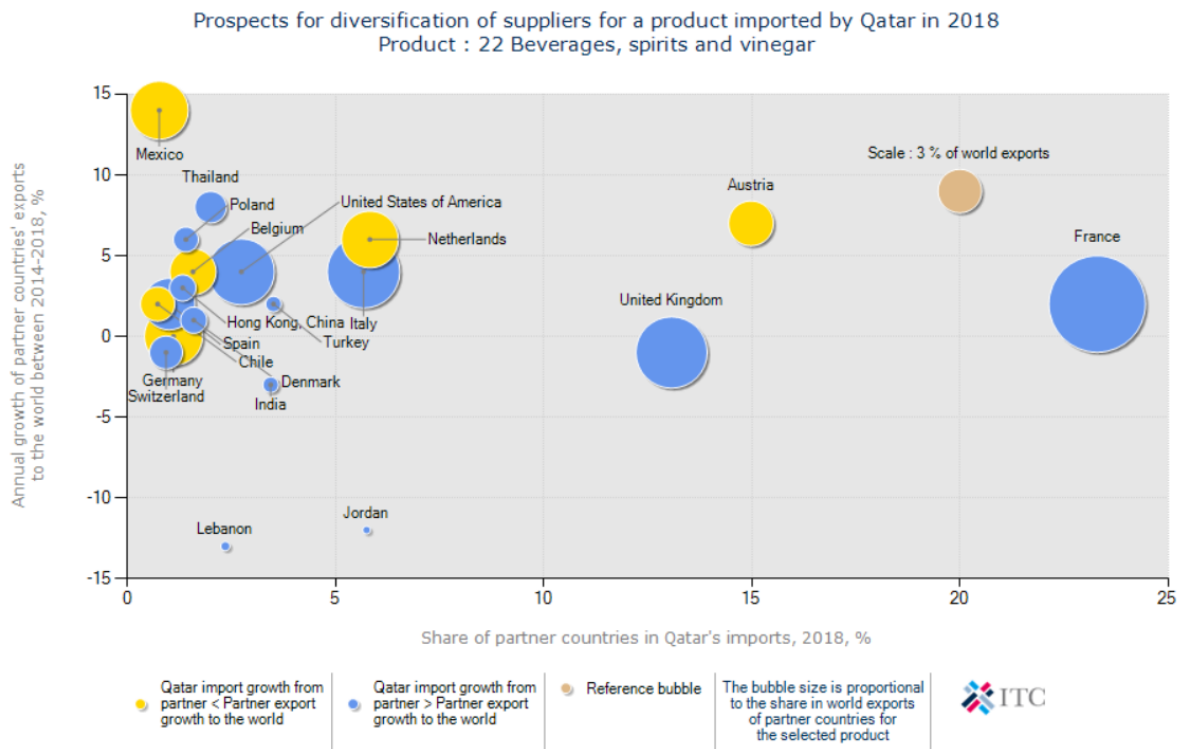
Data Source: Ministry of Planning and Statistics (2019)

2.4 F&B Imports from Austria

Austrian F&B enjoy a solid demand in Qatar. Even though Austria ranks only 34th as a supplier of the Qatari market, the Austrian suppliers are well known among the demanding clientele –be it expats or Qatari nationals. With over EUR 14 Mio. in beverage exports, Austria is one of the market leaders in this field. Austrian Energy Drinks and organic juices are well positioned in all points of sale of the country.



In 2018 Austria exported more than EUR 14 Mio. worth of beverages & soft drinks (water, flavored water) to Qatar, making the country the second biggest supplier of those products. France held a market share of approx. 23%, Austria of 15% and the UK around 13%. France's dominance can be explained by the product composition: approx. 60% of Frances beverage exports to Qatar consist of wine (alcoholic) which hold a high value per liter ratio. In 2019 and 2020, the Austrian beverage exports have dropped sharply which is a) due to a change in the bottling country for a large energy drink producer, and b) in 2020 a result of the pandemic.



Source: www.trademap.org

Austria also exports milk products (EUR 1,3 Mio. in 2020), various food preparations (EUR 600 Tsd. in 2020) juices, jams and marmalade (EUR 387 Tsd. in 2020), pastries and waffles (EUR 225 Tsd. in 2019; EUR 63 Tsd. in 2020) as well as coffee (EUR 227 Tsd. in 2019; EUR 68 Tsd. in 2020) to Qatar.

3 Local Production & Companies

Qatar used to import more than 90 percent of its food, and continuously launching several initiatives and projects that aim at increasing local production and achieving self-efficiency in the basic produces.







As a result of the 2017-blockade, the Qatari government strongly supported any initiative that could have a beneficial effect on the self-sustainability of the country. By granting incentives for new projects and by facilitating the process of establishing new business, local producers were able to quickly expand their market share and were able to achieve a certain degree of self-sustainability.

3.1 Food Security Initiatives by the Qatari Government

Since 2017, significant progress has been witnessed in food production, as, according to the official statistics, local production of agricultural, fish, animal, and dairy products has jumped by 400 percent since 2017 and annual fresh food trade volume has reached QAR 10 billion (USD 2,7 bn).

Plans by the Ministry of Municipality and Environment (MME) include the increase respectively the livestock production to 30% as well as the fish production to 65% of the local demand by 2022.

According to official statements, Qatar has achieved self-sufficiency in the production of chicken and eggs as well as dairy products, while they presented during the last Qatar International Agricultural Exhibition the new Strategic Food Security Projects 2019-2023 as following:

2019 PRODUCTION		TARGET BY 2023
	FISH 74%	➔ 90%
	VEGETABLES 24%	➔ 70%
	RED MEAT 18%	➔ 30%
	TABLE EGGS 28%	➔ 70%
	SHRIMP 0%	➔ 100%
	GREEN FODDER 56%	➔ 63%

Source: Ministry of Municipality and Environment

3.2 Fishery and Agriculture

Qatar has a relatively short coastline of 563 km and coastal waters are characterized by extreme meteorological and hydrological conditions with temperatures varying from 19°C to 32°C, high evaporation rates and high salinities. Qatar waters are relatively poor in marine resources. Total capture production increased from 4,400 ton in 1999 to currently about 15,000 tons, which covers 74% of the domestic demand.

The most common catch are emperor fishes (3,900 ton in 2013), followed by narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and groupers, which are a highly valuable but an overexploited resource.

The ministry paid great attention to fish farming and set up the Water Research Center in Ras Matbakh as a basic requirement for the establishment of small and medium enterprises for aquaculture in the coming years. Qatar is likely to become self-sufficient in fish supply within five years and the government is currently working on floating cage fish farming and shrimp farm construction projects.

The Ministry of Municipality and Environment aquaculture department is planning to license six projects to meet its fish production gap of 600 tonnes per year. Currently the fish requirement in Qatar reaches 46000 tonnes annually while current production stands at 40000 tonnes. Qatar is producing 1000 tonnes of fresh water fish annually and bounding to increase production in the near future with the use of modern technology to meet the growing demand. Below are some active farms

Al Qamra Fishery and Wealth

The Ministry of Municipality and Environment together with Al Qamra Holding Group-Samakna, established in 2017 a fish farming project involving floating cages in the seas, to produce 6,000 tons of fish annually.

The Project is set in a marine water area of 270 hectares and a coastal area of Al Arish area of 111 hectares for prawn farming to produce at least 1,000 tons of marine shrimp annually.

Layan Farms

Layan Farms provide the local market with organic sea products, such as shrimp and tilapia and bass fish. Fish farming plays a purifying and nourishing role in the integrated production cycle at Layan farms. Their products are not limited to type only, but extends to a variety of saltwater and freshwater fish and crustaceans.

Ocean Fish

Ocean Fish is a seafood producer, supplying fresh superior smoked salmon produced in Qatar. Ocean fish is the first smoked salmon producer in Qatar and the largest in the Middle East with a facility of over 4000m². The salmon is supplied by farms from north of Norway and reached Qatar within 48 hours.

3.3 Livestock

Qatar livestock industry increased extensively since 2017, and as per the last declaration of the Ministry of Municipality and Environment (MME) in March 2019, the total number of livestock in Qatar is 1,589,000 heads, of which 1mn are sheep and 400,000 goats, while the rest are distributed among other varieties.

Qatari legislation for livestock is the standards and guidelines of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, WHO, GSO and World Organization for Animal Health—the same standards that Europe and the US use to construct their regulations. Animal products in Qatar must also adhere to the Islamic rules of slaughter outlined by the Gulf Standards Organization (GSO).

Widam Food Company

Widam Food Company is the largest supplier of livestock in Qatar and the most important provider of fresh, chilled and frozen meats imported from around the world. It has an automated butchery and local slaughterhouses operating in line with health standards and requirements.

Widam contributes extensively to Qatar's food requirements and imports the largest quantities of cattle and meats to the country – 1.7 million heads of Australian sheep and other items of meats from India, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia as well as cows from Australia, Somalia, and Ethiopia. The company has a fleet of refrigerated trucks and vehicles as well as fully equipped carriers with latest systems.

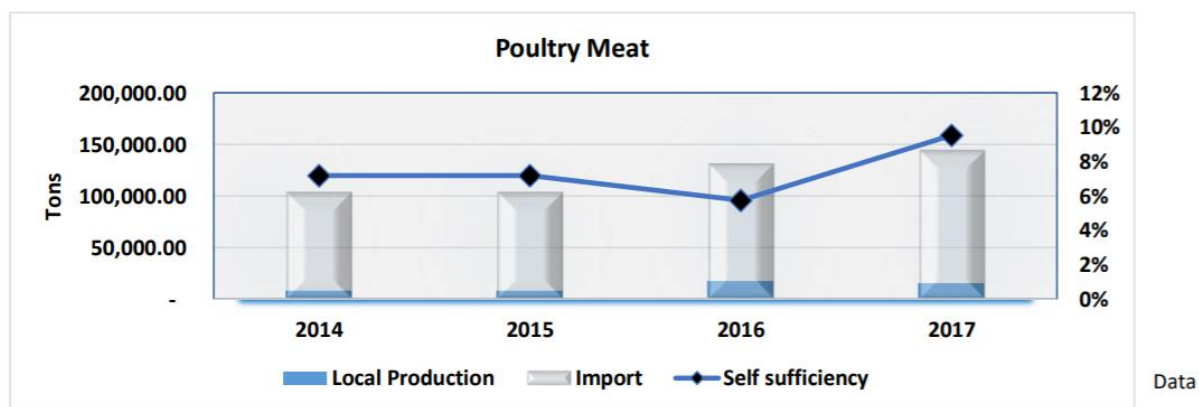
Qatar Company for Meat and Livestock Trading

Ownership and operation of slaughterhouses and cattle farms; distribution of livestock, poultry, organic fertilizers and animal skin; production of animal feed and packed and frozen meat.

3.4 Poultry

Qatar has achieved self-sufficiency in the production of chicken and eggs and efforts are being made to be self-sufficient in dairy products.

In 2018, production of poultry meat for Qatar was 10,004 tons. Production of poultry meat of Qatar increased from 100 tons in 1969 to 10,004 tons in 2018 growing at an average annual rate of 11.88%.



Source: (MDPS,Agriculture, 2013-2017)

Poultry Farming

Company	Telephone	Website / Email	Production
Mazzraty	+974 8004499	www.mazzraty.com info@mazzraty.com	Fresh chicken
Arab Qatari Poultry Farm	+974 44729042	www.aqpoultry.com.qa info@aqpoultry.com.qa	Fresh/frozen and minced chicken; eggs;

Upcoming Project: Al Rayan Poultry farm

Al Rayan Poultry, a subsidiary of Dar Al Rayan Investment Company, plans to introduce the largest exclusive integrated poultry farm in the country. The official investment volume for the project is QR 1.6bn (USD 440 Mio.). The poultry farm is expected to span over an area of 15 million square meters in Al Dawoodiyah area. Al Rayan Poultry Farm will have a production capacity of 70,000 tons of broiler meat and 250 million eggs per year.

Alshamal Company for Poultry Production

The North Farms Company established in 2014 and started working on the production of broiler chickens and table eggs. Recently the company reached a production capacity equal to 15.000 chickens daily, the company is currently increasing the number of chicken's houses to reach the production capacity to 50.000 chickens a day. Additionally Al-Shamal Company started to work on fisheries projects as the company prepared the ponds for fish breeding.

Athba for Trade in Meat and Poultry

Athba farms for fresh and frozen poultry in Qatar – North City, Athba farms produce broiler chickens with 100% plant nutrition without any hormones or antibiotics.

The production capacity of 25.000 per day and planning to raise the production capacity to 45.000 chickens per day by the end of 2019.

Brahama Poultry Farm

Brahama Poultry Farms is one of ACOLID Group (Arab company for livestock development) in partnership with Hassad food, established in 1985 as a major poultry product supplier for the Qatari market. It produces white meat, eggs as well as fodder for productive processes.

Farm for chicken and quail paired

The largest and oldest quail farms in Qatar covering more than 60% of the needs of the Qatari market of fresh and frozen quail.

For further information, please visit <https://www.meratings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Qatar-Poultry-Market-2019.pdf>

3.5 Dairy Products

Qatar used to import nearly 98 percent of its dairy products before June 2017, while in just 20 months Qatar reached self-sufficiency of fresh dairy.

Company	Tel	Website & Email	Products
 Baladna Farm	+974 40358888	www.baladna.com info@baladna.com	Fresh Milk-Yoghurt- Cheese- Labneh- Cream- Dessert- Ghee- Milk -Juice
 Dandy Company Limited	+974 44422980	www.dandy.qa info@dandy.qa	Juices – Dairy - Ice Cream
 Al Rawdah Dairy Farm	+974 44880358	www.almahadairy.com info@almahadairy.com	Milk- Flavoured Milk – Laban - Yoghurts- Juices
 Ghadeer Dairy	+974 44601129	www.ghadeerdairy.com ghadeer@qatar.net.qa	Milk – Juice- Laban- Yoghurt

3.6 Agriculture and Aquaponics

Due to climatic and geographical conditions, Qatar`s agriculture industry is very small compared to other GCC countries i.e Saudi Arabia and UAE. Qatar has been investing in large areas of farmland overseas to ensure access to food supplies. The agricultural arm of Qatar`s sovereign wealth fund, Hassad Food, has bought land in Sudan and Australia, and has announced plans to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on agricultural projects in countries including Kenya, Brazil, Argentina, Turkey and the Ukraine. Despite the country`s arid climate and desert landscape, modern farming techniques have enabled the country to produce agricultural products commercially.

Qatar`s agriculture industry represents only 0,18% of the GDP, and only 6% (670 km³) of the land in Qatar is arable or suitable for use as pastureland, these less than 100km³ are currently used for farming. Crops

include mostly date palms, while vegetable such as carrots, potatoes, onions and fodder beets are also some of the most important crops produced by Qatari farms.

Qatar relies heavily on desalination, which is a costly and energy consuming process of removing salt and minerals from seawater. Recycled water and treated sewage are mainly used for irrigation in the farming industry.

Qatar witnessed increasing vegetable yields using hydroponic farming methods. The Agrico opened Hydroponic Trial and Demonstration Centre which achieved a six-time **higher yield** of tomatoes in Qatar. The Agrico, Qafco, and Yara International opened Hydroponic Trial and Demonstration Centre in February 2019. The main aim of the center was to develop the best horticulture practice and to test local greenhouse technologies. However, the center succeeded in finding a sustainable crop management system in line with the Qatari climate. Further, the hydroponic technique of crop cultivation would save local water resources. Besides, it will prevent the environment from the negative effects of vegetable production.

Greenhouse farming, used by local farms such as Al Mustafawi Organic and Al Safwa, is another efficient method of growing crops that improves yields, reduces environmental impact, and controls agricultural pests such as birds, insects and rodents.

Some of the cultivating farms in Qatar are:

AGRICO Development

AGRICO is a private local Qatari Agricultural Development Company that was founded on the principle of sustainable long-term agricultural production with an eye on the National target of achieving food security. AGRICO has a sophisticated Air-conditioned Hydroponic facility. Able to harvest daily and distribute locally within 24 hours.

Eden Farm

The farm contributes to the national strategy for food security by marketing its products in the local market. It produces all kinds of vegetables, including tomatoes, cucumbers, etc., such as lettuce, parsley and mint.

Oryx Mushrooms is a subsidiary of Eden Farm; the farm produces three types of white mushrooms, brown and portabella. They also produce dates and honey.

Global Farm for Agricultural Supplies

GLOBAL FARM (GF) started running many activities such as open field cultivation, greenhouse cultivation and construction, farm products marketing and so many more, and in the process has become one of Qatar`s top technical farms in hydroponic technology.

GLOBAL FARM has accomplished more than 1,000 med-tech greenhouses for its customers, besides offering agricultural consultations and spreading the culture of agriculture as an inseparable part of the GF.

Paramount Agricole

Paramount Agricole is engaged in mushrooms, vegetables, animal farming and other side products like mung beans sprouts, tofu, etc. Paramount Agricole emphasizes on producing healthy products and use of up-to-date scientific approaches such as biological systems and certified as "Organic Mushroom Farm" (GCC/European Standards) and "Premium Quality Vegetables Farm" by Ministry of Agriculture of the State of Qatar.

Large Stakeholder & Investors

Al Sulaiteen Agricultural and Industrial Complex (SAIC):

One of the prototype farms, the Al Sulaiteen Agricultural and Industrial Complex (SAIC), is located in the desert a short drive from Qatar`s capital Doha. SAIC, which started vegetable production in 2001, is growing tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants and other vegetables through a combination of greenhouses, hydroponic systems and regular farming. It supplies supermarkets and hotels.

Since Qatar's aquifers are already severely depleted, the QNFSP plans to obtain agricultural water from seawater desalination using solar parks, and only keep aquifers as strategic water reserves. The total costs for the QNFSP had not yet been calculated, but it is hoped that private sector involvement will make the program efficient and responsive to consumer demand.

NAAAS for Agriculture Investment is a Qatari company, specialized in Agriculture Investment and unparalleled opportunities of investment in various fields of agriculture, livestock and fisheries through joint ventures. The company committed to provide optimal agricultural solutions, consultations & technical support to entrepreneurs and companies in the State of Qatar, aimed at demonstrating effective cooperation in various fields worldwide.

3.7 Frozen Food

Qatar Frozen Food Market size will witness rapid growth during 2020-2026. Busy work life has increased the demand for ready to eat food products, which would propel the demand for frozen food products in the country. Additionally, the time and efforts involved in the preparation of ready to eat are comparatively low which is another key factor driving the growth of such products during the forecast period.

Qatar Meat Production Company

Qatar Meat Production Company has Meat Processing facility operating with a state-of-the-art technology within the Middle East.

The facility occupies an area of 6000 Square Meters with more than 2000 Square Meters of refrigerated storage space; enables them to have a start-up capacity of over 3000 Tons annually, covering respective ranges:

- Frozen Processed Meat: (beef and chicken burgers, kababs, meat balls, hotdogs, frankfurter and sausages)
- Frozen Range: chicken fillet, strips, tenders, nuggets and popcorn.
- Chilled Processed Meat: beef and chicken mortadella, salami, pastrami and smoked turkey.

National Food Company (ZAD Holding)

National Food Company is in the business of further processed frozen food category and has been active in the market for more than two decades. Their brand "Al Arabia" has an extensive range of frozen food products such as nuggets, burgers, kebabs, samosas, green vegetables.

3.8 Beverage Industry

Al Kawther Water Treatment W.L.L (QATARAT)

Al-Kawther Water Treatment W.L.L was established on 1999 as a branch of Al-Waleed Trading- International, that owned by Mr. Waleed Bin Fahad Al-Mana. It is a 100% local national company.

Conserved Foodstuffs Distributing Company (Khazan Qatar) L.L.C

Conserved Foodstuffs Distributing Co. (Khazan Qatar) L.L.C. was established in early 2005. The company started to produce its own brand "Aqua Gulf" Pure Bottled Drinking Water and later added one more production facility to produce "Dana" Pure Mineral Drinking Water. The company has successfully established itself as one of the leading beverage manufacturers, distributors, and exporters in the State of Qatar. Products are Dana Pure Drinking Water, Aqua Gulf Pure Drinking Water and KITCO Chips and Snacks.

Gulf Water Plant

Gulf Water Plant LLC" Qatar based mineral water company; the company is engaged in manufacturing, selling & marketing of its brands "Jouf" Drinking Water. The unit has procured & installed the best technology available in the global market to achieve sustainable growth and self-sufficiency of local pure mineral water.

Lusail Factory for Mineral Water

Alkalive is the first factory to produce Alkaline water in the state of Qatar, ISO 22000 certified. The production started in 2017 with 100% Qatari investments and Italian technology, it is the first of its kind to produce alkaline water in Qatar, Alka water process does not contain any use of toxins materials or chemicals.

United Food Stuff Factory

United Food Stuff Factory – UFSF is a Qatari Company established in 2012 with a vision of becoming a leader in the F&B industry. Located in industrial area Doha, Qatar, the plant began commercial operations and distribution of the water brand Sidra for the local market and across the region.

West Bay Ice & Water Factory

West Bay ice & water was established in 2012 as one of the earliest factories specialized in hygienic ice that is prepared for human consumption. It has a wide range of products; West Bay expanded by adding a state-of-the-art bottled water line (ASEEL Water).

Rayyan Mineral Water Factory

Rayyan Natural Water was established in 1984, and is part of Al Rabban Holding Group. The Company has a state-of-the-art excellent production facility in an unpolluted rural area of 60 kms from Doha. The product is not gained from desalinated seawater instead, the water is drawn from a natural aquifer. Rayyan has a high-tech advanced laboratory to ensure that standards of purity and hygiene are maintained to the highest levels. The product's consistent quality is the brand's competitive advantage. The company adheres to strict quality systems and is ISO 9001 accredited. It has also been certified for HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Policy) by quality Austria Gulf in 2011.

3.9 Juices

Al Raheeq Juice Factory

Al Raheeq is a Doha-based Fruit Juice start-up, established in 2015 and offers a variety of juices for which they use the finest fruits and ingredients. Some of the flavors: Apple, Apple-Pear, Apple-Carrot, Cherry, and more to come. Al Raheeq Fruit Juice Factory applies the latest quality and health & safety standards seamlessly in its production facilities.

Gulf Food Production

GULF FOOD PRODUCTION is a branch of Mohamed Jassim Al Kuwari and Son's (MJK) Group, with more than 14 companies in different sectors. They are specialized in food production which includes a variety of beverage juices, selection of milk products, yoghurt, cheese, and dairy specialties. In addition, they have a collection of luxury pastry & chocolates, Italian gelato, and a wide range of bakery products.

3.10 Various Industry

Qatar Flour Mills

Qatar Flour Mills (QFM) has a wide basket of flour, and an expansive range of wheat-based products, available in Qatar, and the surrounding region. QFM products are the result of attention to detail, consistency in milling. The QFM facility is certified by the SGS standards of quality, ISO 9001:2008, and ISO 22000:2005, and is HACCP certified.

Qatari Tunisian Food Company

Established in 2000, the Qatari Tunisian Food Company (QT) is one of the leading companies in packing and exporting Olive Oil in the GC, and 51% owned by Mahaseel (a subsidiary of companies. QT recently inaugurated a new facility at the New Industrial Area with a yearly production capacity of 1,000 tons. QT's core business mainly focuses on two main segments: the first covers importing and repacking of the finest

Olive Oil, while the other section focuses on importing and distributing of a number of Tunisian products (more than 28 products), which gets marketed locally, like Tuna, Sardines, Pasta and others.

Qatar Food Factories Company

Qatar Food Factories Co. (Qatar Pafki) is one of the leading Qatari companies in snack food. Established in 1984 the Company supplies products like Crispy Corn Curls, Fried Corn (Tasty), Potato-base Chips, Tortilla Corn Chips in various flavors and shapes in Qatar and the Gulf States. Rebuilt in 2011 the factory uses the latest manufacturing technology/machinery and furnaces made in the USA, Europe and Australia with state-of-the-art electronic controllers. The production process is fully automatic from processing up to packaging restricting contact of human hands through the entire process.

Al Qassim Dates

Qassim Dates is a Qatari company offering 100% of the finest and purest types of dates manufactured and packaged with more than 180 products manufactured, packaged and packed in various forms. Qassim Dates is dedicated to introduce everything new and innovative in the world of manufactured dates

National Food Company NAFCO

National Food Company (NAFCO), established in 1997, owned by Hassad Food (80%) and Qatar Industrial Manufacturing Company – QIMC (20%). NAFCO owns a Dates facility located in the central market. The facility is equipped with several high-end machineries for sorting, cleaning, drying and packing of dates. The facility spans on a total area of 5,000 sq, it also includes production halls, storage rooms, a laboratory and a cooling space. The company's scope also covers manufacturing, packing and marketing of agricultural and food products in the local market, and exporting the excess quantities abroad.

Al Rahi Bakery

Al Rahi Bakery is one of the largest ready-made bakery factories in Qatar. The bakery produces approximately 350 products of daily baked goods Including cakes, desserts, croissants, sandwiches and others

Colosseum Doha W.L.L.

Colosseum Doha W.L.L. was established in 1999 with the aim of bringing Italian food quality to Qatar. It specializes in the production of gelato, ice cream, sorbetto, desserts and fresh pasta. Colosseum is an artisan factory, flexible to customize any possible flavor depending upon the requirements of the customers. The Company opened its state-of-the-art facility in Industrial Area, Doha, in 2003 and has a current production capacity of 4,500 litres of ice cream and 300 kg of pasta daily. Colosseum is HACCP certified by SGS. Its concern for hygiene and quality production processes is reinforced by other parties' frequent audits, such as US vets inspectors and Carrefour auditors.

Al Murouj Dairy & Juice Products Company

Al Murouj Dairy & Juice Products Company is Qatar's first packaged premium ice cream brand called 'Desire'. Using the finest ingredients sourced from across the world, blended with the creamiest milk, Desire delivers the richest tasting ice creams. Their range of ice creams include flavors, such as Cookies & Cream, Tiramisu, Praline & Cream and many more.

Albina Snacks

In 2016 ALBINA SNACKS has built its own roaster in the State of Qatar on the Vision of being the First "Roasting" factory to offer the wholesaler as well as retail Consumer freshly product packs of nuts, seeds and dry fruits from all over the world. The company is using dry roasting technology with low Salt (less than 0.8 %), fat free, oil free and high graded raw materials.

Dallah Converting Industries

Dallah Converting Industries (DCI) produces Aluminum Food Containers, Aluminum Household Foils, PVC Cling Film, Paper Lids, Paper Cups & many other Food Packaging Items & Solutions along with Printing Service.

Muna Food Stuff Factory

A subsidiary of Asak Group, Munah Food Stuff Factory provides local snack products including crisps, chocolates and candies. In addition, Munah provides aluminum foil products such as rolls and containers. Established over a space of almost 17,000 sqm. at the Doha Industrial Area. With its strong focus on quality, it has become a reputed name in the State of Qatar and the Middle East, having managed to occupy a prime position in the face of stiff international competition.

Dolci Sera Sweet

Dolci Sera is a specialized company in oriental and western sweets, established in the year of 2015 in Qatar-Doha and started its activity in the local market.

4 F&B Outlets, Stores and Wholesalers

4.1 Retail & Supermarkets

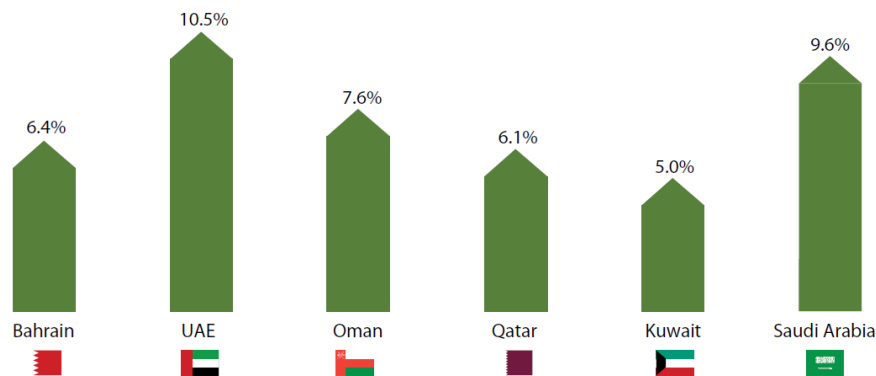
The Qatari middle market itself is also continuously expanding. The local supermarket chain Al Meera remains dominant in the Qatari market, even though there are a large number of international players operating in the segment, as Al Meera included 58 branches by the end of 2018 (53 in Qatar and 5 in the Sultanate of Oman) ; The Al Meera Group also operates the country's Géant hypermarket and WHSmith bookstores. Meanwhile, the international Spar Group began its operations in Qatar in 2017 at Tawar Mall, followed by opening two other stores in 2018 in B-Square Mall and Zero3 Mall. The Carrefour international hypermarket chain is present in Qatar through 12 outlets in malls in Doha (City Center, Villaggio Mall, Ezdan Mall , Landmark Mall, Dar El Salam Mall, Lagoona Mall, Al Mirqab Mall and Mall of Qatar) and in Al Wakrah. The chain is regionally operated by Majid Al Futtaim Retail. Monoprix has three outlets in Qatar and is the most high-end retailer in the country.

Regarding the food retail sub-sector as a whole, in 2014 it contributed between 45% and 48% to the total retail sales, set to increase with the further opening of the aforementioned supermarket chains' outlets.

Main hypermarket and supermarket chains in Qatar

Company	Tel.	Website	Branches
Megamart 	+974 44516301	Megamart Facebook Seite	3 Branches
Carrefour Qatar 	+974 3365 9272	www.carrefourqatar.com	12 Branches
Family Food Center 	+974 44422456	www.family.com.qa	5 Retail Centers
Monoprix Qatar 	+974 44026102 / 4414 6642	www.alibinali.com	3 Branches
Lulu Qatar 	+974 5587 8469 / 4042 1111	www.luluhypermarket.com	10 Branches
Al Meera 	+974 4011 9152	www.almeera.com.qa	52 Branches
Spar Qatar 	+974 4033 9000	www.spar-qa.com	2 Branches

Sales growth at Modern grocery retail (2013-2018, % CAGR):



Source: Business Monitor, Farrelly & Mitchell Research

4.2 F&B Outlets

According to the Agency MERatings⁸, Qatar's F&B segment benefits from the presence of a resilient business environment and a wealthy consumer base. In addition, Qatar made a great leap forward given the various developments in the country such as FIFA 2022, Doha Metro as well as the construction of new malls and hotel master developments such as Lusail and Mshaireb. Future growth of the sector is linked directly to the development of entertainment, hospitality and tourism in Qatar. The F&B sector is an intrinsic part of Qatar's economy, which was flourished over the years due to cultural diversity of the country's population as well as growth in business and leisure tourism that has given rise to a host of restaurants serving different cuisines from around the world.

Observing the F&B Service Sector in Qatar, it can be stated that this sector is expected to flourish massively in 2022, as Qatar is the host of the mega sporting event in 2022. This event will attract estimated additional tourists of 3.1 million to the country with an average spending of QR288 per person per day for a stay ranging from three to eleven days.

According to a study by QDB⁹ in 2018, the total revenue of the F&B Services Sector in Qatar is estimated to increase from QR6.99bn in 2016 to QR14.26bn in 2022, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.4 percent. This growth is largely in line with the projected growth of the population and annual increase in tourist arrivals during this period.

Furthermore, 62 new upscale hotels, including a mix of four stars, five stars, and seven stars are scheduled to commence operations in Qatar by 2026.

Moreover, the 8 World Cup 2022 stadiums will serve as key locations for F&B outlets such as cafes, Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs), kiosks and mobile food trucks. The fine dining segment in Qatar is estimated to grow from QR675m in 2016 to QR1.37bn by 2026. There were 142 fine dining outlets operating in Qatar, which accounted for 4.8 percent of the country's total F&B outlets.

4.3 Wholesale

⁸ www.meratings.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Food-and-Beverage-Sector-in-Qatar.pdf

⁹ https://www.qdb.qa/en/Documents/Food_and_Beverages_Sector.pdf

Qatar`s food production industry accounts for approximately 10% of the countries domestic consumption. Qatar depends mainly on food imports for local needs. Food consumption was forecast to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10% up to 2019 for international entrepreneurs and traders, as well to the manufacturers, suppliers, food technology companies, and hospitality services on food and beverage.

The F&B products segment, characterized by a large presence of international brands, either manufactured regionally through local factories or imported through distributors, accounts for the lion`s share of the market at 70%. However, the food service segment, led by international chains and represented by regional franchise partners, is set to outperform the sector`s growth, expanding by 8.4% annually until 2021¹⁰.

The key-F&B Importers in Qatar are the following:

Company	Telephone/Fax	Website	Sector
Nasser Bin Khaled and Sons Trading Company	T +974 44516301 F _874 44883009	Not available	Importer/Distributor Whole Categories
Qatar National Import and Export Company	T +974 4456 2222 F +974 4456 2299	www.qnie.com	Importer/Distributor Representation of some Austrian Products
Doha Drug Store	T +974 44506245 F +974 44605322	www.dohadrugstore.com	Importer/Distributor Representation of some Austrian Products
Ali Bin Ali Establishment	T +974 4446 9888/ 4469 7777 F +974 4436 9911	www.alibinali.com	FMSG/Restaurants/ Ownership of Supermarket
Friendly Food Qatar	T +974 44686363 F +974 44685757	www.friendlyfoodqatar.com	FMCG / Horeca Distribution
Quality Food Services W.L.L.	T +974 44500901 +974 44419190 F +974 44500902	www.qualitygroupintl.com	FMCG/Restaurants
Benina Food Qatar	T +974 44887283	www.beninafood.com	FMCG /Delicatessen
ABUISSA Marketing & Distribution	T +974 44466969	www.abuissa.com	FMCG/Ownership of Restaurants
Arizona Trading Company	T +974 44551526 F +974 44661529	www.arizona-qatar.com	FMCG Product
Brouq Food Trading	T +974 44472124 F +974 40396500	www.brouqtrading.com	FMCG

¹⁰ <http://www.gulf-times.com/story/581856/F-B-market-in-Gulf-set-to-grow-to-196bn-by-2021>

4.4 Survey

The main purpose of the questionnaire survey was to provide a basic overview of the market struggle that companies have faced during the Blockade as well as the current effect of COVID-19 on food supplies, market demand and consumer behavior towards European Products and particularly Austrian products;

The following are some statements of the comments of players in the food sector and the interest in food categories that they would like to include in their product portfolio.

Qatar National Import and EXPORT (QNIE)

QNIE is part of Al Wataniya Holding and active in the market for more than 50 years. The company is well positioned in the market with a vast network of food distribution of dairy products, meat, poultry, seafood, edible oils, pasta, snacks, soft drinks, juices, mineral water, coffee, cakes and frozen food.

Through its main subsidiaries; distribution of fruits and vegetables; ownership and operation of food retail outlets. As well they are incorporated into distribution of glassware, tableware, kitchenware, razors and cups. A quick overview to the company products can be found at <http://qnie.com/products/retail/>

The high management at QNIE stated that COVID-19 has affected their HORECA business and declined by approx. 35%; however, retail business is booming and it was noted that the frozen food is a growing category in Qatar. A change in consumer behavior, which is much more price sensitive than before, was pointed out.

Ali Bin Ali Holding

Ali Bin Ali Holding is a successful leading company in the State of Qatar. The company is engaged with different activities from ownership and operation of consumer electronics; retail outlets; distribution of general food products and nonalcoholic beverages; ownership and operation of restaurants, department stores (Monoprix); as well through several subsidiaries they provide other activities like interior contracting; software solutions including enterprise resource planning, as well as many more activities that can be seen here <https://www.alibinali.com/>

A Commercial Director at Monoprix Qatar overseeing the three outlets in Qatar pointed out the recent major change in consumer behavior since the beginning of COVID19. The focus is now more into purchasing commodity of essentials of life.

AIMD (Abulssa Marketing and Distribution) is an organized distribution business distributing food, cosmetics, perfumes, luggage, household items, stationery and toys. The General Manager pointed out the following:

- Future lies on ORGANIC/HEALTH oriented products. Covid-19 has further added scope to the situation. Therefore, Organic, Sugar Free, Health drinks etc.
- European products are relied to be high in quality and a bit expensive. It definitely has an advantage over other Middle East products in the premium sector.

5 Regulatory Framework

The Government of Qatar continues to develop its standards regime to meet internationally and regionally recognized norms and practices, such as the International Standardization Systems Organization (ISSO). The Qatar Laboratories and Standardization Affairs is in charge of developing and conformity assessment body for Qatar. However, Qatari government ministries such as the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ministry of Municipality and Environment provide recommendations for standards. The Qatar Laboratories and Standardization Affairs continually develop new standards and criteria for various items and merchandize.

Ministry of Public Health

Food Safety Department – Ports Health and Food Control Section

T +974 44070226

E port.health@moph.gov.qa

W www.moph.gov.qa

5.1 Import Regulations

Qatar's Customs and Ports Law covers all aspects of the import and export of goods to and from its ports: Hamad International Airport, Salwa Overland Customs, Mesaieed Port, Doha Port and Ras Laffan. Qatar has strict regulations, which must be adhered, in order to obtain customs clearance of goods. All goods must be recorded on a customs declaration form and a manifest presented to the customs authority on arrival. Failure to comply with the customs law may result in delays, holding of goods, penalties, storage/demurrage fees, or the return of goods to origin. In serious infringements, legal action may be taken.

General Authority of Customs

P.O. Box 81, Doha, State of Qatar

P +974 4441-1149

F +974 4441-4959

W www.customs.gov.qa/eng/

Port Health and Food Control Section / Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) have the authority to control imported food under the provisions of the Food Control Law No. 8 / 1990, amended by Law No. (4) / 2014. Port Health and Food Control Section follows Food Safety and Environmental Health division / Public Health Department, control over all imported food: fruit, vegetables, species, meat and meat products, milk, fish and all other foods that are imported to Qatar from all over the world.

Qatar Technical regulations and standards are the references to comply imported Foods. Any foodstuff matching with the requirements released for use and any foodstuff proves to be unsafe or noncompliance (destroyed or re-exported).

Qatar Technical Regulations and Standards can be divided into two groups: General group includes general requirements for all types of food as Qatar Technical regulation No. QS 9 (labeling requirements), Qatar Technical regulation No. QS2500 (List of permitted additives), Qatar Technical regulation No. QS 150 (Mandatory Expiration dates for food products). The second group can be called specific group which determine the specific requirement for each type of food.

With the implementation of the food importers pre-registration system, Qatar wants to make sure that imported products comply with Qatar standards requirements. The **registration process** can be completed online on the homepage of the relevant authority.

5.2 Import Procedures

All importers are required by law to have an import license. Import licenses are issued only to Qatari nationals, or to the Qatari partner in a limited liability partnership, and must be registered with the Ministry of Economy and Commerce. This regulation also applies to foreign owned entities operating in Qatar.

Qatar Laboratory Sampling

Random samples are collected routinely from meat and poultry products entering Qatar. The product is examined for Pesticides, Salmonellae and other pathogenic bacteria.; Total bacteria counts.; Heavy metals.; Species identification tests for pork tissue, including lard, in formulated product.

Recommended shelf life for frozen beef and poultry products is twelve (12) months; for minced meats, it is nine (9) months; for fresh beef, it is 21 days; and for fresh mutton, it is 14 days.

Eligible Products

- Fresh/frozen red meat and meat products, except pork.
- Fresh/Chilled and frozen poultry and poultry products.
- Poultry products heated to a core temperature of 70°C for at least 3.6 seconds or 74°C for at least 1 (one second).
- Pork and pork products: Only through the Qatari based “Qatar Distribution Company”, which is the only company authorized by the Qatari Government to import pork and pork products into Qatar.

Labeling Requirements

Fresh/frozen meat and poultry, packaged meat and poultry must bear the following structures: Production (slaughter/freezing) and expiration dates. Date format requirements for Qatar must conform to the following: Day/Month/Year for products with a shelf life of three (3) months or less. For products with a shelf life of more than three (3) months, both the Day/Month/Year and Month/Year formats are acceptable. Dating should be in numeric format and bilingual (English/Arabic). Arabic stickers are allowed.

A statement that the product has been slaughtered according to Islamic principles is required. Metric Net Weight - Presently, Qatar has a tolerance of 10 percent variation in the labeled net weight. The Country of origin must be mentioned on the label.

Certification Requirements

All imported meats, including beef and poultry products, require a health certificate issued by the country of export and a “Halal” slaughter certificate issued by an approved Islamic center in that country. Islamic Information & Documentation Certification GmbH is an approved center by Qatar for Halal and Halal Slaughterhouse Certificates.

Handling/Storage Requirements

Special Handling - Qatar requires that instructions for consumers concerning storage, preparation and other special handling requirements accompany shipments.

Packaging - Vacuum packaging is not required.

Documents

Qatar Customs will only accept official invoices, official Certificate of Origin (COO) & packing lists; these are now mandatory. Shipment without these documents will not be cleared under any circumstances and shall be returned back to origin.

It is now mandatory to write the HS CODE of the Commodity in the official invoices and COO; otherwise Shipment will not be accepted for clearance.

“COUNTRY OF ORIGIN” OR “MADE IN” fields are mandatory for each piece, on materials, and on cartons.

Shipments originating from Europe: Please mention clearly on the COO the country of origin. Example: ‘Country of Origin: European Community – Austria. If the Products are made in two different countries, the Country of Origin should be both countries in the COO, Invoice, and on the materials. Example: **‘European Community – Austria & Germany.’**”

The ‘COUNTRY OF ORIGIN’ OR ‘MADE IN MARK’ details on the shipment should match the information on the Official Invoice, COO, and on the materials. (Any discrepancies will cause the shipment to be returned to the origin.)

Import Documentation

There are some special requirements for food clearance at Doha customs, below are the import documentation

- Invoice, packing list and the CO is a must with all documentation requirement
- Legalized Health Certificate issued by concerned health department/Ministry and attested by the Qatari Embassy/Consulate from Origin.
- The date of production and expiry must be clearly shown on each sale unit. Stick-on labels are not acceptable.
- The ingredients of each item should be printed both in Arabic and English language with indelible ink with correct quantity and weight.
- Phytosanitary certificate for leaves and vegetables, issued by NPPS (National Plant Protection Organization) from the Origin.
- Non-Radiation certificate for all shipments from European Union and Japan and should be attested by the Qatari Embassy/Consulate from Origin.
- The Shipment must have +60% shelf life while arriving in Qatar. Otherwise, PHD will destroy the items at consignee’s expense.

The following documents are required for imported foods:

- Commercial invoice
- Packing list
- Bill of Lading
- Health certificate from the country of origin; please refer to Appendix 2 for template
- Halal slaughter certificate (for poultry and meat products)
- Certificate of origin
- Radiation free certificate (for European products only)
- Spices must be accompanied by a certificate stating that it is free of pesticides and herbicides.

The invoice, Halal slaughter, health, and country of origin certificates must be notarized by the Qatari Embassy or Consulate in the exporting country. Please refer to appendix 3 for template.

Rejected consignments for health/quality reasons must be returned to the country of origin or destroyed within maximum of two weeks. This grace period can be extended if extenuating circumstances exist. Health certificates are required for all food products. While health certificates for meat products are issued regularly, obtaining certificates for processed food products such as grocery items can prove challenging for

exporters. In most cases, exporters are able to obtain health certificates from their respective State governments. Products denied entry due to labeling infractions may later be cleared upon appeal to the Food Control Section of PHD/NHA, provided the infraction was minor. Labeling infractions deemed serious will result in rejection of a shipment with little chance of a successful appeal. Serious labeling infractions include label tampering, missing or incorrectly printed production/expiry dates and dates printed on stickers rather than the original label/packaging

5.3 Taxes & Duties

All goods imported into Qatar are subject to customs duties, based on a percentage value of goods (typically 5%), or a per unit basis. The value of goods is calculated according to the Regulations under the Customs and Ports Law.

Qatar-Customs and Import Duty Calculator <https://customsdutyfree.com/qatar-customs-and-import-duty-tax-calculation-method/>

Excise tax

The Qatar Excise Tax Law No. (25) Of 2018 comes into effect on 1 January 2019 and is the foundation of the new Excise Tax system that Qatar is introducing and is based on the Common Excise Tax Framework signed by the six Gulf Cooperation Council ("GCC") states. Excise Tax will be administered by the newly established General Tax Authority ("GTA") which replaces the Qatar Tax Department ("QTD") as the competent authority for managing all taxes in Qatar. The Qatar Excise Tax Law sets out the various rules and obligations for taxpayers.

The Excise Tax Executive Regulations, which have yet to be published, is expected to provide more details on the compliance requirements relating to Excise Tax. A copy of the Qatar Excise Tax Law (in Arabic) and other key information is now available on the General Authority of Customs (GAC) website

http://www.customs.gov.qa/eng/EX_Tax.php

General Tax Authority

The General Tax Authority ("GTA") has been established as a separate entity, under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance, and is in charge of the implementation of all taxes in Qatar.

Excise Tax is applied to the import, production, stockpiling and storing of excise goods. Excise Tax is applicable on the following goods at their respective tax rates:

- Tobacco products – 100% tax rate
- Carbonated drinks (non-flavored aerated water excluded) – 50% tax rate (HS Code 22090090)
- Energy drinks – 100% tax rate HS Code 22029090)
- Special goods – 100% tax rate

5.4 Halal

A certificate of Islamic (Halal) Slaughter is required. Exporters may obtain a Certificate of Islamic Slaughter from a member of an Islamic Center or Islamic organization listed below. A certificate of Islamic Slaughter is a certificate issued by a member of a Muslim organization recognized by the importing country to provide this service; the certificate states that animals were slaughtered according to Moslem religious

requirements. This certificate must accompany products labeled ""Halal". The certificate must be endorsed by the Qatar Consulate in the exporting country and must accompany all shipments. In the absence of a Qatari Embassy/Consulate, endorsement by any of the GCC or Arab Embassy/Consulates will be accepted.

Halal certification will be required for the following products:

Fresh/frozen unprocessed products bearing Halal label claims must be accompanied by an appropriate Halal certificate. Alternatively a written assurance from the exporter that an appropriate Halal certificate will be supplied to accompany that shipment before it reaches its destination.

Processed products with Halal label claims, raw materials used in processed products with Halal label claims must be accompanied by an appropriate Halal certificate.

Austria	Islamic Information & Documentation Certification GmbH (IIDC)		29 Oct 2018
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See: HALAL Certification in Qatar: <https://blipsnip.com/halal-certification-in-qatar/>

6 Trends, Business Opportunities & SWOT of the Qatari F&B Sector

According to recent studies by Alpen Capital, the F&B sector in the GCC is expected to grow by an annualized average rate of 4% to 5% in the coming years. The expected growth rates mirror to some extent the population and GDP projections for the countries. Increasing revenue diversification measures of the government and the entailing investments have attracted several expatriates from across the world to avail job opportunities in Qatar. A high spending power, in terms of GDP per capita (PPP), allows residents of Qatar to indulge in activities like dining out and shopping at supermarkets and hypermarkets. Such consumer patterns have been increasing consumption of food. The inflow of foreign immigrants and tourists is likely to increase, as the country gears up to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022 by building infrastructure, hotels, stadiums and tourist attractions.

Trends

- ⇒ The growing proportion of working couples is expected to spur the demand for packaged foods and ready meals as well as eat-out options.
- ⇒ The expansion of the non-oil-sector is expected to attract a bigger variety of expats.
- ⇒ Increased penetration of organized retail (hypermarkets, supermarkets) is likely to increase the demand for packaged, organic and healthy high quality processed food.
- ⇒ Due to the blockade and the increased feeling of national pride, consumers are likely to buy more “Made-in-Qatar” goods – if they are perceived as having equal or higher quality and taste. Government driven marketing campaigns as well as subsidies for local production are expected to strengthen this trend.
- ⇒ Emerging of private labels as a lower-price option for consumers.
- ⇒ Growing demand for healthy and organic foods as consumers become more educated
- ⇒ An advancing food processing segment: the UAE and KSA have already managed to position themselves as food-processing hubs. Due to the blockade and the diversification initiatives, Qatar is increasing the amount of local factories to reduce import-dependency and to utilize the re-export potential of processed foods.
- ⇒ Digitalization of the sector: digital marketing already plays a key role in influencing consumer behavior. While online shopping for groceries is still developing, online ordering for food delivery is omnipresent. Services such as Talabat, Carriage and Uber Eats are popular.

STRENGTHS – Qatar’s competitive advantage

- Third-largest gas reserves in the world & world’s leading exporter of LNG resulting in huge financial buffers allowing the economy to remain resilient during crises.
- Economic diversification strategy supporting development of non-hydrocarbon sectors
- Hosting of World Cup 2022 (followed by the Asian Cup 2027 – the bid is still ongoing; and the Asian Games 2030 – Qatar won the bid to host the Asian Games 2030) sustains infrastructure and construction activities, therefore guaranteeing a demanding consumer base.
- Sizeable and growing high-spending expatriate population.
- Food consumption is expected to receive a significant one-time-boost through the WC2022.
- High per capita income supports political stability and purchasing power of the customers.

OPPORTUNITIES – Growth Drivers for Qatar

- Growing consumer base.
- Developing tourism sector.
- Rising health awareness, consumers are willing to pay more and shift towards healthy food options.
- Since the beginning of the blockade, Qatar is looking for new suppliers.

WEAKNESSES



- Monetary policy dependent on the currency peg regime.
- Persistent dependence on hydrocarbon revenues to finance imports in the medium and long term.
- Formalized import procedures, high costs and document requirements.
- Hot and arid climatic conditions, scarce water resources.

CHALLENGES/THREATS

- With increasing quality of food imports arises the need to develop robust logistic infrastructures to limit transit times and food wastage.
- Reduction of government subsidies and public wages might tighten the liquidity of the consumer base in the mid-term.
- Rising geopolitical uncertainty: Possible negative impacts of rising diplomatic and geopolitical tensions (Qatar Blockade, Iran).
- Volatile legal environment, leaving very little time to contribute towards the food standards and potential new taxes as well as foodstuff requirements in the market.

7 Fairs and events

The main fairs and trade shows taking place in Qatar that cover the sector of F&B goods are:

Title	Coverage	Date and venue	Website
 Qatar International Agricultural Exhibition (AGRITEQ)	Platform for local and international agriculture stakeholders in the fields of agricultural technologies, equipment and related products	Spring; Doha Exhibition and Convention Center - DECC, Doha, Qatar	www.agriteq.com
 Hospitality & Food Qatar 2021	Platform for hotels, restaurants, cafes and franchise investors who want to buy and network with potential customers from the entire Gulf region	Fall; Doha Exhibition and Convention Center - DECC, Doha, Qatar	www.hospitalityqatar.qa

8 APPENDIX

- (1) The Qatari government and QFZA has identified the following “new” industry sectors of interest for foreign engagement:
 - 1) Logistics – high value industrial and consumer markets (food packaging, high value spare parts – aviation and maritime, pharma supply chain etc.).
 - 2) Chemicals and heavy industries – utilization of natural gas for energy production and raw material. Specialty chemicals, formulation chemicals, advanced polymers etc.
 - 3) Automotive, marine and aviation
 - 4) Energy technologies – energy storage, energy market and systems, energy efficiency and renewable energy (solar). Hydrogen as energy storage and large-scale production for export is gaining increasing interest in Qatar Oil Company and government.
 - 5) Pharma and medical technologies
 - 6) Food and agriculture/aquaculture technology – the focus on this report.
 - 7) Water and waste management – circular technologies.
- (2) Qatar Food Importers Guide 2017 (PDF)
<https://www.moph.gov.qa/Admin/Lists/PublicationsAttachments/DispForm.aspx?ID=76&RootFolder=%2A>

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