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Report Highlights:

Hong Kong's economic growth reached 2.5 percent in 2024, at the lower end of most forecasts. Although Hong Kong government (HKG) officials have taken a number of measures to boost tourism, investment, and economic activity, the city continues to face headwinds including high interest rates and a slumping housing market, which have impacted demand for imported food and beverages. Despite these challenges, Hong Kong's transparent import regulations, status as a free port and regional hub for transshipment to other markets in Asia, and concentration of high-income consumers make it an appealing and competitive market for U.S. agricultural products. Key U.S. consumer-oriented commodity imports include beef, poultry, seafood, tree nuts, fresh fruit, wine and spirits, and a wide range of prepared foods and snack foods.

Market Fact Sheet: Hong Kong

Executive Summary

Hong Kong has a population of 7.5 million. In 2024, its per capita GDP was \$54,079, one of the highest in Asia. Hong Kong is a vibrant city and a major gateway to Asia. Consumers are sophisticated and enjoy a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Due to limited arable land, around 95 percent of food in Hong Kong is imported. In 2024, Hong Kong's total imports of agricultural and related products dropped 1.0 percent to \$24.1 billion compared to 2023.

Imports of Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Products

Hong Kong imports of consumer-oriented agricultural products dropped 1.1 percent to \$20.2 billion in 2024, accounting for 84 percent of all agricultural imports. The top ten imports were seafood, fresh fruit, prepared food, beef, non-alcoholic beverages, dairy, wine, poultry, pork and bakery products. China, the United States, Chile, Japan and Brazil were the top five suppliers.

Consumer Oriented Agricultural Imports and Market Share - 2024 (Billion USD)

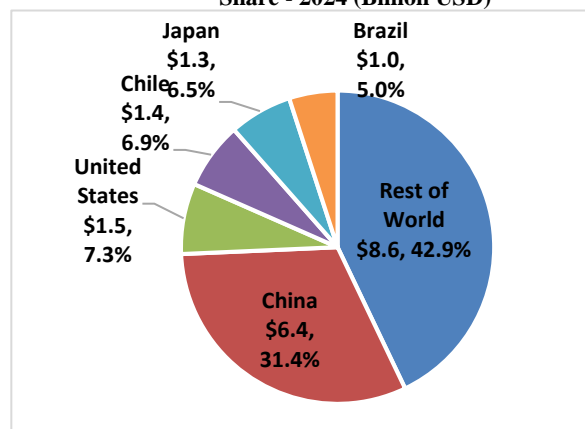


Chart 1: Top exporting countries to Hong Kong (USD Billion)

Food Retail Industry

In 2024, Hong Kong's retail food sales dropped 2.8 percent to \$11.8 billion. The Hong Kong food retail market is made up of supermarkets, convenience stores, and traditional markets. Supermarkets account for over 60 percent of retail food sales. There are over 700 supermarkets, 1,300 convenience stores, and nearly 100 traditional markets in Hong Kong.

Food Processing Industry

The local food processing sector is small. In 2024, global imports of bulk products increased by 7.2 percent to \$372 million and represented 1.8 percent of all agricultural imports. Imports of intermediate agricultural commodities were \$2.7 billion.

Food Service Industry

Hong Kong has an expansive, influential, and dynamic hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) food service sector. In 2024, Hong Kong's restaurant receipts dropped 2.4 percent to \$14.1 billion. There are 17,154 restaurants in Hong Kong.¹

Quick Facts CY 2024

Global Imports of Consumer-Oriented Ag. Products

\$20.2 billion (- 1.1 percent from CY 2023)

Top Growth of Consumer-Oriented Ag. Imports

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1) Fresh fruit | 2) Poultry |
| 3) Meat | 4) Tree Nuts |
| 5) Distilled Spirits | 6) Prepared Food |
| 7) Dairy | 8) Spices |
| 9) Chocolate | 10) Coffee |

Food Industry by Channels

Consumer-Oriented Ag. Products:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| - Gross imports | \$20.2 billion |
| - Re-exports | \$8.0 billion |
| - Retained imports | \$12.22 billion |
| - Retail food sales | \$11.8 billion |
| - Restaurant receipts | \$14.1 billion |

GDP/Population

Population: 7.5 million

GDP per capita: \$54,079

Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Open, import dependent market with affluent customers.- U.S. products are perceived as high-quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Highly competitive market, low barrier to entry.- Relatively small local market, requirements for small order and packaging size.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Niche market expansion for healthy food and halal foods.- Hong Kong is a major trading / re-export hub for other Asian countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stronger U.S. dollar and higher freight and longer transit for U.S. goods.- Consumption trend for locals to dine and shop in mainland China

Data and Information Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Trade Data, Trade Data Monitor, Euromonitor International, Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, and Hong Kong Trade Development Council. Currency in U.S. dollars unless otherwise stated.

¹ As of April 2025, licensed restaurant number in Hong Kong- Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW

Hong Kong is major market for U.S. agricultural products, with total agricultural and related exports reaching nearly \$1.6 billion in 2024. Hong Kong's global imports of agricultural and related products dropped 1.0 percent to \$24.1 billion in 2024 but remained stable at \$6.4 billion in the first quarter of 2025. The United States is the third largest supplier of agricultural products to Hong Kong, behind China and Australia and the second largest supplier of consumer-oriented products with exports reaching \$1.5 billion in 2024.

Hong Kong's economic growth reached 2.5 percent in 2024, at the lower end of most forecasts. In 2024, Hong Kong's GDP per capita was \$54,079, one of the leading GDP per capita in Asia, and real GDP is forecast to grow between 2- 3 percent in 2025.² Although Hong Kong government (HKG) officials have taken a number of measures to boost tourism, investment, and economic activity, the city continues to face headwinds including high interest rates (the Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the U.S. dollar) and a slumping housing market, which have impacted retail and HRI sector demand. However, Hong Kong continues to serve as a crucial trading hub where buyers make purchasing decisions for a vast range of consumer-ready products that are transshipped to China and other parts of Asia, including neighboring Macau which receives most of its food imports via Hong Kong. Limited land for local agricultural production requires Hong Kong to import about 95 percent of its food needs. Due to this reliance on imports, the region maintains transparent and minimally burdensome import requirements for most agricultural products.

After declining during the pandemic, Hong Kong's population has rebounded, slightly surpassing pre-pandemic levels at approximately 7.5 million in 2024. Much of the increase is the result of a government visa scheme to attract labor (both skilled and relatively un-skilled), predominantly from mainland China. Hong Kong's annual visitors, a key driver of high-value food consumption, have also rebounded following a sharp decline during the pandemic. In 2024, visitors increased to 45 million. Although this represents an improvement over the previous year, it remains well below the peak of 65 million visitors received in 2018. Additionally, the composition of visitors has shifted with far fewer arrivals from the United States and EU and more mainland travelers. This shift has impacted consumption patterns as mainland travelers tend to stay in the region for shorter periods and have a stronger preference for Asian and Chinese cuisine. Combined with the loss of approximately 600,000 high-income residents following the imposition of the National Security Law in 2019 and pandemic in 2020 and increasing numbers of Hong Kong residents traveling to mainland China for cheaper dining and retail options, the city's food retailers and food and beverage industry, particularly those catering to international cuisine and products, have struggled to maintain profitable operations.

² "Hong Kong Economy", Hong Kong Government

Table 1. Hong Kong: Advantages and Challenges

Advantages	Challenges
Hong Kong relies on global imports for about 95 percent of its food and beverage needs.	U.S. products can be disadvantaged compared due to higher freight costs and longer transit time compared with regional competitors like China, Australia, Japan, and Thailand.
Hong Kong remains a trading hub for food and beverage products entering other markets, including China, Macau, Taiwan, and Vietnam.	Hong Kong residents are increasingly traveling to mainland China for lower-cost dining and retail options.
U.S. food and beverage products enjoy an excellent reputation among Hong Kong consumers and are known for their high quality and safety.	Regional Asian competitors, particularly China and Thailand, have increased their product quality and often sell at lower prices.
The wide range of U.S. product offerings can cater to diverse tastes and preferences among different segments of the Hong Kong market.	Hong Kong buyers often require smaller packaging and minimum purchase commitments that may be unappealing to some U.S. exporters.
Hong Kong is a quality and trend-driven market, middle to upper-class consumers willing to pay for new, unique, or premium products.	Hong Kong's changing of demographics have seen higher rates of immigrants from mainland China and fewer expats with Western tastes.

SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

Language

The official written languages in Hong Kong are Chinese and English. The official spoken languages are Cantonese (the prominent Chinese dialect in Hong Kong and South China) and English. English is commonly used in business transactions and many citizens are trilingual.

Travel to Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China with separate customs and immigration requirements. U.S. passport holders do not need a visa to enter Hong Kong, but they do need a visa to enter China. As is the case in most markets, in-person meetings are considerably more effective for establishing business.

Legal System

Under the principle of “one country, two systems,” Hong Kong retains a separate legal system from mainland China, which is based on British common law, supplemented by written laws.

Payment

The Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the U.S. dollar. The Hong Kong government does not impose any capital controls on foreign payments. Hong Kong importers are typically able to accept a variety of payment terms, including letters of credit, though for many products importers may seek credit terms once a relationship is established with an exporter.

General Consumer Preferences

Hong Kong consumers are conscious about their well-being and actively seek products that are innovative, sustainable, nutritious, and convenient. While consumers are willing to pay for premium products, recent trends have shown increasing interest in “value” as residents seek to pare back expenses. With many residents having limited time or space for meal preparation, there is rising demand for ready-to-cook and frozen options that provide quick and easy solutions for home cooking.

Importer Connections

ATO Hong Kong can assist U.S. exporters seeking to connect with Hong Kong buyers. For additional information, please contact Atohongkong@usda.gov.

SECTION III. IMPORT FOOD STANDARDS & REGULATIONS and IMPORT PROCEDURES

In Hong Kong, food intended for sale must be fit for human consumption as defined under the legal framework for food safety control in Part V of the [Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap.132](#) and subsidiary legislation. Hong Kong draws reference from Codex and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) in the context of food safety standards and animal health standards in setting, or in lieu of, domestic regulations.

Labeling

The sale of prepackaged food in Hong Kong must comply with the labeling requirements for name, ingredients, date, storage and use instructions, manufacturer information, weight, and nutrition. The marking or labeling of prepackaged food can be in either English or Chinese, or in both languages. If both languages appear in the labeling or marking of prepackaged food, the name of the food, nutritional labeling, and the list of ingredients must appear in both languages. However, the Hong Kong government accepts labeling stickers. There are many cases, particularly for small sales items, where U.S. products are imported into Hong Kong with U.S. labels, and then importers apply label stickers on the packaging to comply with Hong Kong’s food labeling requirements. At present, the Hong Kong government does not have regulations regarding the labeling of genetically engineered (GE) food products. The government makes no distinction between conventional and GE foods in regulating food safety. For more details, please refer to GAIN Report: [Agricultural Biotechnology Annual](#).

Hong Kong does not have specific regulations for labeling organic products. The Hong Kong Organic Center allows products to carry their organic logos provided that they can fulfill the Center’s certification requirements. Hong Kong allows USDA organic labels.

For more guidelines on Hong Kong’s food import regulations, please refer to GAIN Report: [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Country Report](#).

Certification

The importation of meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and frozen confections are required to provide health certificates. The Center for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is responsible for issuing import licenses for these foods to Hong Kong importers. U.S. exporters need to provide health certificates to their importers so that they can obtain import licenses. In addition, the importation of seafood products that are eaten raw, such as oysters, require health certificates under administrative order. Other general food items can be imported to Hong Kong without certification.

Import Duties and Permits

Hong Kong is a free port, imposing duties on only four products: liquor, tobacco, hydrocarbon oils, and methyl alcohol. Local importers must apply for a license from the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department for the importation of dutiable commodities. In addition, a licensed importer must apply for a permit for each and every consignment. Importers are not required to apply for any licenses or permits for the import or export, manufacture, storage, or movement of wine and liquor with an alcoholic strength of less than 30 percent by volume. The current duties are as follows:

Product	Volume	Tax Value
Cigarettes	per 1,000 sticks:	HKD \$3,306 (USD\$245)
Cigars	per kg	HKD \$ 4,005 (USD\$316)
Distilled Spirits (Liquor)	with more than 30 percent alcohol	100 percent Initial value up to HKD \$200 (USD\$25.64)
Distilled Spirits (Liquor)	with more than 30 percent alcohol	10 percent Value above HKD \$200 (USD\$25.64)

(Note: Beer, wine, and liquor with less than 30 percent alcohol by volume is not taxed.)

Please refer to GAIN Report [Import Regulation on Alcoholic Drinks](#) for additional information.

Facility Registration Requirements for Foreign Suppliers of Red Meat and Poultry

Effective February 14, 2025, Hong Kong transitioned from a “systems-based” approach to recognizing foreign meat and poultry establishments to an “establishment or plant-based” registration system. Under the new import protocol, U.S. slaughtering, cutting, processing and cold storage facilities seeking to export raw meat and poultry products to Hong Kong must be registered with CFS prior to export. U.S. slaughtering, cutting, processing, and cold storage facilities are encouraged to review the CFS list of U.S. establishments [here](#) to verify all company information is current and accurate prior to export. Registration is only required for raw meat and poultry products. Cooked and further processed products (ham, bacon, sausages, canned meat) are not subject to the new import protocol requirements.

For additional information on registering U.S establishments and verifying establishment eligibility, exporters should consult the [FSIS Export Library](#).

SECTION IV. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

Retail

In 2024, Hong Kong's retail food sales dropped 2.8 percent to \$11.8 billion. The Hong Kong food retail market is made up of supermarkets, convenience stores, and traditional markets.

Table 2. Hong Kong: Food and Beverage Retail Sales (Billion USD)

Channel	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Share (2024)	Growth (2023 vs 2024)
Supermarket/Dept Stores	7.89	7.33	7.88	7.32	7.13	60%	- 2 . 5 %
Other Outlets	4.79	4.67	4.67	4.86	4.71	40%	-3.2%
Total	12.68	12	12.55	12.18	11.84	100%	-2.8 %

Source: Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department

There are over 700 supermarkets, 1,300 convenience stores, and close to 100 traditional markets in Hong Kong.^{3,4} The “Supermarket/Department Stores” category in Table 2 include sales of supermarkets, convenience stores, and food and beverage sections at department stores. In addition to groceries, these stores offer a more comprehensive shopping experience with increased offerings of fresh food, bread and pastry, organic options, and hot takeout meals. “Other outlets” refers to traditional markets, also called wet markets, mom-and-pop stores, bakeries, fresh fruits stalls and other outlets typically smaller in scale.

Traditionally, Hong Kong consumers shop daily for food items due to a preference for fresh food and limited storage space in their homes. Street market sales trend toward fresh foods while supermarkets dominate in processed, chilled and frozen, high value-added, and canned food products. For more information on the Hong Kong Food Retail Sector, please refer GAIN Report [Retail Food Annual](#).

E-commerce Market for Food & Beverage

Hong Kong's e-commerce sector experienced accelerated growth during the COVID-19 pandemic, as lockdowns drove consumers toward online platforms for essentials like groceries and personal care items. The value of online retail sales surged from \$2.63 billion in 2020 to \$4.06 billion in 2024, though 2023 saw a 5.9 percent decline as physical stores reopened. Despite this rebound effect, e-commerce penetration remains modest at 8.4 percent of total retail sales – significantly lower than mainland China's 47 percent – reflecting Hong Kong's dense network of physical stores and deep-rooted in-person shopping habits.

Despite these obstacles, notable opportunities remain. Hong Kong's fast-paced culture aligns well with e-commerce's ability to offer convenience to consumers pressed for time. Hong Kong consumers are open to new, innovative, and healthy products, and the region's status as a major trading hub for Asia with world-class air logistics suggest room for growth. For more information on Hong Kong's e-commerce sector, please refer to GAIN Report: [Hong Kong E-commerce Market for Food and Beverage Products](#).

³ Hong Kong Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

⁴ “Supermarkets in Hong Kong, China; Convenience Stores in Hong Kong, China”, Euromonitor International.

Hotel Restaurant and Institutional (HRI) Sector

Hotels

There are over 300 hotels providing approximately 92,900 rooms for visitors to Hong Kong.⁵ The Hong Kong Hotel Classification System implemented by Hong Kong Tourism Board features five key indicators including “facilities”, “location”, “staff-to-room ratio”, “average achieved room rates” and “business mix.” Hotel occupancy has rebounded since COVID restrictions were fully lifted in early 2023 and the sector remains a key user of imported, high-end food and beverage products.

Restaurants

Hong Kong is home to a diverse culinary scene with more than 17,154 restaurants in Hong Kong restaurants catering to all tastes and budgets.⁶ The Michelin Guide 2025 stars 76 restaurants in Hong Kong and 19 in Macau, including seven three-starred establishments in Hong Kong, outnumbering the five three-starred restaurants in New York City and six in London.⁷ In 2024, Hong Kong restaurant receipts remained steady at \$14.0 billion while the restaurant purchase of food and beverage purchases dropped 2.1 percent to \$4.5 billion compared to 2023.

Sales of the Chinese restaurants, which make up 36 percent of total restaurants sales, declined by 4.3 percent in 2024.⁸ In contrast, fast food shops recorded growth over two years, with 18.1 percent in 2023 and 7.2 percent increase 2024.

Table 3. Hong Kong: Restaurants Purchases and Receipts (Billion USD)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	Growth (23 vs 24)
Restaurant Receipts	11.9	11.1	14.07	14.06	-0.1%
Restaurant Purchases	3.9	3.7	4.59	4.50	-2.1%

Source: Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department, USD1=HKD7.8

Institutions

Hong Kong’s institutional foodservice sector consists of hospitals, residential care facilities, schools, prisons, and travel industry catering facilities. Many of these facilities, especially those operated by the government, purchase food supplies through tenders where price, quality, consistency, and stable supply matter. Experienced local importers are familiar with the process and requirements.

For more information on the Hong Kong HRI Sector, please refer to GAIN Report: [Hong Kong HRI Annual](#).

Food Processing Sector

Local food processing is very limited in Hong Kong due to the high cost of land and labor resources. In 2024, Hong Kong’s domestic exports of processed food and beverages decreased 4.4 percent to \$990 million year-on-year.⁹ Locally produced key products include instant noodles, pasta, biscuits, pastries,

⁵ Hong Kong Tourism Board, Hong Kong Hospitality Insights 2023 Overview & 2024 Outlook.

⁶ As of April 2025, licensed restaurant number in Hong Kong- Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

⁷ Michelin Guide 2025.

⁸ Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department.

⁹ “Processed Food and Beverages Industry in Hong Kong” Hong Kong Trade Development Council.

cakes, and drinks. Other related activities include the canning, preserving and processing of seafood (fish, shrimps, prawns, and crustaceans), dairy products (fresh milk, yoghurt, and ice-cream), edible oils and seasonings. The processed food and beverages industry in Hong Kong largely centers on re-export activities. In 2024, Hong Kong re-exports of processed food and beverage increased 1.5 percent to \$5.0 billion compared to 2023. Mainland China and Macau are two major destinations for re-exports, accounting for 49 percent and 29 percent respectively.

Hong Kong hosted more than 200 events in 2024 and plans for over 90 mega events in the first half of 2025. The government expects to generate \$425 million in consumer spending and \$231 million in economic value added in the first half of 2025. However, the recovery has not been without its challenges. Restaurants and retailers are still dealing with high operation cost, labor shortages and a changing consumer landscape after the pandemic- spending per capita lagged due to competition from Shenzhen and regional cities. Long term economic recovery will continue to depend on improvement in sectors such as housing and import and export business.

SECTION V. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD IMPORTS

Table 4. Hong Kong: Imports of Consumer-Oriented Ag. Products

Partner Country	Calendar Year (Value: \$ million)					Growth	Growth
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2023vs2024	2020vs2024
_World	22,483.00	24,212.81	20,901.28	20,456.90	20,237.90	-1%	-10%
China	5,054.08	5,772.46	6,099.45	6,634.91	6,353.76	9%	31%
Japan	1,461.70	1,687.04	1,555.50	1,482.21	1,317.39	-5%	10%
United States	2,162.26	1,913.77	1,534.75	1,427.15	1,480.33	-7%	-58%
France	990.94	1,202.13	951.38	1,032.30	987.41	9%	-12%
Thailand	1,534.33	1,572.14	1,201.47	986.63	797.42	-18%	-19%
Australia	1,012.56	1,191.00	813.72	935.33	881.07	15%	-18%
Brazil	1,976.81	1,633.43	877.77	869.82	1,019.78	-1%	-56%
Chile	1,286.79	1,898.02	1,617.10	808.72	1,394.20	-50%	-44%
New Zealand	540.51	616.8	506.4	472.21	563.29	-7%	-30%
Netherlands	620.05	562.39	379.98	412.18	434.56	35%	-30%
Total of Top 10 Partners	16,349.06	17,862.43	15,553.58	15,081.20	15,229.21	-3%	-24%
Total of Rest of the World	6,133.94	6,350.38	5,347.70	5,375.70	5,008.68	-7%	-18%

Source: Trade Data Monitor, LLC.

**Table 5. Hong Kong: Top 10 Imports of
Consumer-Oriented Agricultural Products and Competition¹⁰**

Product Category			Major Supply Sources¹¹
Fresh Fruit			1. Chile – 43.9%
Gross Imports	\$3.1 billion	1.12 MT	2. Peru – 9.6%
Retained Imports	\$1.0 billion	0.53 MT	7. United States – 4.4%
Seafood			1. China – 35%
Gross Imports	\$3.2 billion	309,499T	2. Japan – 12%
Retained Imports	\$2.48billion	269,862T	8. United States – 3%
Beef and Beef Products			1. Brazil – 38%
Gross Imports	\$1.48 billion	313,398 T	2. United States – 27%
Retained Imports	\$969 million	120,445 T	3. Australia – 7%
Wine and Related Products			1. Australia – 30%
Gross Imports	\$873.9 million	40.5 million liters	2. France- 20%
Retained Imports	\$622.0 million	33.4 million liters	7. United States – 5%
Pork and Pork Products			1. Brazil – 31%
Gross Imports	\$895 million	277,831T	2. China – 28%
Retained Imports	\$784 million	237,165T	8. United States – 3%
Soup and Other Prepared Food			1. China – 26%
Gross Imports	\$1.58 billion	146,189 T	2. United States – 15%
Retained Imports	\$320 million	114,605 T	3. Germany – 9%
Dairy Products			1. New Zealand – 28%
Gross Imports	\$1.11 billion	249,989 T	2. Netherlands – 17%
Retained Imports	\$465 million	199,356 T	9. United States – 2%
Poultry Meat and Products			1. China – 58%
Gross Imports	\$1.1 million	420,893 T	2. Brazil – 12%
Retained Imports	\$977 million	342,240 T	3. United States – 12%
Non-Alcoholic Beverages			1. China – 78%
Gross Imports	\$1.1 billion	398 million liters	2. Japan – 5%
Retained Imports	\$878 million	282 million liters	7. United States – 1%
Bakery Products			1. China – 61%
Gross Imports	\$956 million	316,181 T	2. Japan – 11%
Retained Imports	\$465 million	264,234 T	10. United States – 1%

SECTION V. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Post Contact

Agricultural Trade Office, Consulate General of the United States, Hong Kong and Macau

18th Floor, St. John's Building

33 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong

Tel: (852)-2841-2350

Fax: (852)-2845-0943

Email: Atohongkong@usda.gov

Website: <http://www.atohongkong.com.hk>

<http://www.usconsulate.org.hk>

¹⁰ Calculations based on Trade Data Monitor data.

¹¹ Ranking and market share by gross import value in 2024.

Other Hong Kong Government / Semi-Government Contacts:

Please refer to [GAIN Report HK2023-0024](#).

Attachments:

No Attachments