

Agricultural exports exceeded 100 billion euros in 2021

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Exports of agricultural goods are estimated to have reached 104.7 billion euros in 2021, setting a new record. This is reported by Wageningen Economic Research (WUR) and Statistics Netherlands (CBS) on the basis of joint research commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

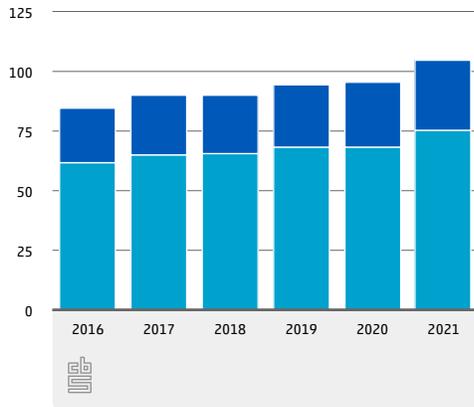
Total [exports of agricultural goods](https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2022/03/agricultural-exports-exceeded-100-billion-euros-in-2021/exports-of-agricultural-goods) (https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2022/03/agricultural-exports-exceeded-100-billion-euros-in-2021/exports-of-agricultural-goods) were 9 billion euros (9.4 percent) higher in 2021 than in the previous year. The growth in agricultural export value is attributable to both increased prices and growth in export volume. Prices of exports increased slightly more than volume.

The estimated total of 104.7 billion euros in agricultural goods exports comprised 75.7 billion in domestically produced goods and 29.0 billion in re-exported agricultural goods which originated from other countries. Domestic exports thus reached 10.7 percent year-on-year growth while re-exports grew by 6.1 percent.

Last year, agricultural exports generated [export earnings](https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2022/03/agricultural-exports-exceeded-100-billion-euros-in-2021/export-earnings) (https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2022/03/agricultural-exports-exceeded-100-billion-euros-in-2021/export-earnings) of an estimated 46.1 billion euros. Of this amount, 42.1 billion euros were domestic exports and 4.0 billion re-exports.

Exports of agricultural goods

bn euros



Domestic exports Re-exports

Source: CBS, figures for November and December 2021 are estimates

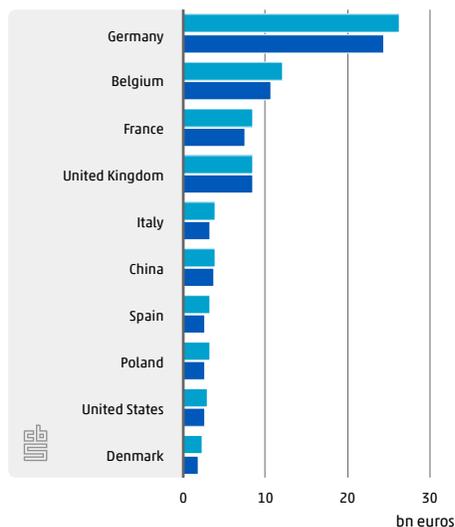
Most agricultural exports went to neighbouring countries

In 2021, a quarter of total agricultural exports went to Germany (26.3 billion). The three next largest markets were Belgium (12 percent), France (8 percent) and the United Kingdom (8 percent). France has surpassed the United Kingdom as the third largest destination for Dutch agricultural exports. Whereas the value of these exports to France rose by 14 percent in 2021, exports to the UK hardly increased (0.4 percent).

Re-exports to the UK down by 35 percent due to Brexit

Exports to the United Kingdom are stagnant. This is due to the significant 35-percent decline in re-exports of agricultural goods to the UK. As of 1 January 2021, import duties have made shipping of goods from outside the European Union directly to the United Kingdom more favourable than via the Netherlands. On the other hand, domestic agricultural exports to the United Kingdom showed a significant increase last year at 14 percent. However, many of the UK's border checks on animal and plant products and various customs formalities have been postponed until 2022. These checks are expected to have an effect on Dutch agricultural exports to the United Kingdom as of this year.

Top ten destinations of agricultural exports in 2021



2021 2020

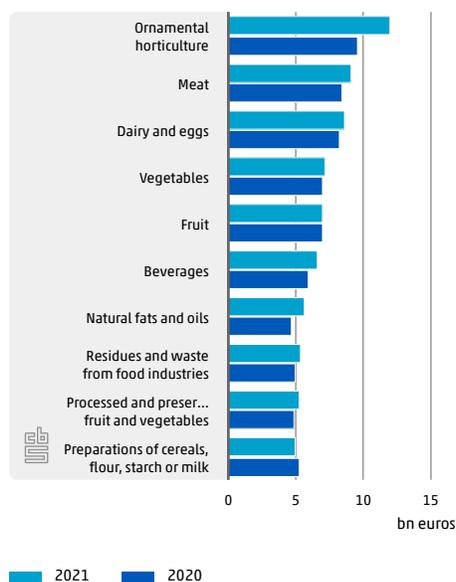
Source: CBS, figures for November and December 2021 are estimates by

Horticultural exports up by one quarter

Just as in previous years, ornamental horticulture (flowers, plants, bulbs and tree nursery products) generated the bulk of the agricultural export value. In 2021, for example, horticultural exports stood at 12 billion euros, i.e. up by one quarter on the previous year. The value increase is mainly due to the sharply rising prices of flowers and plants last year. In 2020, the Netherlands exported 9.6 billion euros worth of horticultural products; in 2019, 9.5 billion euros.

The second most exported agricultural product is meat. In 2021, meat exports rose by 7 percent: from 8.5 billion euros in 2020 to 9.1 billion euros. Other major export products showed similar growth last year. Only preparations of cereals, flour and milk showed a decrease. One of the reasons was the sharp decline in exports of baby milk powder to China.

Top ten exports of agricultural goods in 2021



Source: CBS, figures for November and December 2021 are estimates by

Organic trade

There is growing attention for the conditions under which traded products have been produced. This may concern social issues (e.g. child labour, poor working conditions, slavery) or environmental issues (e.g. climate, biodiversity). In March 2022, the European Commission is expected to publish a directive requiring companies in the European Union to adopt responsible business practices. In the current (trade) statistics, information on this is fragmented. Such data is only available for imports of organic products. According to this data, 1.5 percent of the total volume of imports into the EU was organic in the period 2018-2020. The two largest organic import flows are bananas and livestock feed, with Ecuador being the largest supplier. Within the European Union, the Netherlands is the largest importer of organic products from third countries.

Sources

Publication - [The Dutch agricultural sector in an international context, 2022 \(English summary included\)](https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/publication/2022/03/the-dutch-agricultural-sector-in-an-international-context-2022) (<https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/publication/2022/03/the-dutch-agricultural-sector-in-an-international-context-2022>)

Wageningen Economic Research - [The Dutch agricultural sector in an international context - Abstract](https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/de-nederlandse-agrarische-sector-in-internationaal-verband-editie-4) (<https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/de-nederlandse-agrarische-sector-in-internationaal-verband-editie-4>)