

Exporting Food & Beverage Products from Europe to China

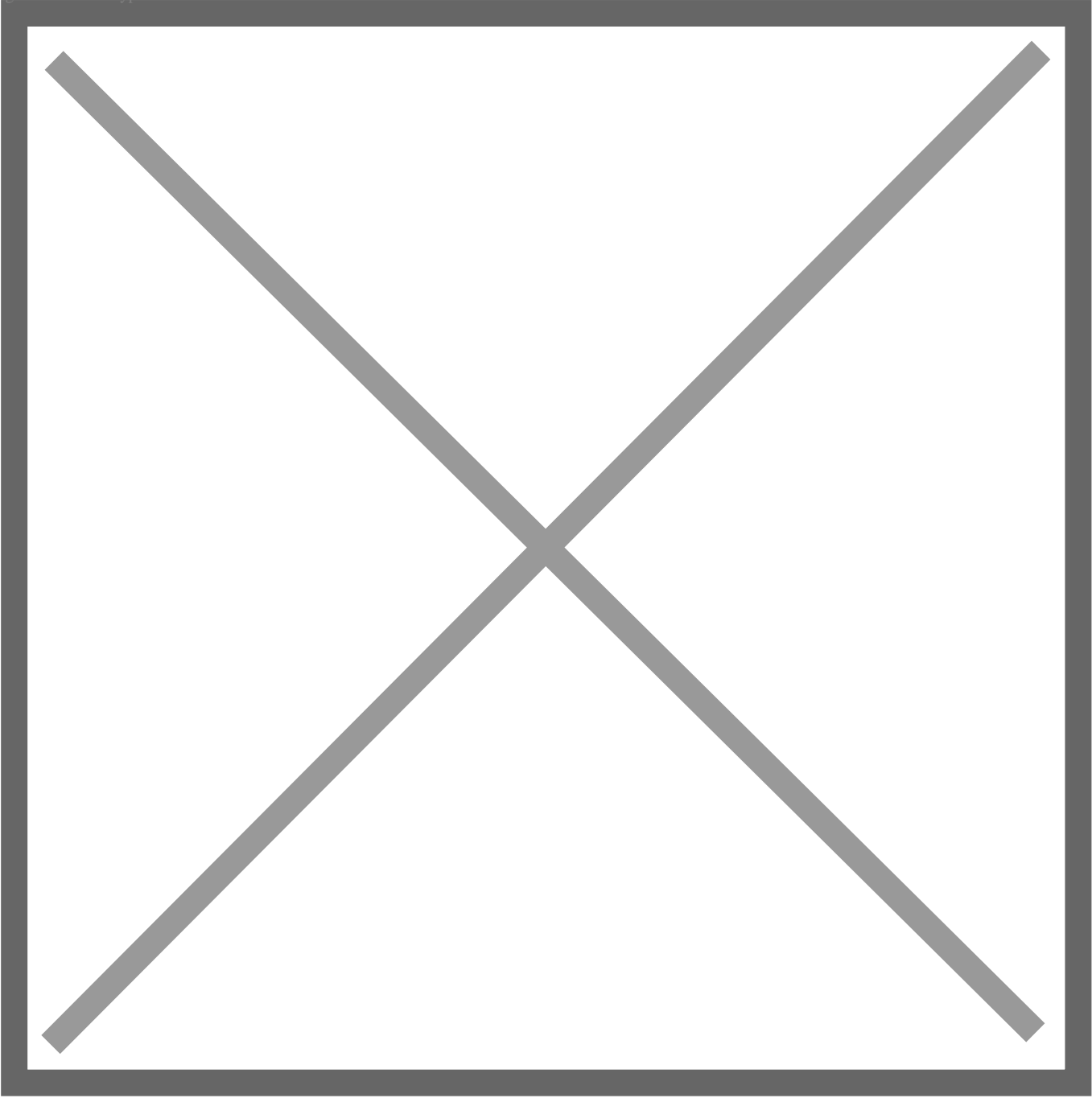
TAGS

Food & Beverage

ARTICLES

19 August 2024

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China is the third agri-food export market for the European Union. EU agri-food exports to China in 2022 reached 15.8 billion EUR, accounting for nearly 7% of the EU's total exports to the country. At the same time, China is the fifth supplier of agri-food products to the EU, with imports into the EU in 2022 reaching 9.8 billion EUR.[\[1\]](#)

The 2019 EU Strategic Outlook, which guides the EU's engagement with China, has a strong focus on **improving market access related to EU agri-food exports to China**. This is the top priority for EU countries in China as far as agriculture is concerned. In March 2021, the landmark [EU-China agreement protecting geographical indications](#) came into force to protect 96 European Geographical Indications (GI) in China and 100 Chinese GI in the EU against imitations and usurpation, bringing trade benefits and demand for high-quality products on both sides. A second list of 175 GIs on each side will be protected in 2025.

Dedicated resources on F&B

Among the numerous support services set up by the EU to support exporters, the **EU SME Centre supports small- and medium-sized enterprises** through various free-of-charge services, such as market entry guidelines, market reports, and confidential one-to-one technical assistance. Food & beverage is a key sector for the activities of the EU SME Centre:

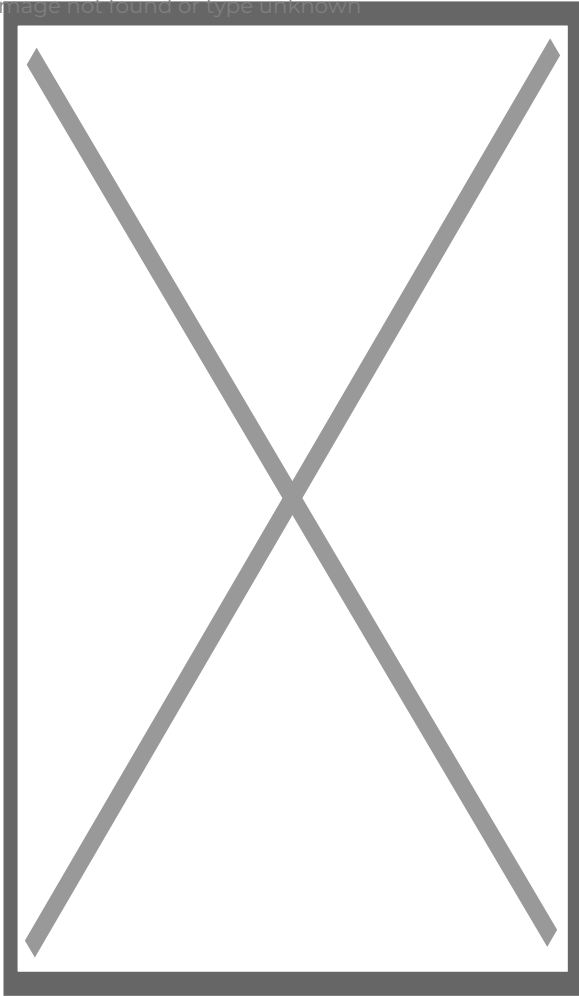
- **More than half of the EU SME Centre's market entry guidelines and market reports focus on the F&B sector**, including specific product categories as well as horizontal issues.
- **40% of one-to-one technical assistance requests** (140+) received by the EU SME Centre since July 2022 were in the F&B sector, involving GACC/CIFER registration, labelling and technical requirements, as well as sales channels.
- One section of the EU SME Centre's **Self-Diagnosis Tool** is entirely **dedicated to F&B issues**, to help EU F&B exporters gauge their readiness in entering the Chinese market.

To support business representatives taking part in the EU High Level Mission to China in April 2024, the EU SME Centre has produced this dedicated page summarising our existing resources in the F&B sector – all free of charge. Business representatives are welcome to [get in touch with the EU SME Centre's team of experts](#) for any questions before, during, and after the mission.

Resources for All F&B Exporters

[Exporting F&B to China: Challenges and Opportunities](#)

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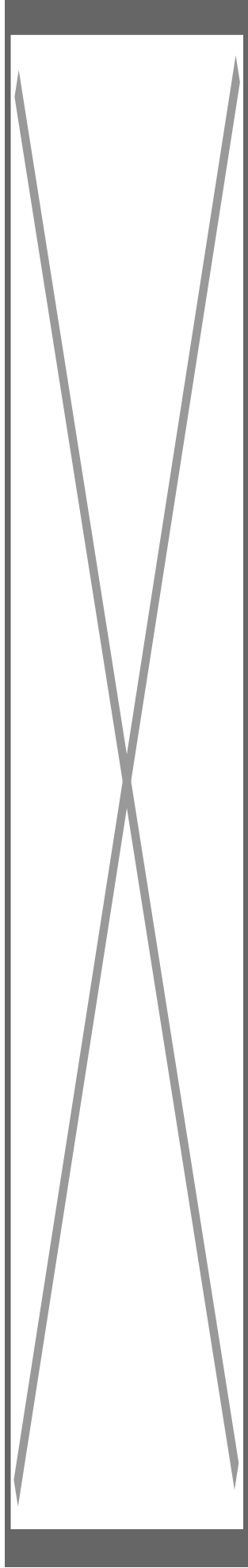


This webinar organised in April 2023 covers three key areas that are crucial for SMEs looking to do business in China: the commercial channels available to SMEs, compliance requirements, and how to protect intellectual property rights (IPR). [Watch the webinar >](#)

The first section focuses on the different **commercial channels available to SMEs, ranging from e-commerce platforms to brick-and-mortar stores**. The second focus is on how to avoid costly mistakes by remaining in **compliance with Chinese regulations, including product safety standards, labelling requirements, and customs procedures**. Last, experts provide insights into the best practices for protecting intellectual property in China and the legal options available in case of infringement.

[Mandatory GACC Registration for European Food & Beverage Establishments](#)

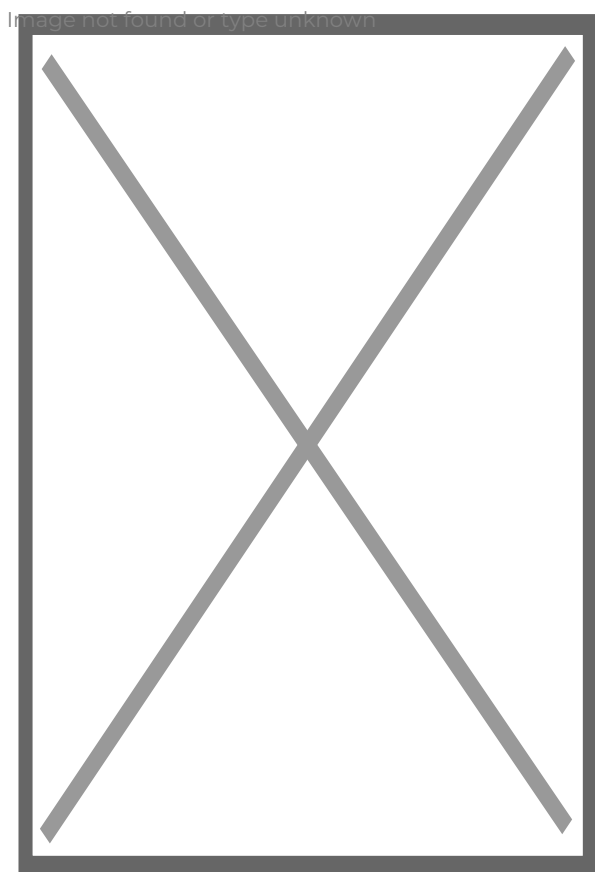
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China's food safety governance has been significantly strengthened over the past years. The overarching governing framework is represented by the Food Safety Law of the People's Republic of China (Second Revision) and the more detailed Implementing Regulations of the Food Safety Law.

The General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) started implementing since 1 January 2022 the Administrative Provisions on Registration of Overseas Manufacturers of Imported Foods, or GACC Decree 248. We have published guidelines updated for 2024 to guide European F&B establishments through the mandatory GACC registration process.

[Download the guidelines here >](#)



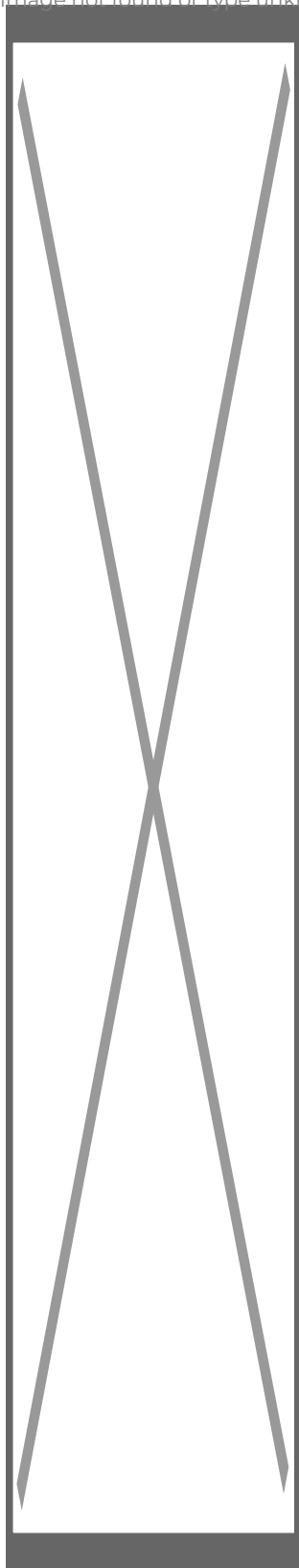
In response to a high number of SMEs contacting the EU SME Centre seeking assistance with the registration system, we have also recorded a webinar meant to guide new exporters with step-by-step screenshots and tips on how to avoid mistakes.

The webinar also touches upon the new **labelling and packaging requirements** for both general products and specific product categories. We share in this video the **contact details of the food safety competent authorities in EU Member States**, as close coordination with them will be required for certain food & beverage product categories. [Watch the webinar >](#)

Finally, we surveyed European SMEs in 2023 on their experiences with the CIFER registration system. The results of this study show the most frequent issues encountered by F&B exporters and trading companies using the system. [See the survey results here >](#)

[Guide to Trade Fairs in China: 2025 Update](#)

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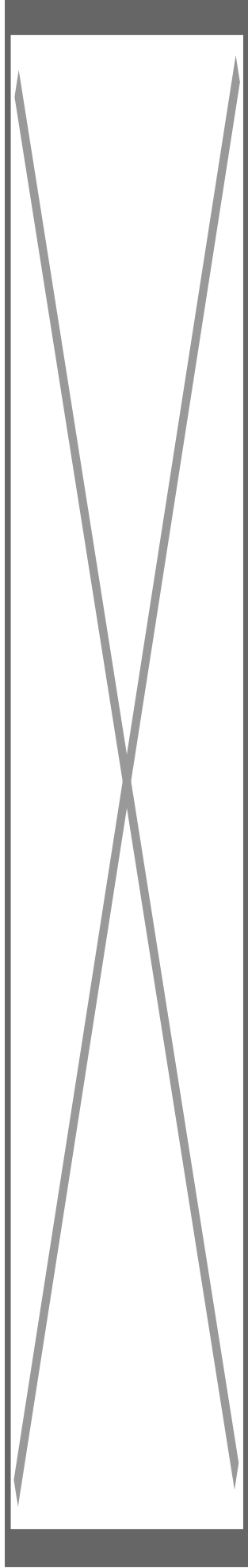


For European SMEs without local resources operating on the ground in the Chinese market, participating in trade fairs in China remains an effective approach to meet potential business partners. This report lists major trade fairs in China that are relevant for and popular among EU SMEs, with a specific section for trade fairs relevant to F&B professionals.

The report also shares practical guidance for EU SMEs on how to define goals and devise a strategy tailored for a specific trade fair. It also offers a series of tips for identifying the Chinese trade fair most adapted to their goals, based on the different characteristics of each fair. Finally, we include a series of general and IP-related good practices to follow before, during, and after taking part in a trade fair, as well as concrete examples from European SMEs. [Read the report >](#)

[Selling to China via Cross-Border E-Commerce](#)

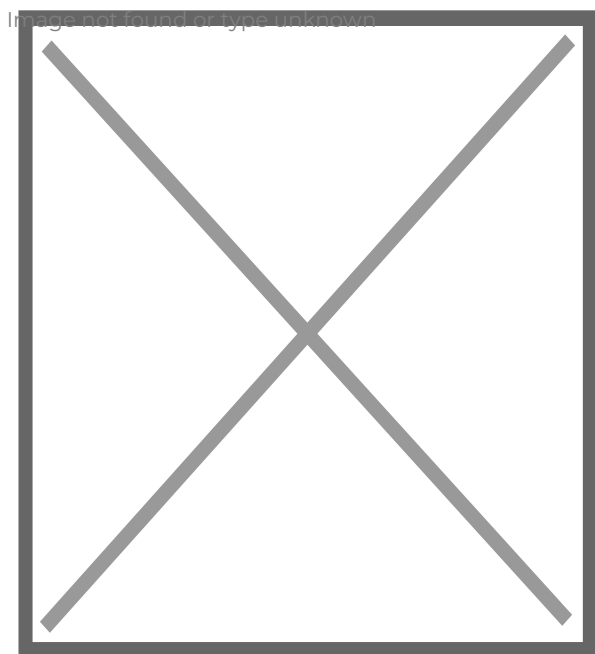
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In this report, we first give an overview of the CBEC market, describing the key differences between general trade and traditional e-commerce, as well as considerations on costs and taxation. We then detail the procedures for EU SMEs to start selling on the most popular CBEC platforms that are currently present in China, mainly Tmall Global, JD Worldwide, Kaola, Xiaohongshu, and WeChat. We also compare the pros and cons of selling via one's own website rather than on the above platforms, and we provide an English translation of the consolidated CBEC Positive List of products that can be sold via cross-border e-commerce.

The report contains four case studies with insights and tips on the opportunities, challenges, mistakes and lessons for EU SMEs entering the Chinese market via CBEC, as well as the typical steps and elements that are taken into account to develop and implement a CBEC market entry and growth strategy. Among these case studies, a company details the process of opening and running a Belgian F&B Store on Tmall Global. [Read the report >](#)

[**Communicating the Value of European GI Products to Chinese Consumers**](#)

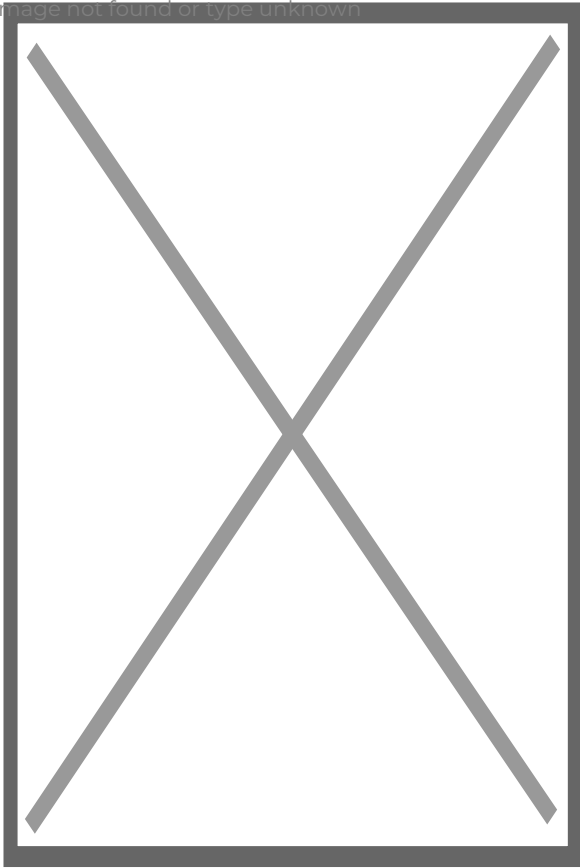


In March 2021, the **EU-China agreement protecting geographical indications** entered into force. The agreement protects 96 iconic EU agri-food names against imitation and usurpation, bringing trade benefits and introducing consumers to guaranteed, authentic products from European countries with rich culinary and cultural traditions.

Chinese consumers appreciate the safety, quality and authenticity of European agri-food. Yet, Chinese consumers' awareness of European GIs remains not as strong and deep as in other countries, requiring EU producers and exporters to adopt different and tailored approaches to communicate and promote the value of GI products in China. [Watch the webinar >](#)

[**Post-Market Supervision and Management of F&B Products**](#)

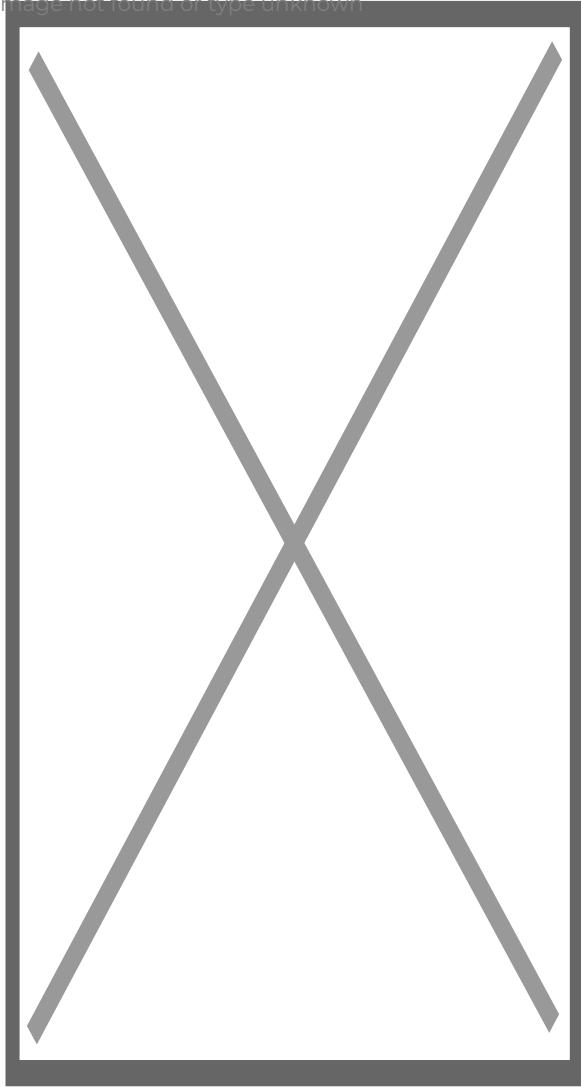
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For the purpose of ensuring food safety, testing for pesticides, and checking for the presence of mycotoxins, China's SAMR and AMR conduct regular sample-checking and random checks on products that have already entered the Chinese market. What happens after products are selected for sample-checking or random checks? What does the checking procedure entail? How long is the wait for results? How can such checks affect one's business in China? How much should businesses worry about it? [Watch the webinar here >](#)

[The Food and Beverage Market Entry Handbook: China](#)

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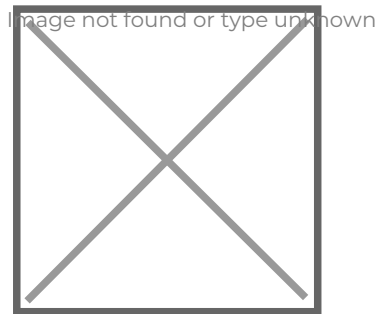


This Handbook published in November 2023 by the [European Research Executive Agency](#) is intended to act as a reference for those agri-food producers planning for, or in the process of entering, the Chinese market. This Handbook provides step-by-step guides on entering the agri-food market in China including relevant information such as analysis of the Chinese market for different product categories, market access and market entry procedures, IP protection, referrals to professional buyers and a signposting and referral system providing useful contacts and ways to penetrate the Chinese market.

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IPR Protection for the F&B Sector

[Guide to IPR Protection in China for the Food & Beverage Sector](#)



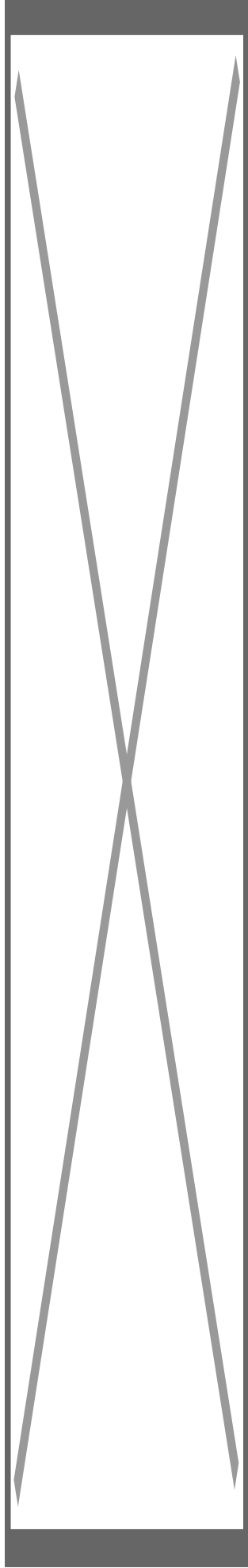
Despite the improvements in China's IP legislation, counterfeiting and other IP infringements are still commonplace in the F&B sector, thus companies need to ensure their rights are protected by taking proactive measures when entering the China market, such as registering their IP in China.

Since IP is territorial, the IP rights obtained in the EU (such as EU trademark or design rights) will not automatically be valid in China and it is the responsibility of each SME to register their rights in China. Entering the market without proper IP protection in place is a guarantee for failure. For example, someone may register your trademark before you do so and effectively block your market entrance. Remember that it is always cheaper to protect your rights from the start than trying to later recover your rights while dealing with infringements. There are several types of IP that are most relevant to the F&B industry. The report on IPR Protection in China for the Food & Beverage Industry provides an overview of the relevant IP registration options and issues within the industry.

[Read the report >](#)

[Guide to Trade Mark Protection in China](#)

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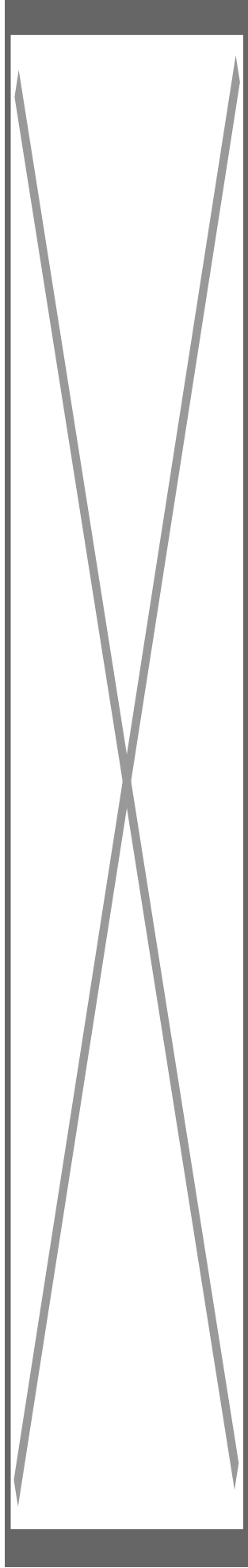


Concerns about product quality and safety in China and the high number of counterfeit or fake goods on the market mean that Chinese consumers tend to rely on brands and brand reputation in their purchasing decisions. A trustworthy brand and good business reputation are critical to success in the F&B market in China. Obtaining and protecting trademarks in China is therefore essential to the success of your business in the country.

Trademarks can convey quality which will enable your company to win new customers and ensure customer loyalty in the long term. The Guide to Trademark Protection in China provides an overview of the trademark registration procedures in China as well as how to enforce your rights in case of an infringement. [Read the report >](#)

[Guide to Geographic Indications in China](#)

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For EU SMEs intending to export products with a specific national or regional origin, a geographical indication (GI) certification can play an important role in your branding strategy. GIs cannot be registered by individual companies but by collective organisations representing a group of producers, e.g. the Spanish Serrano Ham Consortium (Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español).

Furthermore, the EU China Agreement on Geographical Indications automatically protects nearly 300 EU Geographical Indications in China. The Guide to Geographical Indications in China provides an overview of GI protection and registration in China. [Read the report >](#)

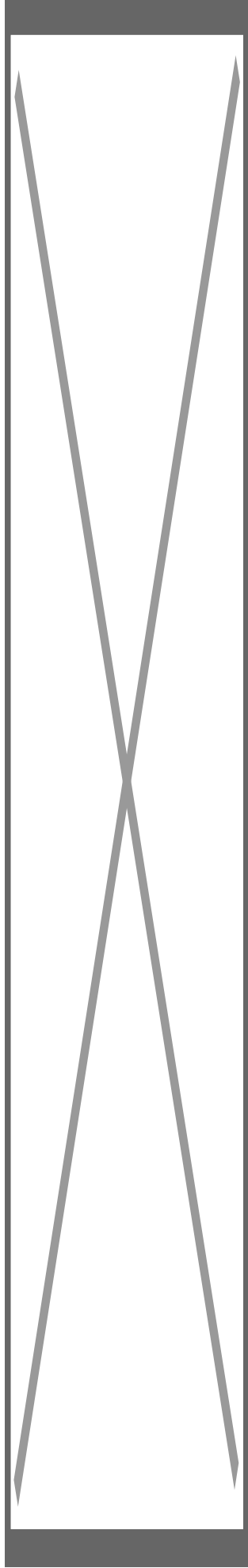
Market Overview and Requirements for Specific F&B Products

The EU SME Centre has released in recent years both sector overviews and segment-specific publications for European exporters of F&B products. The resources below aim at helping prospective exporters and active exporters to understand the market trends for their F&B category and to be aware of the regulatory landscape.

Exporting Wine to China

[China's Wine Market\(s\): Drivers, Technical Requirements, and Opportunities for EU Producers](#)

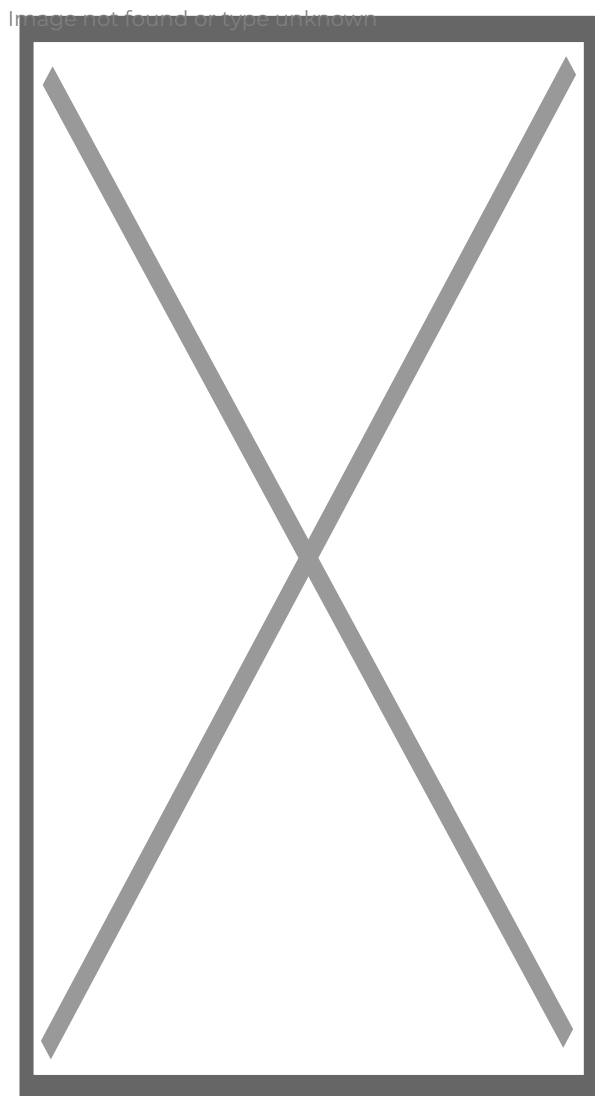
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Published in November 2023, our report on the wine market in China takes stock of the evolution of imports into China, domestic production and consumption habits in recent years. This report also aims to serve as a guide on the **regulatory and technical requirements for importing wine products into China**. We interviewed industry experts and collected feedback from EU exporters to provide **tips and recommendations** that wine exporters should keep in mind or should leverage when selling in the Chinese market.

Over the past few years, the wine market in China has known a steady decrease in all indicators. Despite going through a “self-adjustment” phase, China remains a large market that is highly relevant for European wine exporters. However, competition with wine exporters from other countries is fierce, as some competitors enjoy preferential trade agreements with China. [Read the report >](#)

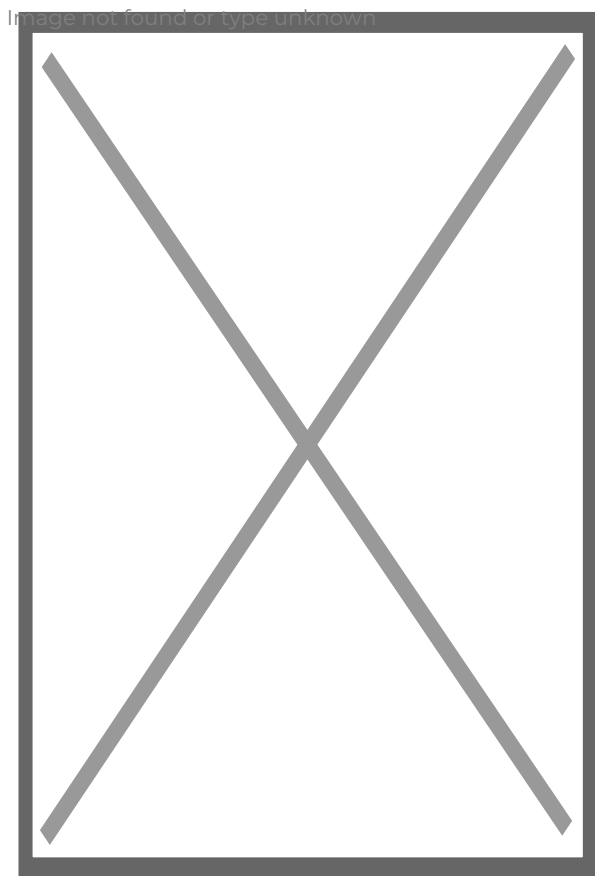
[**Case Studies: Three Wine Professionals Share Their Experience of the Chinese Market**](#)



From interviews conducted in late 2023 with three wine experts in China on their analysis of the market and its evolution over the past few years, we published three case studies. With this publication, we aim to guide EU wine producers and distributors when they select their positioning and marketing strategies. From forging alliances to branding, organising wine degustations

focused on one region or one producer to selecting knowledgeable influencers to introduce a vineyard on Chinese social media, the three experts interviewed recount their innovative paths over the years in the Chinese market. [Read the case studies >](#)

[**Green Harvest: The Evolution of China's Wine Market**](#)

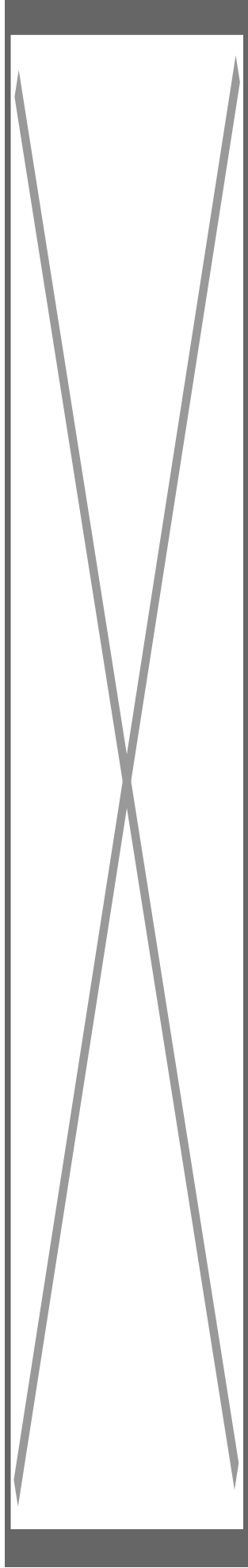


This January 2024 webinar gives an overview of the main findings of the report *China's Wine Market(s): Drivers, Technical Requirements, and Opportunities for EU Producers* by the EU SME Centre. Our Business Advisor sums up the recent figures, consumption drivers, channels and emerging trends, as well as domestic production and imports into China.

With this video, obtain tips and recommendations for selling or promoting wine in the Chinese market, including on aspects unique to EU products. The three wine experts featured in the case studies above share their insights on branding and marketing European wines in the Chinese market. [Watch the webinar >](#)

[**Infographic: Selling Wine in China**](#)

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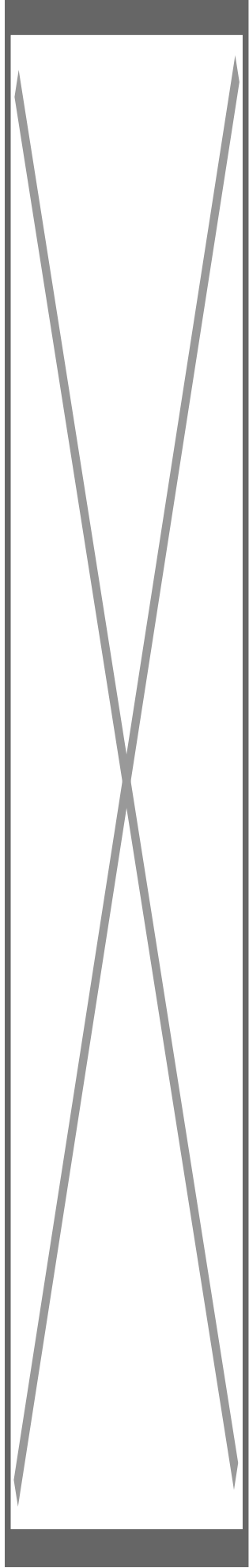
This infographic gathers a few facts and figures about the wine market in China, including consumer tastes, domestic production, market access and tariffs.

We sum up the largest exporters by wine categories, as well as the tariffs and duties that European exporters should know. [See the infographic in detail >](#)

Exporting Dairy to China

[**China's Dairy Sector: Market, Technical Requirements and Opportunities**](#)

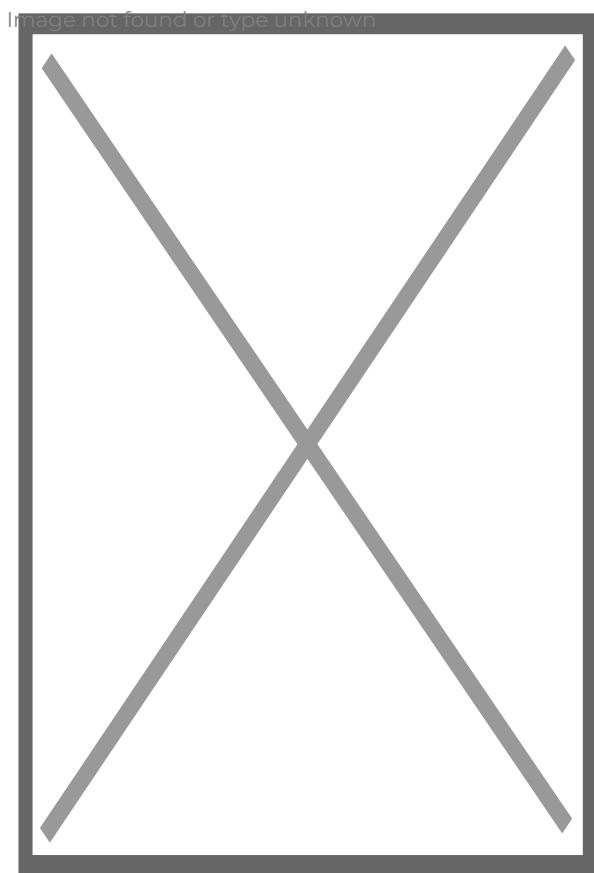
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China is one of the world's largest dairy markets and certainly the **largest importer of dairy products**. This 2023 report provides a detailed analysis of dairy imports into China for various dairy segments, with EU dairy products leading in some categories but lagging behind in others. We detail the **regulatory and technical requirements for importing dairy products into China**, with a focus on issues such as country protocols and eligibility, GACC/CIFER registration for production establishments, as well as heightened requirements for infant formula.

The report contains recommendations for European dairy exporters approaching the Chinese market, including on the most popular retail channels available in China, some of the **unique elements that EU producers can leverage**, and key findings from **interviews conducted with 8 dairy industry professionals in China**. [Read the report >](#)

[The Cream of the Crop: Exporting Dairy to China](#)



Watch this webinar to:

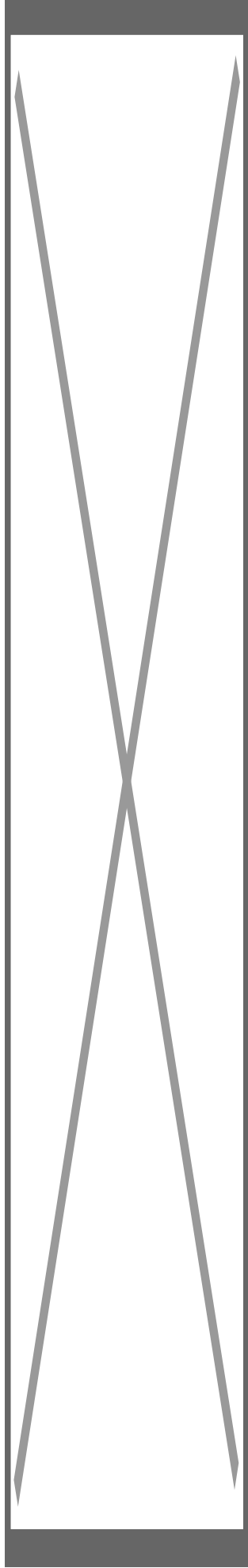
- Understand how to register with the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) and how to prolong or renew your certification.
- Know where to find your customers as well as experienced importers and distributors.
- Learn about the procedures and processes to successfully enter into the Chinese market.
- Get tips on exporting dairy to China, marketing, consumer tastes, and other aspects of the sector.
- Understand practical issues like labelling your products according to the regulations.
- Learn best practices to register trademarks and protect your intellectual property rights.

We also organised in April 2023 a webinar session dedicated to dairy export from Poland to China, in collaboration with the [Polish National Support Centre for Agriculture \(KOWR\)](#), the [Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development](#), and the Embassy of Poland in Beijing. [Watch the webinar here](#)

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[Infographic: Facts and Figures on China's Dairy Market](#)

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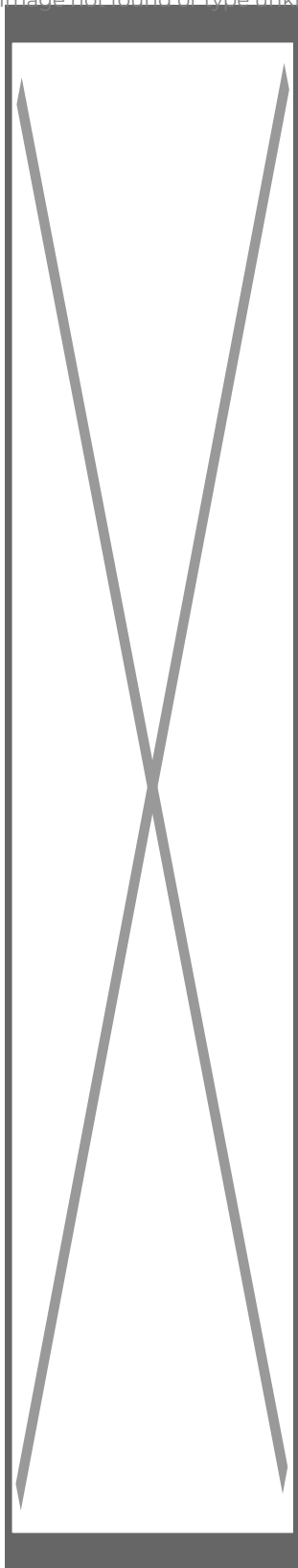
This infographic sums up recent market figures for the dairy industry in China, top exporters of dairy to China in 2022, main competitors for European exporters and the EU's market share.

This infographic was developed using the key findings of the EU SME Centre's 2023 report *China's Dairy Sector: Market, Technical Requirements and Opportunities*, detailed above. [See the infographic here >](#)

Health Food in China

[Guidelines on Exporting Health Food to China](#)

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China is the second largest health food market globally right after the United States, with 18% of global sales and a projected market value of RMB 219.7 billion (ca. EUR 28.94 billion) by the end of 2023. The health food market has registered a 60% growth in the country between 2016 and 2023. The health food sector allows **foreign brands to maintain a competitive advantage** over domestic brands. However, European brands perform behind popular brands from the United

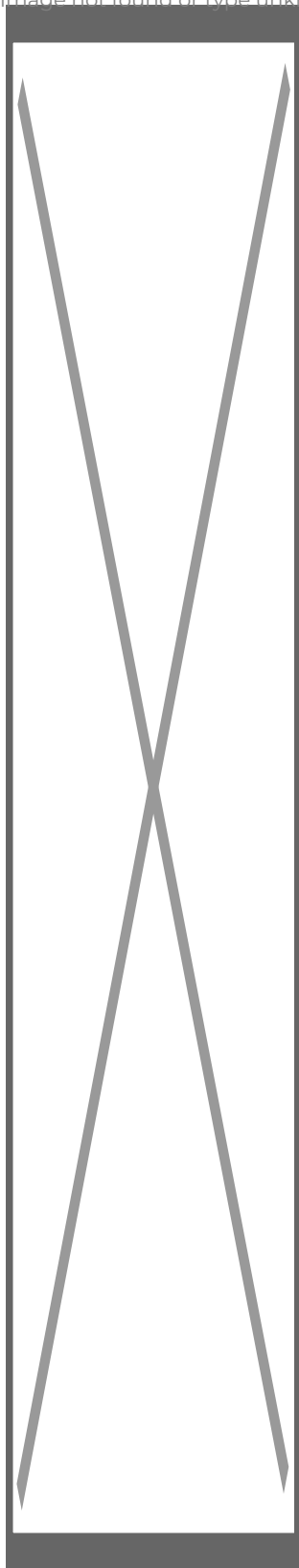
States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Japan.

These guidelines aim to increase the knowledge of possible opportunities, market access channels and technical requirements for European health food brands to enter the Chinese market. [Read the guidelines >](#)

Food additives in China

[**Guidelines on Food Additives in China: Regulations and Practical Cases**](#)

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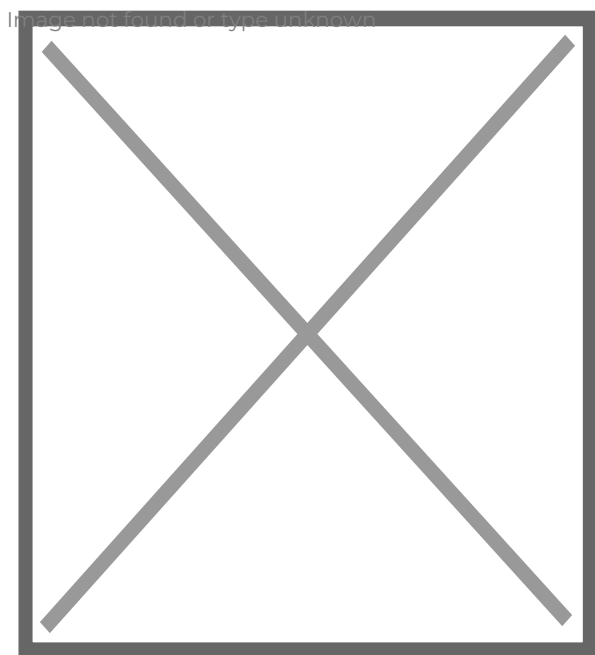


China has established a solid but rather complex regulatory system for food additives. This system might prove difficult to navigate for EU food producers. Many have reached out to the EU SME Centre with detailed questions on the permitted usage and scope of food additives.

For this reason, we published guidelines in 2022 on the ***GB 2760-2014 National Food Safety Standard for Uses of Food Additives*** to clarify these issues and to provide practical guidance to European SMEs. We

look into the definitions of food additives as well as labelling requirements for food additives to be sold in China, distinguishing between food additives imported into China as final products, and final food products containing food additives. [Read the guidelines here >](#)

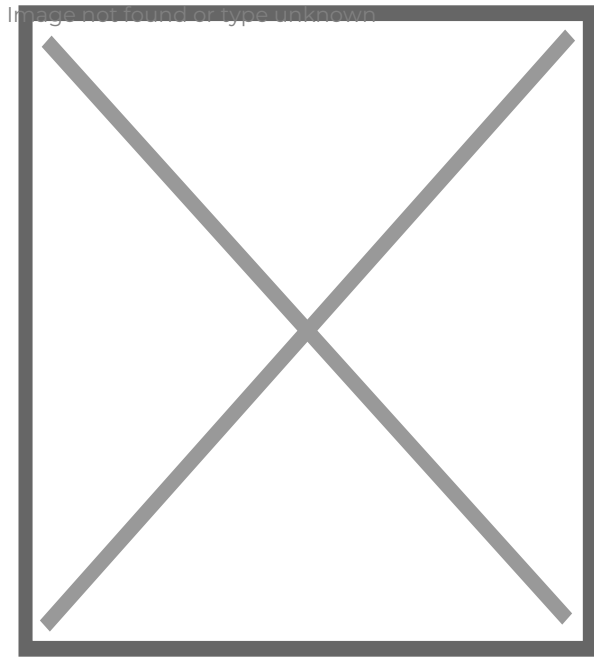
Food Additives in China: Current Requirements and Expected Changes



Watch this webinar to hear the authors of the guidelines *Food Additives in China: Regulations and Practical Cases* provide an overview of the laws and regulations governing food additives in China, discuss the latest labelling requirements and introduce the expected changes to the regulations. [Watch the webinar >](#)

The Plant-Based Food Market

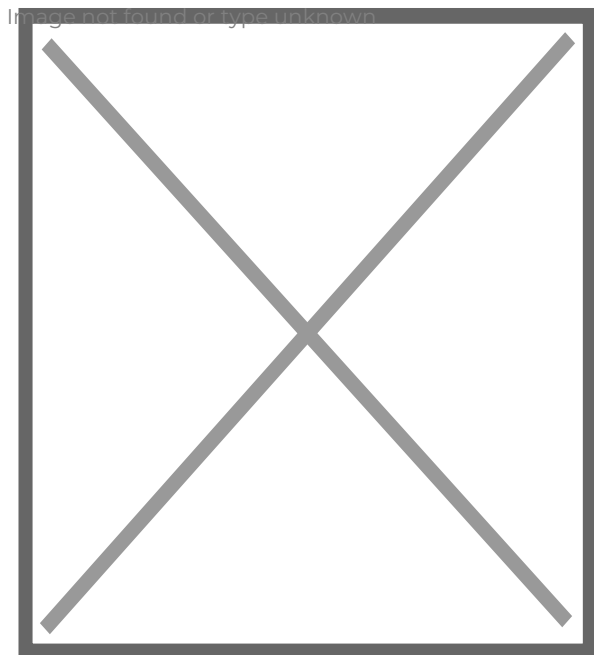
Sow, Sprout, Grow: Understanding China's Plant-Based Food Market



In this workshop, expert speakers and panellists present the current plant-based food market in China and its trends. They explain how their companies built competitive advantages over other brands and answer questions from SMEs interested in exporting plant-based food to China. [Watch the webinar >](#)

The Meat Market in China

[Exporting Meat Products to China](#)

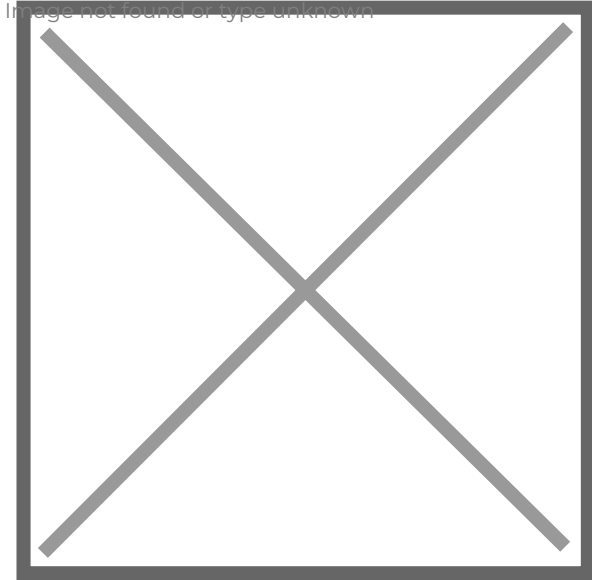


In this 2025 update, we give an **overview of China's meat market**, outlining key recent trends in consumption and imports. These guidelines also cover the essential laws, regulations, and standards that govern meat imports, as well as specific protocols agreed between China and EU

Member States.

Insights into EU meat export registrations and practical guidance on company registration with GACC's CIPHER system are also provided. [Read the guidelines >](#)

[Exporting Pork Products to China](#)



Pork products from a number of EU countries have a well-recognised brand among Chinese consumers, in particular products from Spain, Denmark and the Netherlands. This report provides step-by-step guidance for EU SMEs to understand their eligibility to export pork products to China.

This publication also looks into some of the **key challenges** that EU pork exporters face in China, particularly in terms of: exposure to domestic pork prices which significantly affect the demand of pork imports; China's different approach to "regionalisation" which often leads to temporary country-wide bans on pork imports from EU countries. Still, the EU represents more than half of China's pork imports and opportunities are attractive. [Read the report >](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

The EU SME Centre renewed in 2025 its [FAQs](#) with an entire section dedicated to F&B.

[What is the GACC/CIFER registration required for all food producers?](#)

[What resources does the EU SME Centre have in the F&B sector?](#)

[What products are exempted from GACC/CIFER registration?](#)

[What are the general technical labelling requirements for F&B products?](#)

[How can I know if there is a government protocol in place for my product?](#)

[Meat: EU producers authorised to export to China](#)

[Seafood: Are EU producers authorised to export to China?](#)

[Dairy products: EU producers authorised to export to China](#)

[How can I export wine to China?](#)

[Are EU Geographical Indications recognised in China?](#)

Previous Publications on F&B for the Chinese Market

[China's FMCG Market Overview and Entry Requirements – 2022 Report](#)

[The Private Label Food Products Market in China – 2022 Report](#)

[The Imported Seafood Market in China – 2020 Report](#)

[The Imported Fruit Market in China – 2019 Report](#)

[The Snacks Market in China – 2019 Report](#)

[The Beer Market in China – 2019 Report](#)

[The Alcoholic Drinks Market in China: Market Analysis, Retail Channels and Entry Strategy – 2017 Report](#)

Other F&B Case Studies

[Horsten International: Opening a Belgian F&B Store on Tmall Global – 2023](#)

[Goglio \(Tianjin\) Packaging Co. Ltd: A Leader of Flexible Packaging Solutions – 2023](#)

[TRB Hospitality Group: Understanding Chinese Consumers and Developing New Concepts in a Fast-Moving Environment – 2019](#)

[Brazzale Group & Jikang Food Co Ltd: Cheese Production in China – 2018](#)

[The Halve Maan Brewery: A Real Life Experience in the Imported Beers Industry in China – 2017](#)

[WAKE Energy Drinks – Promoting Active Healthy Lifestyle in China – 2017](#)

[Lancaster Brewery: Getting the First Container of Beer from the UK to China – 2016](#)

[Epermarket – Online Expat Supermarket – 2015](#)

[Everwines and Organic Farm – Going Online in the F&B Sector – 2011](#)

[1] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/b9ffbcd5-709d-45fd-8796-0fafbd4e0087_en?filename=agrifood-china_en.pdf.