

The World Dairy Situation Report 2025¹



¹ Summary report for MILK SA

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Introduction

The 2025 World Dairy Situation Report was published by the International Dairy Federation (IDF) in October 2025. As always, it provides a general survey and overview of the global dairy industry in the previous year. The compilation includes the most relevant and up-to-date information on global production, processing, trade, prices, and consumption of milk and dairy products. The complete report is available from the IDF. In this article, the most salient points are covered to provide a snapshot of the world dairy situation in 2024.

Executive summary

The world population expanded by 70 million people in 2024 (+0.9%), reaching 8.2 billion. Over the past five years, annual growth has slowed to 0.9%, down from 1.1% between 2015 and 2020. In 2022, constrained supply drove prices higher, curbing consumption—particularly in lower-income countries. By contrast, the sharp decline in dairy product prices in 2023 (–17.2% on the FAO index), fuelled by increased supply, supported a partial rebound in demand. Between 2015 and 2024, average per capita milk consumption rose by 12.7 kg, reaching 120.7 kg milk equivalent. Yet population growth remains concentrated in regions with relatively low dairy intake, especially in Africa. In 2024, per capita consumption grew by 1.6%, from 119.1 kg to 120.7 kg, keeping pace with production and outstripping population growth. For the first time in three years, global dairy consumption exceeded milk output, posting its strongest increase since 2021 at +2.5%.

Global production of unprocessed milk (all species) rose by 2.2% in 2024, in line with the average growth rate of 2.2% recorded between 2015 and 2024. Adjusted for the leap day, however, growth was only 1.9%. Output in North America, Europe, Oceania, and South America remained well below the global average (CAGR 2015–2024: 2.2%). Cow's milk accounted for 81% of total production (799 million tonnes), with growth accelerating compared with the previous three years and matching the pace of buffalo milk (+2.2%).

Deliveries of cow's milk to the dairy industry increased by 0.8% in 2024, slightly below the long-term CAGR of 0.9% (2015–2024). Adjusted for the leap year, growth was just 0.5%. Of the total cow's milk output, 467 million tonnes (58.0%) were processed by the dairy industry. The EU27 handled the largest share (31%), followed by the United States (22%), China (7%), and Brazil (6%), while India was not ranked.

Dairy products production synopsis:

The production of packaged milk (liquid milk) decreased by 1.3% in 2024, following two years of growth. The decline was mainly driven by China (-8.3%) due to reduced milk availability, weaker demand and a shift to higher WMP production. Packaged milk is less traded than concentrated products, and consumption of packaged milk tends to be a function of population growth and income trends.

By contrast, global output of **fermented products** recovered in 2024 (+6.1%), breaking a four-year downward trend, driven by growing demand for higher-protein diets.

Global cheese production increased by 2.0% to 24.4 million tonnes in 2024, which is slightly below the average growth rate of 2.2% since 2015. This market analysis is done on cow's milk cheese only, which constitutes 90% of total natural cheese production in the world. In the main cheese-producing region, the EU-27, production rose by 2.3%, accounting for almost half of the global increase and reaching a record close to 10 million tonnes. This rise was mostly driven by the growth of output in Poland (+4.5%), Denmark (+4.3%) and Germany (+3.1%).

Global demand for **butter and other milk fat** remained strong in 2024. Production increased by 2.0% to 13.5 million tonnes in 2024, slightly down from the average growth rate of 2.3% since 2015. Production is dominated by India, which alone accounts for half of the world's dairy fat production. Indian butter and ghee output grew by 3.0% in 2024 to a volume of 7.0 million tonnes. In 2024, butter output in the EU27, the second largest producer, decreased by 1.2%, while in the USA, output increased by 5.9%. In New Zealand, the world's leading butter exporter, production again rose in 2024 (+1.2%), continuing the positive trend observed.

Global Whole milk powder (WMP) production rose by 2.0% in 2024, following a decline in 2023 driven by a sharp drop in Chinese output. With stocks at low levels at the end of 2023, China boosted its WMP production by 15.5% in 2024, despite a reduction in raw milk availability.

Global Skimmed milk powder (SMP) production contracted in 2024, declining by 2.3% to 5.0 million tonnes, primarily reflecting subdued demand developments. Within the European Union (EU-27), output fell for the second consecutive year, registering a 5.1% decrease. The contraction was broadly distributed across member states, with the notable exceptions of France, Denmark, and Portugal, where production increased. In the United States, production declined for the third consecutive year, down by 11.4%. Conversely, output in Oceania expanded, with Australia recording a 13.4% increase and New Zealand a 3.2% rise.

Main exporting countries (% share of total) and export destinations synopsis:

Cheese top three exporters: EU27 1 388 (37%), USA 514 (14%), New Zealand 374 (10%), world trade 3 755 (1 000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: U.K. 430, Russia 295, Japan 275 (1 000 tonnes).

Butter and butter oil top three exporters: New Zealand 465 (40%), EU27 281 (24%), Belarus 80 (7%), world trade 1 165 (1 000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: China 152, USA 101 Russia 95 (1 000 tonnes).

WMP top three exporters: New Zealand 1 373 (57%), EU27 209 (%), Uruguay 158 (7%), world trade 2 425 (1000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: China 435, Algeria 240, Brazil 142 (1 000 tonnes).

SMP top three exporters: USA 745 (28%), EU27 718 (27%), New Zealand 441 (17%), world trade 2 625 (1 000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: Mexico 390, China 245, Indonesia 200 (1 000 tonnes).

Milk and cream top three exporters: EU27 1 428 (33%), UK 775 (18%), New Zealand 424 (10%), world trade 4 375 (1000 tonnes).

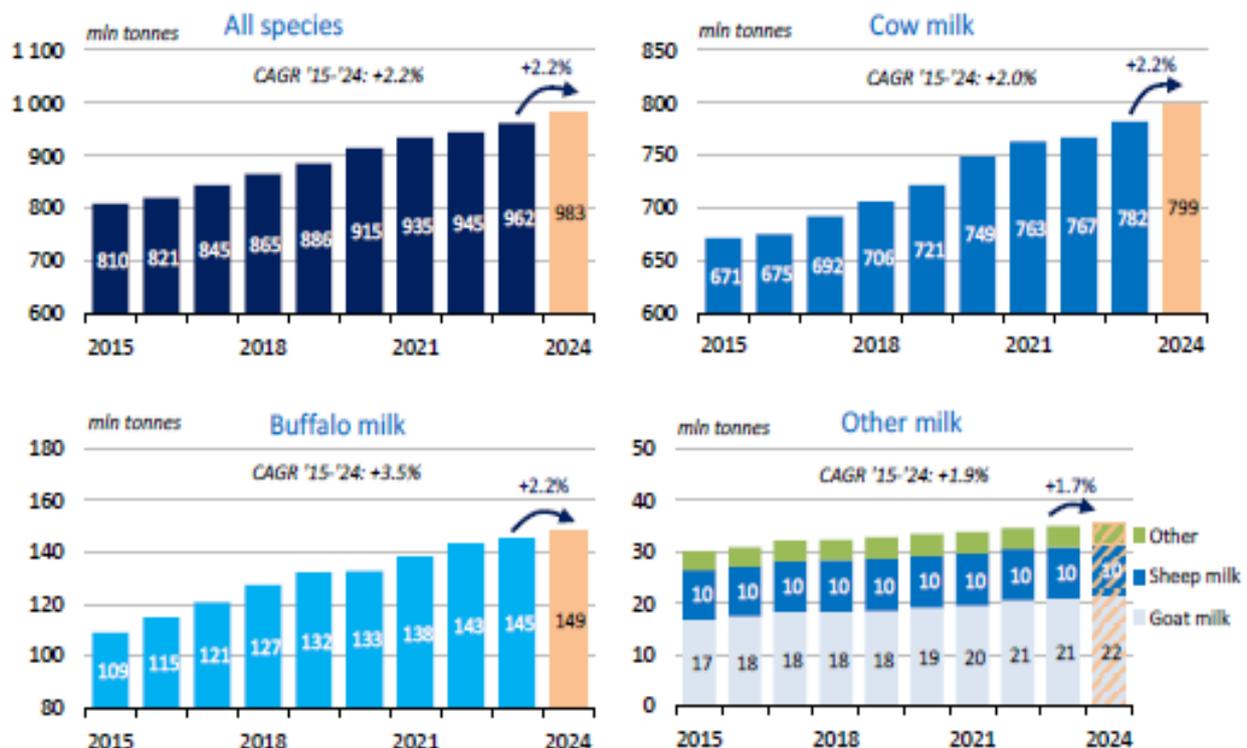
Top three export destinations: EU27 800, China 795, UK 480 (1 000 tonnes).

Production of unprocessed milk

Total production of unprocessed milk (all species) increased by 2.2% in 2024, which is on par with the average rate of 2.2% over the period 2015 to 2024, but if adjusted for the 2024 leap day, growth was only 1.9%. Growth in North America, Europe, Oceania, and South America is well below the average growth rate (CAGR of world milk production from 2015 to 2024: 2.2%). Cow's milk accounted for 81% of global output (799 million tonnes). Its growth accelerated compared with the previous three years and matched the pace of buffalo milk (+2.2%). There is an increasing gap in development between the 'traditional' dairy (exporting) regions and the emerging dairy countries/regions, which strive to achieve self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on imports. Strong growth in Asia is evident, driven by growth in local demand, government promotion and generally favourable unprocessed milk prices. Africa is on the same chart but less pronounced.

Unprocessed cow milk production growth in Asia for 2024 was 4.1%, somewhat below the CAGR of 4.7% for the period 2015 – 2024. All other regions in the world showed below-average growth, while no decline was observed, but in some individual countries, production of unprocessed milk decreased. Details regarding regional and individual countries regarding the production of unprocessed milk can be observed in Tables 1 and 2 below. In 2024, India accounted for 79% of the increase in Asian unprocessed milk production. This represents a growth rate of 7.1%, on par with the CAGR over the period from 2015 to 2024. Besides India, other countries in South Asia, such as Pakistan (+3.8%) and Bangladesh (+6.9%), have also experienced strong growth in cow's milk production. In contrast to the previous year, China experienced a decline in cow's milk production of 2.8% in 2024. The reduction was attributed to weaker demand, oversupply of milk and lower farmgate prices for milk, which led to the culling of dairy animals.

Milk production growth between 2015 and 2024



Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025

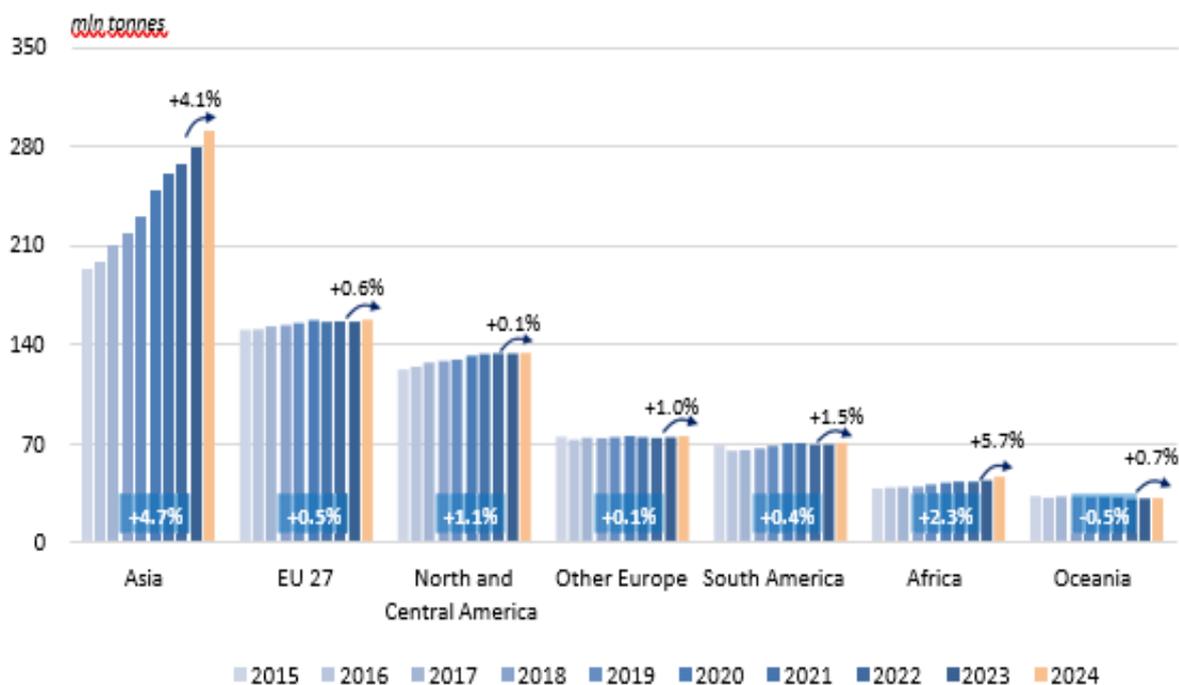
The major unprocessed cow's milk-producing continents are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Unprocessed cow's milk production per continent, 2024

Continent	Milk production 2024 (mil. tonnes)	Share in total cows' milk production (%)	Annual growth 2023 – 2024 (%)
Asia	294.5	37	4.1
EU-27	157.1	20	0.6
North and Central America	132.5	17	0.1
South America	71.2	9	1.5
Other Europe	71.1	9	1.0
Africa	41.1	5	5.7
Oceania	31.5	4	0.7
World	799	100	2.2

Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025

Regional development of cow's milk production between 2015 and 2024 (CAGR '15-'24 in %)



Source: CNIEL, ZuivelNL, FAO, IDF National Committees, national statistics.

Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025

Table 2: Top 20 producing countries of unprocessed cow's milk in 2024 and South Africa

Country	'mln' Tonnes	Growth 2023 – 2024 (%)
EU 27	156.5	0.6
Germany	33.9	-0.3
France	24.2	1.1
Poland	16.1	4.0
Netherlands	14.4	-2.3
Italy	13.3	1.9
India	136.1	7.1
USA	102.5	-0.2
China	40.8	-2.8
Brazil	37.7	3.4
Russia	33.8	0.8
Pakistan	21.7	3.8
New Zealand	21.6	1.3
Turkey	21.0	5.4
United Kingdom	15.7	1.1
Mexico	14.0	1.7
Bangladesh	13.5	6.9
Uzbekistan	12.4	4.0
Argentina	10.9	-6.5
Canada	10.6	0.8
Belarus	8.7	5.1
Australia	8.6	-0.7
Colombia	7.9	8.7
Iran	7.6	0.0
Japan	7.4	0.8
South Africa	3.5	3.6

Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2024

In Table 2, strong growth is observed in India, Turkey, Bangladesh, Belarus and Colombia. The following countries experienced a noteworthy contraction in the volume of unprocessed cow's milk that was produced in 2024 compared to 2023: the Netherlands, China and Argentina.

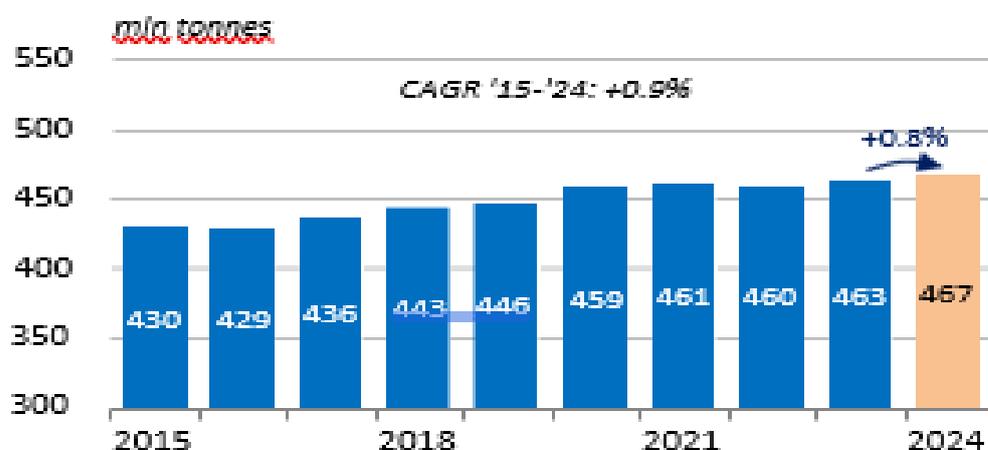
The growth rate of unprocessed buffalo milk production in 2024 was 2.2%, which is lower than the average annual growth rate of 3.5% for the period 2015 – 2024. The two main producing countries are India and Pakistan, with respective growth rates of 2.1% and 3.0% in 2024. The global volume of unprocessed buffalo milk in 2024 was 149 million tonnes.

Dairy processing

Global cow's milk deliveries to the industry increased by 0.8% in 2024, slightly lower than the CAGR of 0.9% for the period 2015 - 2024. If adjusted for the leap year, growth was only 0.5%. Four hundred and sixty-seven million tonnes of cow's milk (58.0% of total cow's milk production) were delivered to dairy processors for further processing. The EU27 processes the largest quantity of milk (31%), followed by the United States (22%), China (7%), and Brazil (6%), with India not being ranked. The trend of the two main producers of unprocessed cow's milk in the EU27 diverged in 2024. Deliveries in France rebounded to increase by 1.1% while deliveries in Germany decreased by 0.4%. In Asia, milk deliveries in Japan rebounded (0.8%) and in the Republic of Korea (0.6%), with Turkey growing at 10.5%, twice as much as global milk production growth. After six years of growth in China, volumes decreased by 1.5% in 2024. In the USA, deliveries were stable in recent years but edged down in 2024 by 0.2%, and in Australia, deliveries were down by 0.7%, while deliveries increased in New Zealand by 1.3%.

World: cow's milk deliveries (2015-2024)

Global milk deliveries trends (A)



Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025, (A) based on 54 countries

The aggregate dairy production statistics used to calculate and indicate dairy product output, represent between 75% and 90% of the estimated total world production. Fresh dairy products are an exception, as a large proportion of these come from and are marketed via the informal global market or are simply excluded from official statistics. Despite that, the IDF 2025 report provides data from 50 countries that form the basis for volume estimates and growth trends. Overall, processors favoured the production of cheese, butter, cream and fermented products over SMP and liquid milk.

The production of **packaged milk (liquid milk)** decreased by 1.3% in 2024, following two years of growth. The decline was mainly driven by China (-8.3%) due to reduced milk availability, weaker demand and a shift to higher WMP production. In India, production growth remained positive (+1.0%) though slightly slower than in previous years. Brazil (+2.2%), the United Kingdom (+1.6%) and Russia (+2.0%) all registered year-on-year increases.

In the EU27, structural decline in consumption continued to weigh on production (-0.8%). In the United States, after a long-term decline (CAGR 2015-2024: -1.5%), production rebounded in 2024 (+0.8%). This increase may indicate a new trend, with a recovery in whole liquid milk consumption.

Packaged milk is less traded than concentrated products, and consumption of packaged milk tends to be a function of population growth and income trends.

By contrast, global output of **fermented products** recovered in 2024 (+6.1%), breaking a four-year downward trend, driven by growing demand for higher-protein diets.

In most countries, production increased slightly or remained stable, except for the Republic of Korea (-4.7%) and Argentina (-15.9%). Chinese production recorded a strong recovery (14.7%). In the EU 27, production continued to rise (+3.0%), supported by a notable increase in Germany (+3.6%) and more moderate growth in France (+1.4%) and Spain (+0.7%). Output also grew significantly in the United States (+6.3%) and Turkey (+11.7%).

Liquid milk output

Global liquid milk production ^(C)



Trends in leading producing countries

mln tonnes	2024	Growth 2023/24 (%)
EU 27	22.1	-0.8%
China ^(D)	21.4	-8.3%
United States	19.5	+0.8%
India ^(E)	16.7	+1.0%
Brazil	7.8	+2.2%
United Kingdom	6.2	+1.6%
Russia	6.1	+2.0%

Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025; (C) is based on 55 countries (D) including dairy beverages (E) figures for co-operatives only

Global cheese production increased by 2.0% to 24.4 million tonnes in 2024, which is slightly below the average growth rate of 2,2% since 2015. This market analysis is done on cow's milk cheese only, which constitutes 90% of total natural cheese production in the world. In the main cheese-producing region, the EU27, production rose by 2.3%, accounting for almost half of the global increase and reaching a record production of close to 10 million tonnes. This rise was mostly driven by the growth of output in Poland (+4.5%), Denmark (+4.3%) and Germany (+3.1%).

In the United States, the second largest producer after the EU 27, cheese production increased by 0.7% to 6.5 million tonnes, below the average growth of 2.1% observed since 2015. Cheese production in the United States was driven by expanded production capacities and an increase in milk solids production.

Brazil and Türkiye, respectively the number three and four in global cheese production, experienced strong growth of 4.0% and 5.8%, but output in Argentina and the United Kingdom declined by 1.7% and 4.1%, respectively.

Cheese output

Global cheese production ^(L)



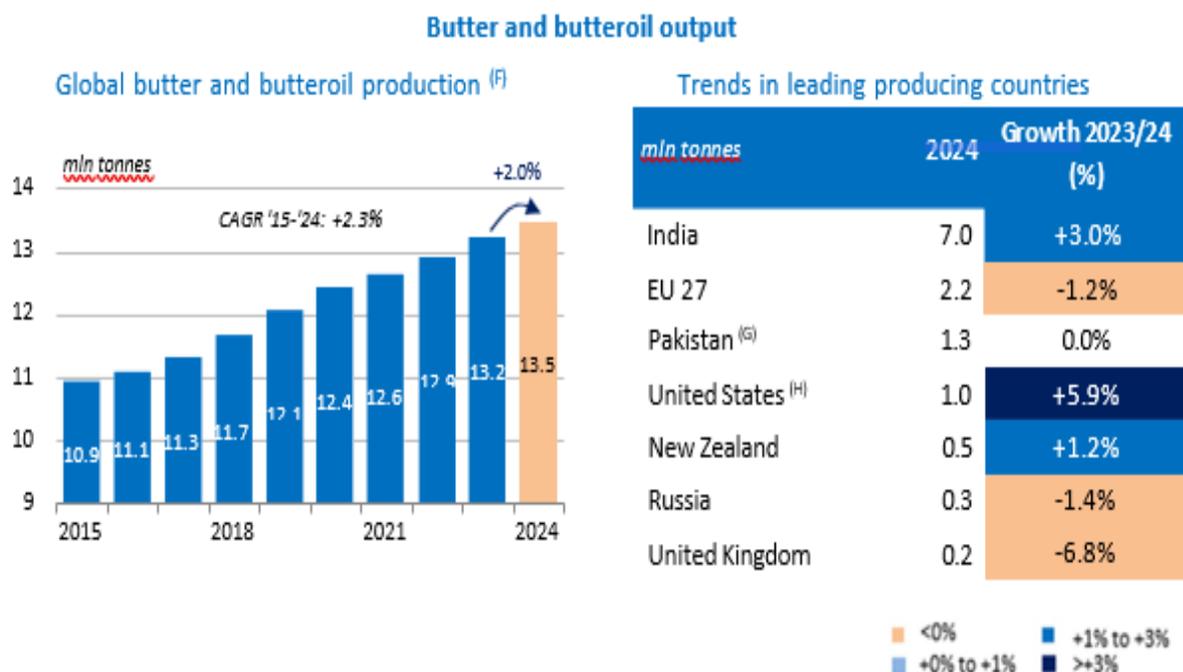
Trends in leading producing countries

mln tonnes	2024	Growth 2023/24 (%)
EU 27	10.0	+2.3%
United States	6.5	+0.7%
Brazil	1.1	+4.0%
Türkiye ^(J)	0.8	+5.8%
Russia ^(K)	0.7	+6.6%
Mexico	0.6	+1.2%
Egypt	0.5	+3.1%

Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025; (L) based on 55 countries (J) all types of cheeses

Global demand for **butter and other milk fat** remained strong in 2024. Production increased by 2.0% to 13.5 million tonnes in 2024, slightly down from the average growth rate of 2.3% since 2015. Production is dominated by India, which alone accounts for half of the world's dairy fat production. Indian butter and ghee output grew by 3.0% in 2024 to a volume of 7.0 million tonnes. In 2024, butter output in the EU27, the second largest producer, decreased by 1.2%, while in the USA, output increased by 5.9%. In New Zealand, the world's leading butter exporter, production again rose in 2024 (+1.2%), continuing the positive trend observed since 2022.

Among the other major global producers, Russia (-1.4%) and the United Kingdom (-6.8%) experienced declines. UK butter production fell for the third consecutive year, reaching 188 thousand tonnes.



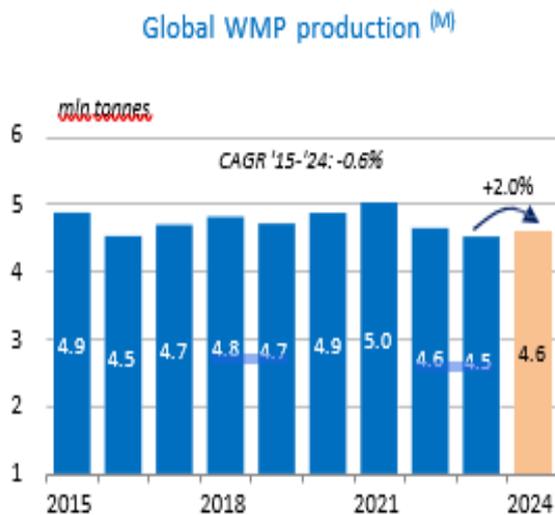
Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025; (F) is based on 56 countries, (G) Pakistan data is 2020/21 and (H) Butter only

Global Whole milk powder (WMP) production rose by 2.0% in 2024, following a decline in 2023 driven by a sharp drop in Chinese output. With stocks at low levels at the end of 2023, China boosted its WMP production by 15.5% in 2024, despite a reduction in raw milk availability.

New Zealand, the world's leading producer, recorded a moderate 1.1% increase in WMP output for the second consecutive year, reaching 1.4 million tonnes. Although Chinese demand fell for the third year in a row, this was offset by stronger sales to the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

In contrast, WMP production in the EU27 declined by 8.5% in 2024, dropping to 0.7 million tonnes, as milk supplies were redirected primarily toward cheese production. Output fell across all EU27 member states, with Germany being the sole exception.

WMP output



Trends in leading producing countries

mln tonnes	2024	Growth 2023/24 (%)
New Zealand	1.4	+1.1%
China ^(N)	1.0	+15.5%
EU 27	0.7	-8.5%
Brazil	0.5	+4.7%
Argentina	0.2	-3.9%
Uruguay	0.2	0.0%
Mexico	0.2	0.0%

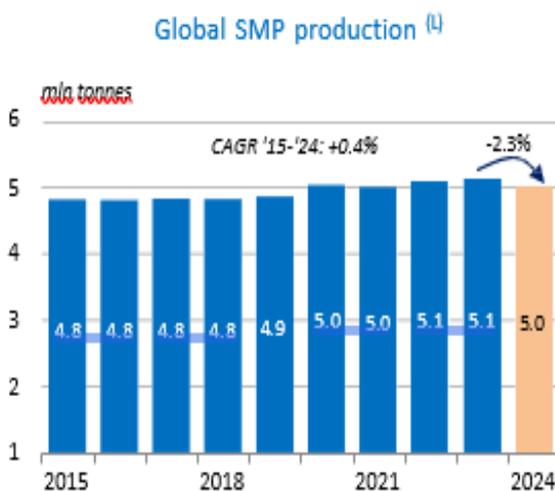


Source: CNIEL, ZuivelNL, IDF national committees, national statistics.

(M) is based on 50 countries (N), including infant formula

Global Skimmed milk powder (SMP) production contracted in 2024, declining by 2.3% to 5.0 million tonnes, primarily reflecting subdued demand developments. Within the European Union (EU27), output fell for the second consecutive year, registering a 5.1% decrease. The contraction was broadly distributed across member states, with the notable exceptions of France, Denmark, and Portugal. In the United States, production declined for the third successive year, down by 11.4%. Conversely, output in Oceania expanded, with Australia recording a 13.4% increase and New Zealand a 3.2% rise. Growth was also observed in Asia, where India and Japan reported increases of 3.4% and 6.0%, respectively. Argentina registered a significant recovery, with production rising by 15.5%, partially offsetting the sharp contraction experienced in 2023.

SMP output



Trends in leading producing countries

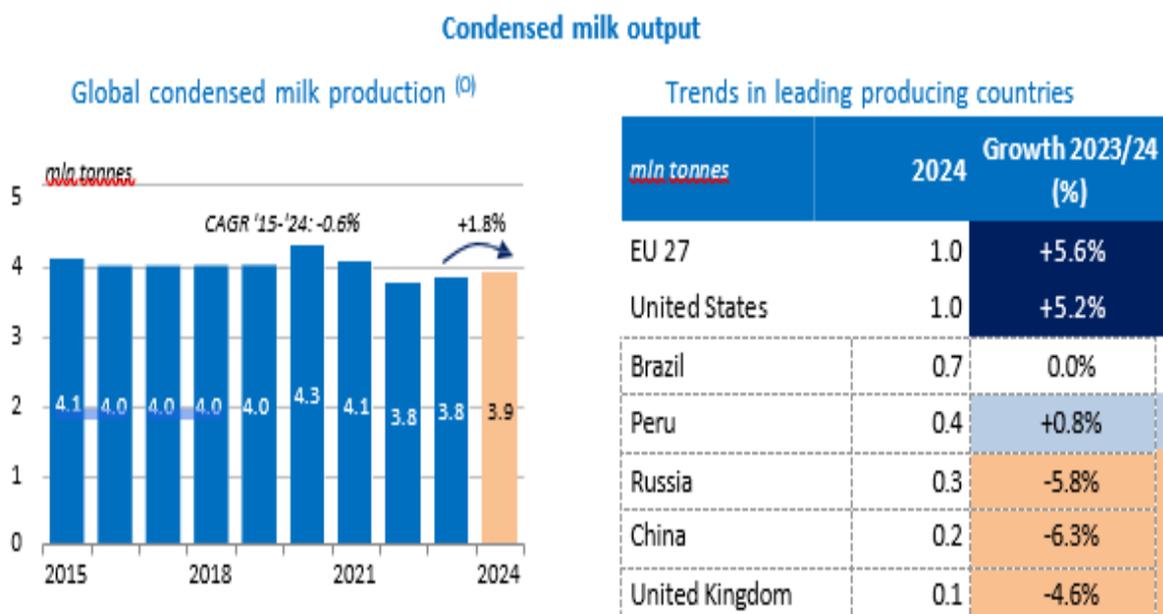
mln tonnes	2024	Growth 2023/24 (%)
EU 27	1.5	-5.1%
United States	1.0	-11.4%
India	0.8	+3.4%
New Zealand	0.5	+3.2%
Australia	0.2	+13.4%
Brazil	0.2	0.0%
Japan	0.2	+6.0%

Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025; (L) is based on 52 countries

Global condensed milk production increased in 2024 for the second consecutive year, rising 1.8% to 3.9 million tonnes. The expansion was driven primarily by the world's two leading producers the United States (+5.2%) and the EU27 (+5.6%), which together account for more than half of global output (2.0 million tonnes). Within the EU-27, Germany recorded the strongest growth (+14.8%), lifting production to 342 thousand tonnes. Germany remains the bloc's second-largest producer after the Netherlands, where output was stable (+0.2%, 363 thousand tonnes). Several smaller producers also posted notable gains, including Belgium (+14.7%), Lithuania (+28.4%), and the Czech Republic (+17.1%).

After several years of decline, Peru recorded a modest recovery (+0.8%). By contrast, output fell sharply in Russia (-5.8%) and China (-6.3%). The United Kingdom also experienced a contraction (-4.6%), marking a clear departure from its long-term average growth rate (+2.6%).

Although recent figures are unavailable for Brazil, the country remains one of the world's largest producers, alongside the EU27 and the United States.



Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025; (O) is based on 45 countries

Liquid whey is mostly a cheese manufacturing by-product (producing more than 80%, while the rest is derived from casein production). It is mainly produced in the leading cheese-producing regions such as the EU27 and the USA.

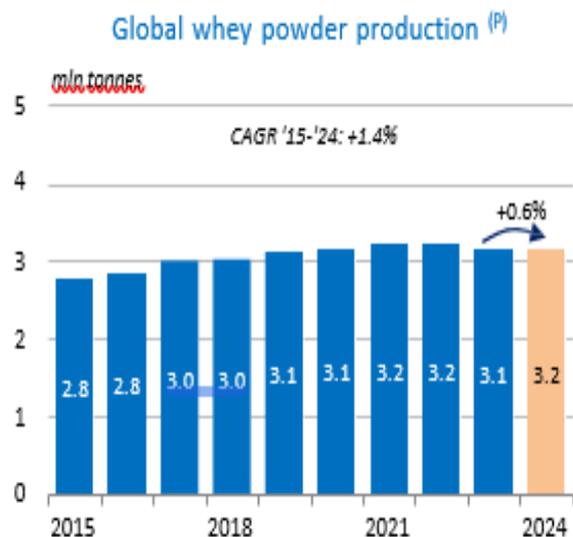
In 2024, **global whey powder** production rose by 0.6% to 3.2 million tonnes, well below the average annual growth rate of 1.4% recorded between 2015 and 2024. Despite this increase, output has merely returned to the levels seen in 2021 and 2022, following a sharp decline in 2023.

Within the EU27, production grew by 1.4% to 2.1 million tonnes, representing 68% of global output. France, after nine consecutive years of decline, recorded a 3.6% increase in 2024. Output also rose in Poland (+0.9%), Italy (+1.1%), and the Netherlands (+7.3%). In contrast, Germany saw a 2.8% decrease, while the United States experienced a significant drop of 9.1%.

Whey processors are increasingly shifting their focus toward producing WPC (Whey Protein Concentrates) and WPI (Whey Protein Isolates) to meet rising demand for high-protein food

products. The United States remains the undisputed leader in this segment, while in Europe, Germany is the main producer.

Whey powder output



Trends in leading producing countries

m/ln tonnes	2024	Growth 2023/24 (%)
EU 27	2.1	+1.4%
United States	0.4	-9.1%
Russia	0.2	-1.3%
Argentina	0.1	-4.3%
Türkiye	0.1	+115.3%
Australia	0.1	-5.3%
Ukraine	0.0	0.0%



Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025; (P) is based on 43 countries

Global Dairy Industry

The ranking of world dairy leaders changed little in 2024 compared to 2023. In both years, it included the same 20 dairy companies. Currency movements against the USD were moderate in 2024 and therefore did not have a significant impact on the ranking of dairy groups.

Top 20 World Dairy Leaders (dairy turnover in billion USD) ^(A)

Company	Country	2022	2023	2024	Growth 2023/24
1 Lactalis	FR	29.8	31.9	32.8	+3%
2 DFA ^(e)	US	24.5	21.7	23.0	+6%
3 Yili	CN	18.4	17.8	16.1	-10%
4 Arla Foods	DK	14.5	14.8	14.9	+1%
5 Danone ^{(B) (C)}	FR	15.6	15.5	14.6	-6%
6 FrieslandCampina	NL	14.8	14.1	14.0	-1%
7 Fonterra ^(D)	NZ	15.8	16.1	13.9	-13%
8 Saputo	CA	13.5	12.8	13.7	+7%
9 Mengniu	CN	13.8	13.9	12.3	-12%
10 Nestlé ^(B)	CH	11.8	12.2	11.8	-3%
11 Unilever ^(E)	GB	8.3	8.6	9.0	+5%
12 Savencia	FR	6.9	7.3	7.7	+5%
13 Amul ^(F)	IN	6.9	7.2	7.7	+7%
14 Schreiber ^(e)	US	6.5	7.1	7.2	+1%
15 Müller ^(H)	DE	6.5	6.7	6.7	0%
16 Sodiaal	FR	6.6	6.1	6.4	+6%
17 Agropur ^(G)	CA	5.8	6.3	6.2	-0%
18 Froneri International	GB	5.3	5.7	6.0	+5%
19 Lala	MX	4.6	5.6	5.5	-1%
20 DMK	DE	5.8	5.9	5.5	-7%

Source: CNIEL, company reports, international press.

- (I) PepsiCo and Mondelez not ranked.
- (J) Infant formula excluded.
- (K) Including plant-based substitutes.
- (L) Year finishing in July.
- (M) Ice cream only.
- (N) Year finishing in March of the following year.
- (O) Year finishing in October.
- (e) Estimate.

Dairy consumption

The world population grew by 70 million people (0.9%) in 2024, bringing the total to 8.2 billion. Over the past five years, the annual growth rate has gradually slowed to 0.9%, compared with 1.1% between 2015 and 2020. In 2022, limited supply constrained demand, triggering a price surge that disproportionately affected consumption in lower-income countries. By contrast, the easing of dairy product prices in 2023 (–17.2% according to the FAO index)—driven by increased supply—enabled a partial recovery in consumption. Between 2015 and 2024, average per capita milk consumption rose by 12.7 kg, reaching 120.7 kg milk equivalent. However, global population growth remains concentrated in regions where per capita dairy consumption is comparatively low, particularly in Africa.

In 2024, per capita dairy consumption increased by 1.6%, from 119.1 kg in 2023 to 120.7 kg, keeping pace with milk production growth and surpassing population growth. For the first time in three years, global dairy consumption outpaced milk production, recording its strongest growth rate since 2021 of +2.5%. Consumption expanded by more than 24 million tonnes in a single year, equivalent to the annual production of New Zealand or France. Total milk consumption reached 985 million tonnes in 2024 and is projected to cross the symbolic 1,000 million-tonne threshold in 2025. This faster consumption growth relative to production was largely linked to shrinking stock levels in China, the EU27, and the United States.

According to FAO assessments of regional dairy production and trade in 2024, annual per capita consumption varied significantly, from 43 kg in Africa to 287 kg in Europe. Asia accounts for half of global dairy consumption and remains the primary driver of demand. Yet, demand in Asia fell short of its usual pace in 2024, mainly due to stagnant consumption in China for the third consecutive year.

While Asia and Africa remain non–self-sufficient in dairy consumption, both regions improved their self-sufficiency rates between 2015 and 2024. In contrast, Central America, which also lacks self-sufficiency, did not achieve any improvement over the same period.

Globally, milk supplied to processing companies is primarily consumed as fresh dairy products such as liquid and fermented milk, yoghurt, cream, and related items (28%), alongside butter and butteroil (32%) and cheese (27%). Since 2015, butter, cheese, and cream have shown the strongest growth in consumption (+22%), outpacing fermented products (+16%). However, condensed milk consumption has declined (–5%), while liquid milk has remained relatively stable. Within dry dairy products, whole milk powder (WMP) consumption has fallen by 5%, whereas skimmed milk powder (SMP) has increased by 4%. Notably, more than half of global milk output bypasses industrial processing and is managed by small-scale or informal operators, making it unrecorded and complicating efforts to quantify consumption by product category.

The most significant shift has occurred in fresh dairy: after years of stagnation, demand rebounded sharply in 2024, driven largely by the rising popularity of protein-enriched products in Western markets.

CONSUMPTION

World: per capita consumption and population



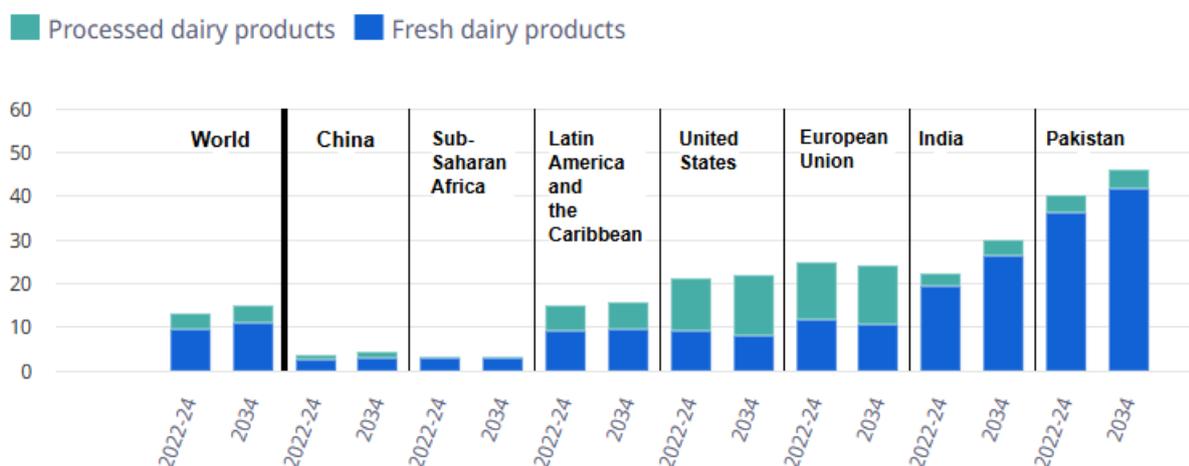
World: self-sufficiency rate (per region)

Region	2015	2024
Asia	90%	92%
Europe	111%	110%
EU 27	115%	115%
Non-EU	100%	102%
North America	108%	109%
South America	101%	101%
Africa	83%	86%
Central America	78%	77%
Oceania	309%	356%

Source: IDF World Dairy Situation 2025

According to the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2025, the share of fresh dairy products in global consumption is expected to increase over the next decade due to stronger demand growth in India and Pakistan, which in turn is driven by income, urbanisation and population growth. World per capita consumption of fresh dairy products is anticipated to grow by 1.0% p.a. over the coming decade, primarily driven by higher per-capita income growth. The most significant growth is expected in India and Pakistan, where milk solids consumption is expected to increase to 30 and 46 kg per capita, respectively. In low- and lower middle-income countries, most of the production is consumed in the form of fresh dairy products. In Europe and North America, overall per capita demand for fresh dairy products is declining, but the composition of demand has been shifting over recent years in favour of dairy fat such as full-fat drinking milk and cream.

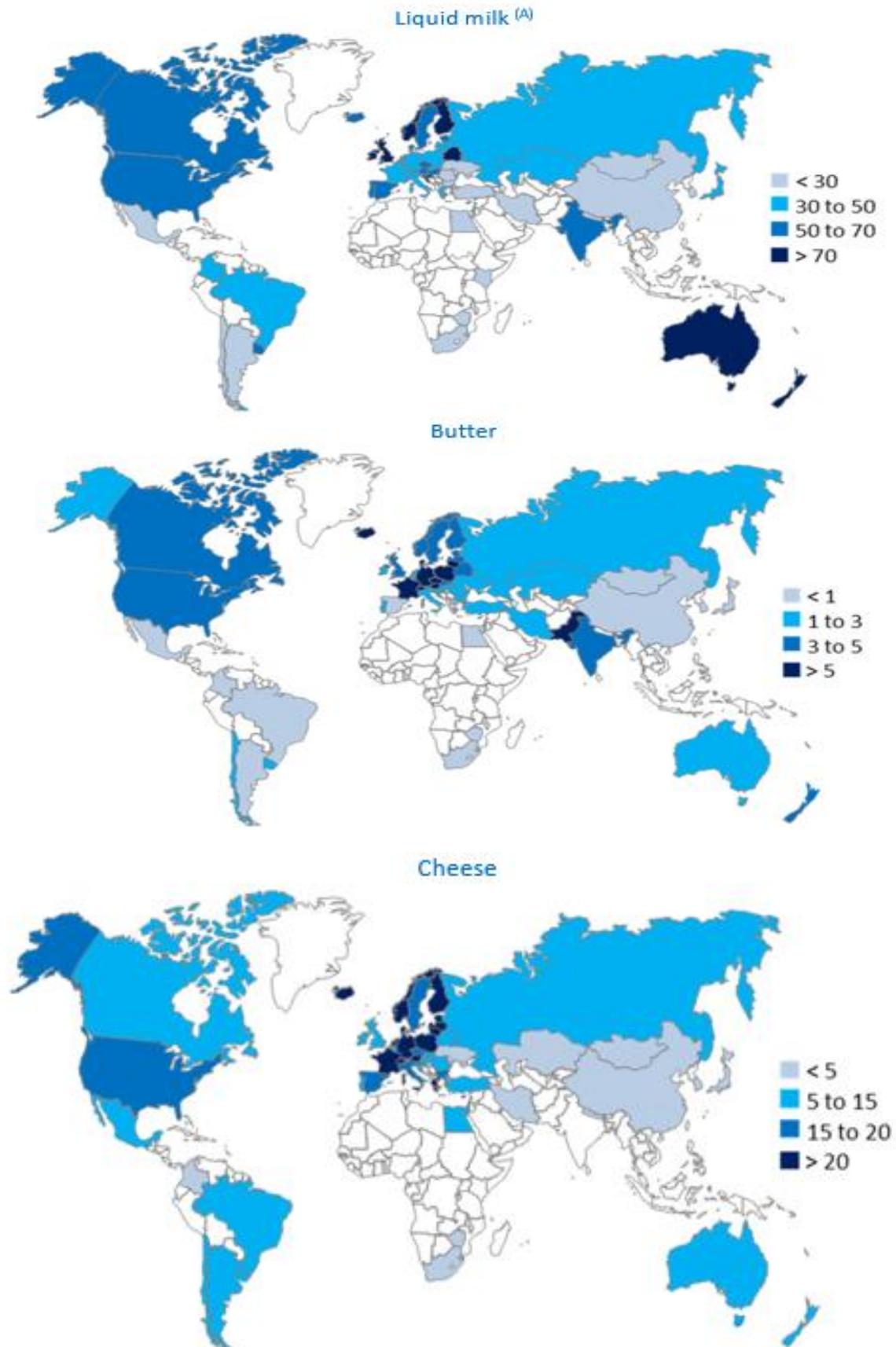
Per capita consumption of processed and fresh dairy products in milk solids (kg/person)



Note: Milk solids are calculated by adding the amount of fat and non-fat solids for each product; Processed dairy products include butter, cheese, skim milk powder and whole milk powder.

Source: OECD/FAO (2025), "OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook", OECD Agriculture statistics (database), <http://data-explorer.oecd.org/s/1hc>.

Per capita consumption in kg (2024)



Source: National Committees of IDF, USDA, Eurostat.

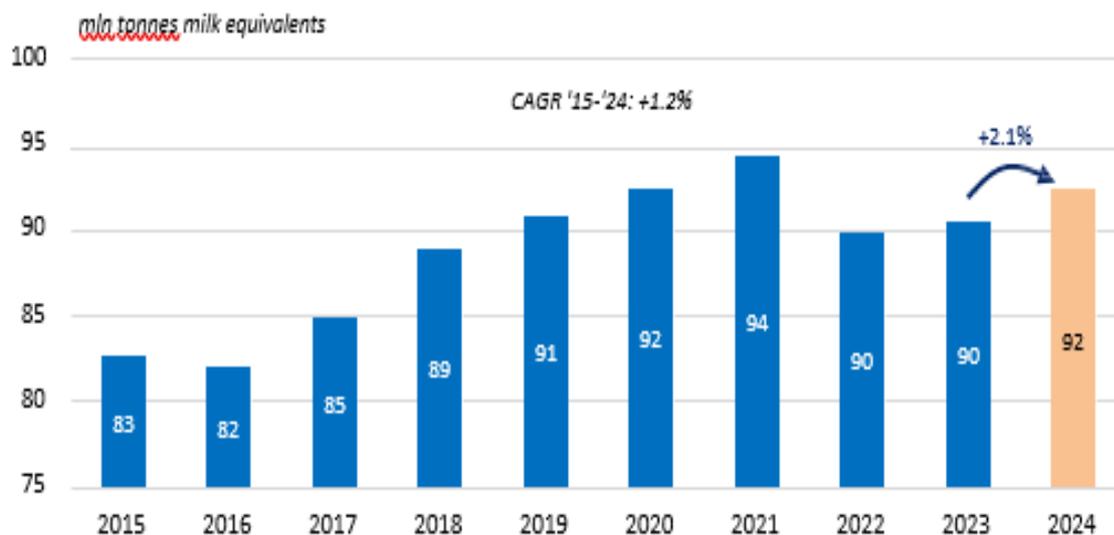
(A) May include milk drinks, fermented products.

International dairy trade

In 2024 international dairy trade increased by 2.1% to 92 million tonnes milk equivalent, still slightly lower than the annual growth rate for the period 2015 – 2021, pre-COVID-19 (2.3%). In 2022 international dairy trade contracted by 4.2% due to COVID-19 lockdown measures and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. In 2023, international dairy trade remained disappointing, growing only at 0.8% compared to the pre-COVID-19 CAGR of 2.3%. The CAGR for international dairy trade for the period 2015 – 2024 reduced from 2.3% (period 2015 – 2021) to 1.2%. Comparing at this level, inclusive of the two difficult years, the 2024 growth rate is showing a good recovery.

The year 2024 presented a mixed picture regarding dairy demand. Chinese demand once again fell short of expectations, as the country continued to face slower than usual economic growth, high youth unemployment and a persistent real estate crisis. Demand in some regions remained stable or continued to grow, while others contracted in line with 2023 trends. However, overall global dairy trade achieved above-average growth, driven primarily by major exporters finding new outlets for their products in alternative markets.

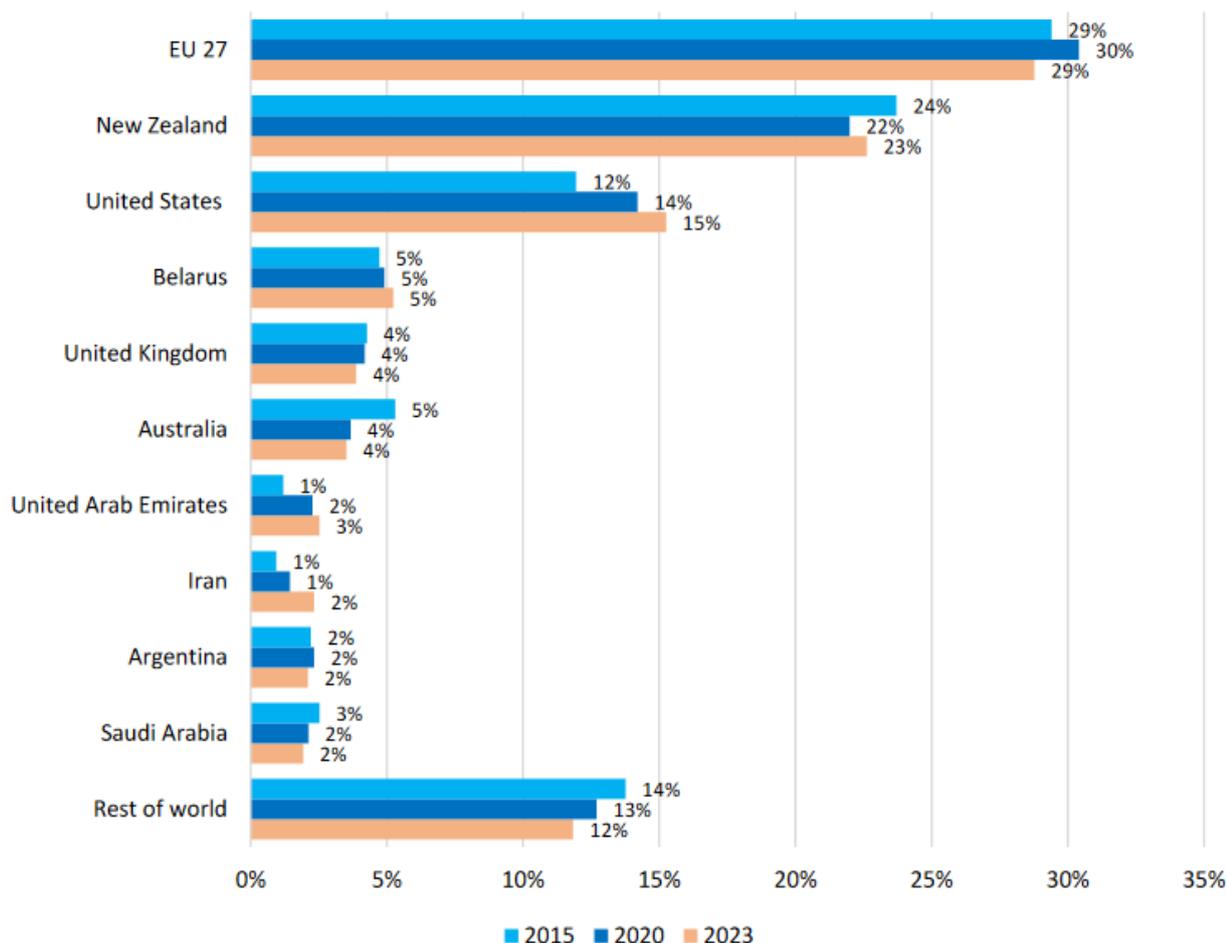
World trade
(milk equivalent basis, period 2015-2024)



Source: [ZuivelNL](#), Comtrade.

In 2023 the exports share of New Zealand, the USA, Belarus, Australia, and Iran increased while the other key exporting countries experienced negative growth or maintained their share.

**Export share ^(C) development of key exporters on the world dairy market
(milk equivalent basis, period 2015-2023)**



Source: ZuivelNL

(C) As part of total world volume trade: reference volumes used were (expressed in milk equivalents): 2015: 82.7 / 2020: 92.4 / 2023: 92.4

To provide some perspective on the main exporting countries and importing (export destinations) countries of cheese, butter, butter oil, WMP, SMP, milk and cream and the volumes concerned, the following graphs and tables were developed.

Cheese top three exporters: EU27 1 388 (37%), USA 514 (14%), New Zealand 374 (10%), world trade 3 755 (1 000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: UK 430, Russia 295, Japan 275 (1 000 tonnes).

Butter and butter oil top three exporters: New Zealand 465 (40%), EU27 281 (24%), Belarus 80 (7%), world trade 1 165 (1 000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: China 152, USA 101, Russia 95 (1 000 tonnes).

WMP top three exporters: New Zealand 1 373 (57%), EU27 209 (7%), Uruguay 158 (7%), world trade 2 425 (1000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: China 435, Algeria 240, Brazil 142 (1 000 tonnes).

SMP top three exporters: USA 745 (28%), EU27 718 (27%), New Zealand 441 (17%), world trade 2 625 (1 000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: Mexico 390, China 245, Indonesia 200 (1 000 tonnes).

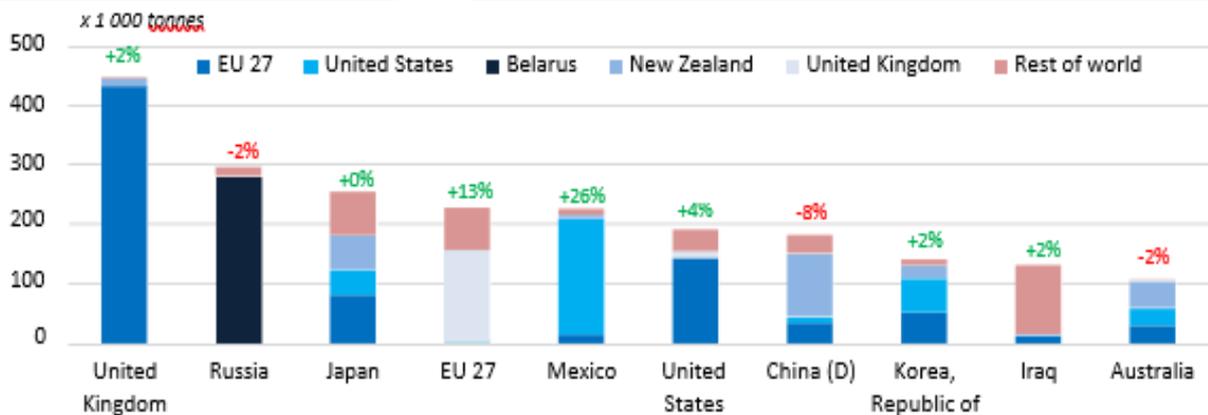
Milk and cream top three exporters: EU27 1 428 (33%), UK 775 (18%), New Zealand 424 (10%), world trade 4 375 (1000 tonnes).

Top three export destinations: EU27 800, China 795, UK 480 (1 000 tonnes).

Dynamics in world cheese trade: main exporters, key export markets (volume x 1 000 tonnes)

Top-10 global cheese exporters 2024							
No.	Exporter	Volume	Share	Growth 2023/24	CAGR '15-'24		
1.	EU 27	1 388.4	37.0%	+0.2%	+2.0%		
2.	United States	513.8	13.7%	+17.3%	+5.5%		
3.	New Zealand	374.3	10.0%	+0.1%	+1.5%		
4.	Belarus	299.5	8.0%	+1.8%	+5.7%		
5.	United Kingdom	195.7	5.2%	+9.6%	+3.0%		
6.	Australia	167.4	4.5%	+29.0%	-0.2%		
7.	Iran	114.7	3.1%	+13.4%	+10.5%		
8.	Saudi Arabia	104.8	2.8%	+20.8%	-2.0%		
9.	Argentina	98.9	2.6%	+16.2%	+9.6%		
10.	Switzerland	75.3	2.0%	+8.5%	+1.8%		
	World trade	3 755.0	100.0%	+5.9%	+2.7%		

Top-10 cheese export destinations 2024

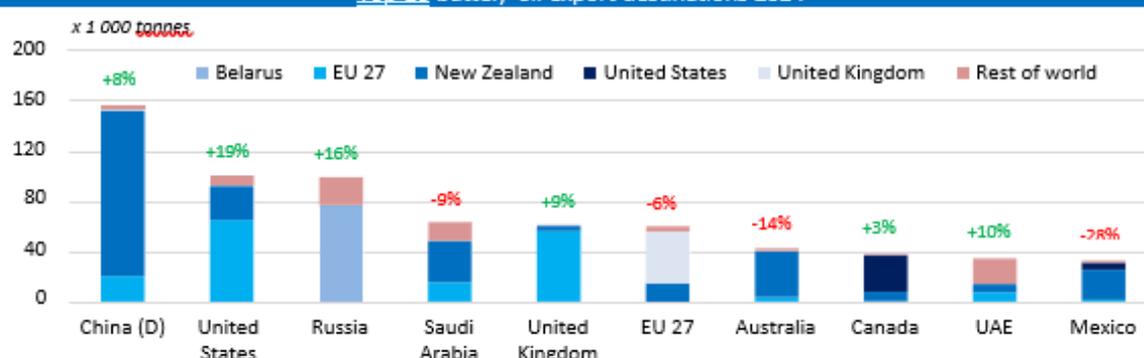


Dynamics in world butter/-oil trade: main exporters, key export markets (volume x 1 000 tonnes)

Top-10 global butter/-oil exporters 2024

No.	Exporter	Volume	Share	Growth 2023/24	CAGR '15-'24
1.	New Zealand	465.3	39.9%	-9.5%	-1.8%
2.	EU 27	280.8	24.1%	-3.7%	+0.9%
3.	Belarus	80.0	6.9%	-1.7%	-0.4%
4.	India	63.0	5.4%	+166.6%	+12.8%
5.	United States	48.4	4.2%	+26.0%	+6.2%
6.	United Kingdom	46.3	4.0%	-18.7%	+1.0%
7.	Iran	32.9	2.8%	+120.8%	+47.2%
8.	Argentina	22.8	2.0%	-5.9%	+13.5%
9.	Australia	22.7	1.9%	+127.9%	-14.9%
10.	Saudi Arabia	17.5	1.5%	+37.7%	+15.9%
	World trade	1 165.0	100.0%	+2.2%	+0.2%

Top-10 butter/-oil export destinations 2024



Source: ZuivelNL, Comtrade.

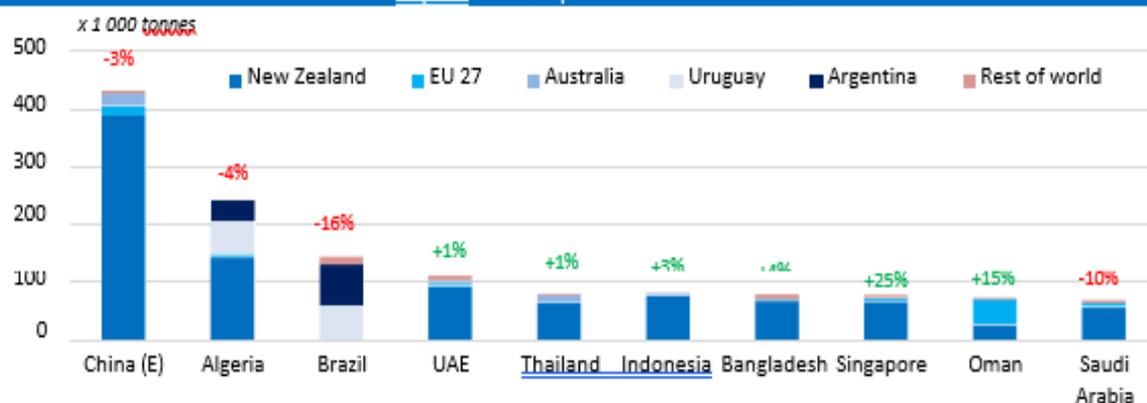
(D) Hong Kong, Macao included.

Dynamics in world WMP trade: main exporters, key export markets (volume x 1 000 tonnes)

Top-10 global WMP exporters 2024

No.	Exporter	Volume	Share	Growth 2023/24	CAGR '15-'24
1.	New Zealand	1 372.8	56.6%	+0.5%	-0.1%
2.	EU 27	209.0	8.6%	-19.7%	-6.6%
3.	Uruguay	157.6	6.5%	-0.8%	+5.6%
4.	Argentina	121.4	5.0%	+9.2%	-1.4%
5.	Australia	55.4	2.3%	+45.5%	-1.8%
6.	Singapore	48.5	2.0%	+25.4%	-1.4%
7.	Belarus	33.8	1.4%	-3.8%	-1.3%
8.	Malaysia	30.2	1.2%	+11.9%	+1.0%
9.	United States	25.5	1.1%	-2.1%	-3.1%
10.	China (E)	18.4	0.8%	+80.0%	+20.6%
	World trade	2 425.0	100.0%	+0.4%	-1.0%

Top-10 WMP export destinations 2024

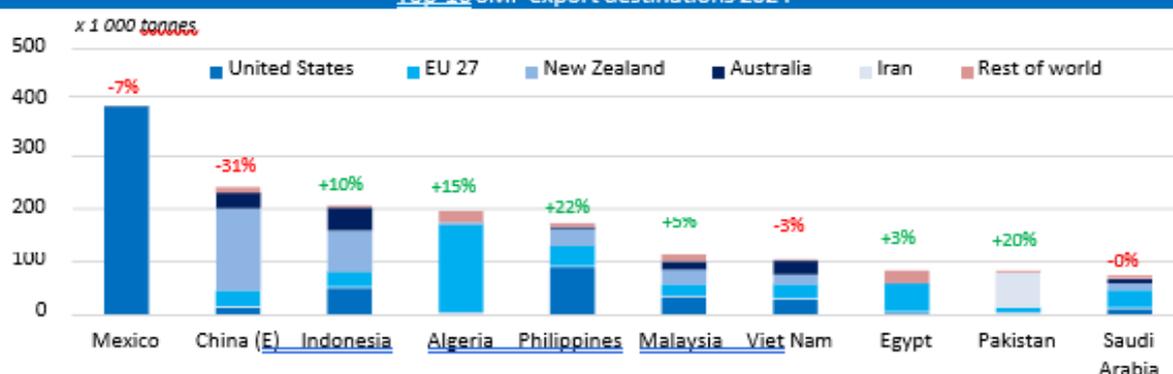


Dynamics in world SMP trade: main exporters, key export markets (volume x 1 000 tonnes)

Top-10 global SMP exporters 2024

No.	Exporter	Volume	Share	Growth 2023/24	CAGR '15-'24
1.	United States	745.4	28.4%	-8.0%	+3.2%
2.	EU 27	718.0	27.4%	-7.4%	+0.2%
3.	New Zealand	441.3	16.8%	-2.2%	+0.8%
4.	Australia	170.0	6.5%	+27.2%	-1.8%
5.	Iran	132.7	5.1%	+26.0%	+36.7%
6.	Belarus	118.7	4.5%	+1.3%	-0.3%
7.	United Kingdom	50.4	1.9%	-28.8%	-0.1%
8.	Ukraine	21.4	0.8%	+4.9%	-5.2%
9.	Canada	20.1	0.8%	-21.2%	+4.4%
10.	Argentina	19.7	0.8%	+7.4%	-2.3%
	World trade	2 625.0	100.0%	-1.5%	+1.5%

Top-10 SMP export destinations 2024



Source: ZuivelNL, Comtrade.

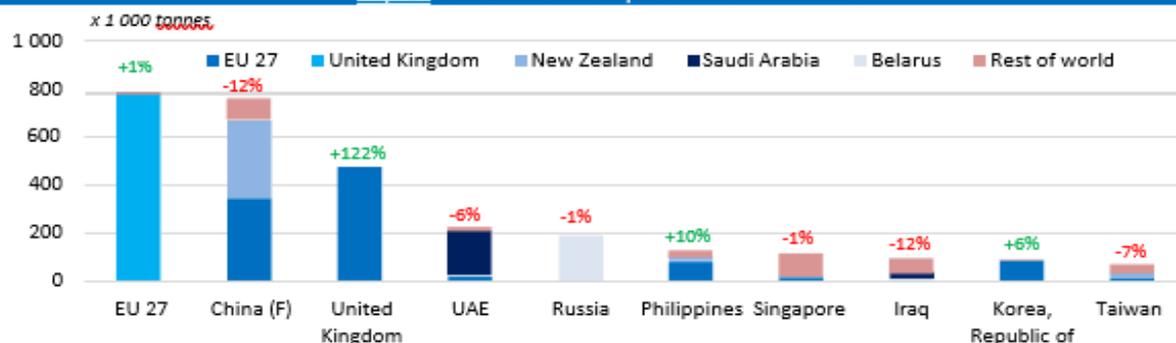
(E) Hong Kong, Macao included.

Dynamics in world milk and cream trade: main exporters, key export markets (volume x 1 000 tonnes)

Top-10 global milk and cream exporters 2024

No.	Exporter	Volume	Share	Growth 2023/24	CAGR '15-'24
1.	EU 27	1 428.2	32.6%	+15.5%	+3.8%
2.	United Kingdom	774.5	17.7%	+0.8%	+1.7%
3.	New Zealand	424.2	9.7%	+4.4%	+11.0%
4.	Saudi Arabia	372.4	8.5%	+5.6%	+7.6%
5.	Belarus	196.8	4.5%	+2.3%	-5.4%
6.	Australia	165.0	3.8%	-18.9%	+0.2%
7.	United States	144.9	3.3%	+4.3%	+4.4%
8.	Iran	123.4	2.8%	-5.4%	+11.9%
9.	Thailand	96.2	2.2%	+6.4%	+16.9%
10.	Uganda	88.1	2.0%	0.0%	+21.4%
	World trade	4 375.0	100.0%	+4.8%	+2.9%

Top-10 milk and cream export destinations 2024

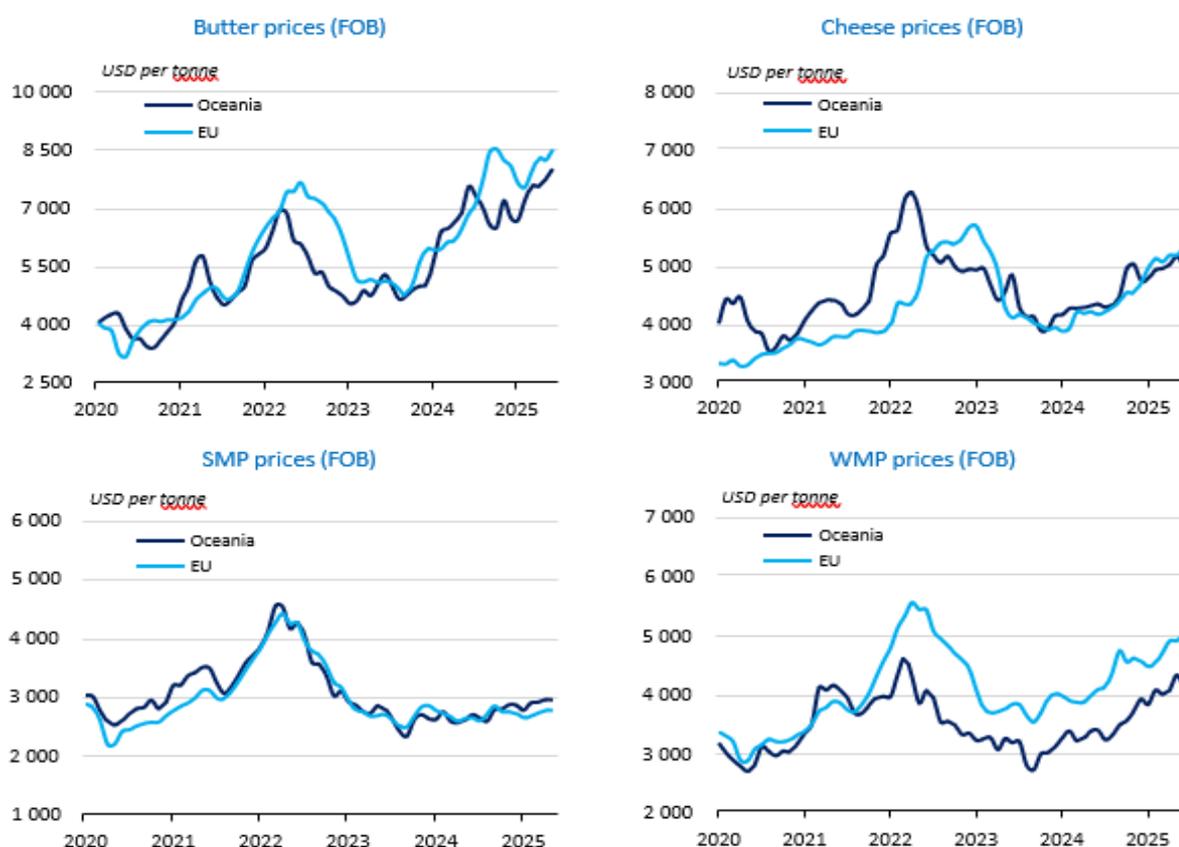


Source: ZuivelNL, Comtrade.

Trends in dairy product prices

The FAO Dairy Price Index (FDPI) averaged 129.7 points in 2024, marking an increase of 4.8% from the 2023 annual average. The 2024 average FDPI is still 13.2% below the highest annual average on record, registered in 2022. While subdued global import demand in 2023, particularly from China, resulted in nine months downward trend of the FDPI for the first nine months of 2023, the FDPI rose throughout 2024, with the sole exception of the month of April. Strong global demand and strained supply contributed to the rise in 2024, particularly in the case of butter, despite year-on-year growth in global unprocessed milk production.

Price developments by product for Oceania and EU



Source: European Commission, USDA.

Unprocessed milk prices

New Zealand registered strong milk price growth, up by 11.1% compared. In the United States, farmgate milk prices rose by 10.9% in 2024, and in the EU27, the average farmgate milk prices rose by 3.1% compared to 2023. From July 2024, the farmgate price in the EU27 increased steadily as supplies tightened. Contributing factors included herd contractions linked to environmental pressures, stricter climate and water rules and disease outbreaks such as bluetongue and lumpy skin disease.