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EU Agri-Food Trade Surplus Widens as Imports Fall Faster Than Exports

Exports slipped 3% to €96.9 billion through May, with weaker sales to the U.K. and the U.S. weighing on results

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The European Union’s agri-food trade surplus with countries outside the bloc widened in the first five months of 2026, even as exports slipped, because imports fell more sharply, according to new figures released by the European Commission.

From January through May, EU agri-food exports totaled €96.9 billion, down 3% from the same period in 2025. Imports fell 5% to €77.5 billion. That left the bloc with a positive trade balance of €19.4 billion, about €1 billion higher than a year earlier.

The Commission said the softer export performance was tied in part to lower prices for products including cocoa, pork and olive oil. The decline was also linked to weaker trade with two of the EU's most important overseas markets, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Exports to the U.K., the EU's largest agri-food export destination, fell 3% to €22.3 billion in the first five months of the year. Exports to the U.S., the second-largest market, dropped 13% to €11.1 billion. On the import side, purchases from the U.K. declined 6% to €6 billion, while imports from the U.S. fell 7%.

Brazil remained the EU's top supplier of agri-food imports during the period, with shipments valued at €7.6 billion, up 1%.

Wine remained one of the EU's leading agri-food export categories despite a decline in value. Exports of wine and wine-based products reached €6.3 billion from January through May, down 5% from a year earlier. Even with that drop, wine stayed among the bloc's biggest export earners, behind cereals at €10 billion and dairy products and food preparations, each at €8.3 billion.

Wine also remained one of the strongest contributors to the EU's overall agri-food surplus. The category generated a positive trade balance of €5.8 billion in the first five months of 2026, supported by relatively low imports of just €547 million. Only cereals, with a surplus of €7.8 billion, and dairy products, with €7.4 billion, contributed more.

Other beverage categories showed more resilience. Spirits and liqueurs posted a 5% increase over the same period, reaching €3.5 billion in exports, according to the Commission data.

The figures matter for drinks producers because they show that beverages continue to play an important role in Europe's external farm trade even as broader demand weakens in key markets. For wine exporters in particular, the drop in shipments to

major destinations such as the U.S. and the U.K. points to pressure on sales abroad, while the continued strength of the trade surplus suggests European producers still hold a strong competitive position internationally.

The latest numbers come at a time when producers across Europe are watching consumer demand, pricing and trade flows closely after several years of volatility tied to inflation, shifting consumption patterns and slower economic growth in some major importing countries. In that context, the Commission’s data suggest that while total agri-food exports have lost some momentum in early 2026, lower import volumes helped improve the bloc’s overall trade position.