Argentina

RETAIL FOOD SECTOR

Enter a Descriptive Report Name

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Report Highlights:  
The Argentine food and beverage market is expected to grow in 2010 after a stable 2009. An improved global economic environment and increased local exports are expected to impact positively in Argentina’s economy. Retailers indicate that they will continue to expand through the opening of new stores, primarily in the interior of the country. Purchases of imported foods are expected to remain flat or begin to grow again after a marginal drop in 2009.

Post:  
Buenos Aires
Executive Summary:
The Argentine food and beverage (F&B) market is expected to grow in 2010 after a relatively stable 2009. An improved global economic environment and increased local exports are expected to impact positively in Argentina’s economy.

In the past several years, the Argentine retail sector saw strong signs of recovery as a reflection of the expansion of the local economy. The following are the main trends in recent years which are expected to continue during 2010:

* continued price increases (inflation rate estimated by some private economists at 15-20 percent);
* growth in volume sales;
* recovery in market share by larger supermarkets, vis-à-vis traditional stores and smaller supermarkets;
* after the economic turndown of 2009, sales of brand names and high-value products are expected to recover in 2010;
* increased purchases of imported F&B (primarily by large supermarket chains);
* improved deli/gourmet sections in upscale stores;
* expansion of private label products;
* strong discounts on purchases, which can reach up to 25 percent off. However, many believe supermarkets will try to phase discounts away;
* company credit cards offered by several large retailers;
* sales to attract customers;
* continued marketing activities through brochures and in-store promotions;
* consumers’ renewed interest in convenience, service, and quality;
* increase of product lines and supply of informal credit by kiosks and grocery stores;
* strong investment in new openings of supermarkets, wholesalers, and hard discounts;
* smaller store formats, concentrating in proximity, a wider variety of product supply, premium brands and service; and,
* expansion primarily in the interior of the country (large and mid-size cities).

Retailers are expected to continue with their plans to open new stores, but focusing on close-by smaller formats, which carry mostly food products. Sales of less expensive private label products are forecast to increase. Purchases of imported products are expected to remain flat or begin to grow again after a marginal drop in 2009.

Author Defined:

SECTION I. MARKET SUMMARY

* Argentine total F&B retail sales for 2009 are estimated at $26 billion.
* In 2008, hypermarkets, superstores, and warehouse stores (locally known as “hard discount stores” and mostly operated by large retailers) accounted for approximately 31 percent of the total F&B sales; and small supermarkets, grocery stores, and kiosks, accounted for about 69 percent.

* Hypermarkets and superstores are the retail formats which have most grown since 1990. They focus on competitive prices, strong discounts, company credit cards, and loyalty programs.

* On the one hand, warehouse stores offer lower-price products, i.e. private labels and B-Brands and, on the other hand, grocery stores provide credit to less affluent consumers, are close-by, and provide personalized service.

* Following consumers’ needs, warehouse stores are incorporating more brand names and service.

* Several of the leading international retail companies are operating in Argentina: WalMart, Carrefour, Casino, and Jumbo. Coto and La Anonima are the only large retailers which still have local ownership.

* Strong competition and concentration in Buenos Aires city and suburbs. However, during the past few years, hypermarkets and superstores have expanded into the interior of the country through the purchase of smaller chains and the opening of new stores.

* Customers continue to focus on products which provide good value. However, during the past few years, as a result of salary increases and a higher purchasing power, the Argentine consumer has become more sophisticated. Customers value convenience, first brands, quality, variety, and proximity.

* Supermarket private label products account for approximately 6-8 percent of total supermarket sales. There is a wide variety of F&B products sold under private label. Practically all products under this category are manufactured locally.

* Large retail companies have great negotiating power, putting strong pressure on their suppliers.

* F&B sales in hypermarkets and superstores account for approximately 65 percent of total sales.

* As an average, Argentines spend about 33 percent of their income in F&B.

* Although F&B imports have been gradually recovering, in 2008, they will be at about 80 percent of what they were in 2001 before the crisis.

* Approximately 70 percent of all imported F&B are sold through hypermarkets, superstores and supermarkets.

* Overall, imported products include those “commodities” which are not domestically produced, such as canned palm hearts, tuna fish and pineapple, corn, peas, tomatoes, and also some fruits.

**Value of Retail Sales of Imported Food and Beverage vs. Domestic Products (in $ billion)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Sales/Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imported F&amp;B - CIF</strong></td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imported F&amp;B - retail price</strong></td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Trends in Distribution Channels

-- Large investment in the retail sector. Practically all retail formats are increasing in number: warehouse stores (incorporating product variety and service), supermarkets, supercenters, wholesalers, traditional grocery stores, and shopping malls.

-- Concentration through new openings, mergers and acquisitions is expected to continue growing moderately. Carrefour owns Norte and Dia, with almost 30 percent of total supermarket sales. Cencosud owns Jumbo, Disco and Vea which together account for 27 percent of total supermarket sales. Coto accounts for 16 percent of total sales, while La Anonima and Wal Mart account for almost 10 percent each.

* WalMart and Carrefour were the companies announcing large investments in expansion.
* Wholesale clubs (WalMart’s Sam’s and Makro’s Kargo) closed their stores in the late 1990s, as the format did not "catch on".

* Large retailers have modern centralized warehouses.

* With the growth in sales of small grocery stores, wholesalers have increased their market share. There are 5-6 solid local companies that offer good service. Almost all of these companies are investing heavily in modernizing and opening new outlets. There were 132 outlets in total in 2008.

* Large retail chains face fierce competition among themselves, and against smaller supermarkets and grocery stores, which prompts them to implement promotional campaigns based on low prices, important discounts, and improved service. They offer a wide variety of products.

* The upper/middle-high socioeconomic strata usually buy in hypermarkets since they value variety and service. They also make small purchases of fresh products in nearby smaller stores. The middle class usually shop in medium and small supermarkets. Lower-income consumers typically shop in traditional grocery stores and hard discounts.

* Supermarkets sell primarily non-perishable food products, carbonated and alcoholic beverages, cold cuts, dairy products, and cheese. Between 30-40 percent of meats and poultry are sold in supermarkets and the balance in traditional/specialized stores. Supermarkets have a relatively small market share of fruits, vegetables and bread sales, although they are incorporating more fresh products.

* Due to a major concern about incorporating healthier eating habits, consumption of functional F&B, and low-calorie and fat-free products (especially, dairy products, sandwich bread, flavored water, and fruit juices) increased significantly during the past couple of years.

* Internet sales are expanding dramatically as they are becoming more and more popular among consumers with higher- and middle-income purchasing power. Sales in 2008 totaled more than
$400 million, of which 20 percent was F&B.
* Home and office delivery by retailers has regained popularity after becoming more restricted, during the past few years, as service had lost importance in the local price-driven market.
* With a higher purchasing power and a lower unemployment rate, value has become increasingly important among the majority of consumers.
* Superstores purchase imported F&B directly and through local importers, agents, and/or representatives.
* Large supermarkets buy imported F&B directly. In most hypermarkets, approximately 7 percent of the F&B are imported.
* F&B are imported primarily from Brazil, Ecuador and Chile because of lower freight costs and zero or low tariffs for most goods.
* Buenos Aires City and suburbs represent roughly 45 percent of the country’s F&B sales. The balance is distributed throughout the rest of the country, primarily in 10 large cities.

**Number and Type of Food & Beverage Retail Outlets (Estimated 2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Store</th>
<th>Number of Outlets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypermarkets</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superstores</td>
<td>1,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse Stores</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Supermarkets or Independent grocers</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Stores (incl. mom-&amp;-pop and specialty food stores)</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience Stores</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>637,778</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAS Buenos Aires

**Trends in Services Offered by Retailers**

* Store credit cards, usually in conjunction with strong discounts or long payment terms.
* Incorporation of convenience foods, such as hot and frozen meals.
* A few hypermarkets offer some ethnic and kosher food, and organic products. They also have a special area devoted to imported F&B.
* Home and office delivery. Kiosks and convenience stores provide office delivery.
* A limited percentage of more affluent consumers do their shopping by phone and the Internet. However, this service is becoming more and more popular.
* During the past few years, there were some openings of other food and non-food businesses annexed to hypermarkets and superstores, such as movie theaters, food quarters, entertainment parks, etc.
* In addition, fast food restaurants were incorporated inside most stores.
## Outlook for U.S. Exports of Food & Beverage Products

Below are the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. F&B in the Argentine market:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentine consumers think of U.S. products as high quality and reliable.</td>
<td>Mercosur preferential tariffs encourage inter-regional trade. Brazilian and regional competition is strong for many products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many Argentines have traveled and studied in the U.S., and know U.S. culture and products. Exposure is also expanding through cable TV and the Internet.</td>
<td>Initial purchases by importers are usually small, which discourage U.S. suppliers and increase unit costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most local retail chains want to carry a good variety of imported F&amp;B on their shelves.</td>
<td>There is a large local supply of many F&amp;B products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imported food from the U.S. and the EU is mostly considered gourmet.</td>
<td>Large foreign investment in the domestic food industry during the 1990’s improved efficiency, quality, and competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. F&amp;B products are known for their efficiency, value and variety.</td>
<td>Higher distribution costs are incurred to reach the interior of the country and smaller cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant investment by large retail chains focused on new store openings, especially in the interior of the country, permits good country coverage.</td>
<td>Local importers perceive a lack of flexibility and response from most U.S. exporters in supplying documentation needed to register new products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large retail chains have more opportunities to deal with foreign suppliers directly.</td>
<td>Advertisement and marketing of locally manufactured products are very effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are good local cold chain facilities in Argentina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local retailers have gained exposure to U.S. exporters and consolidators through FAS activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A growing local F&amp;B industry opens new opportunities to imported food ingredients.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAS Buenos Aires
SECTION II. ROAD MAP FOR MARKET ENTRY

A. HYPERMARKETS OR SUPERCENTERS, SUPERSTORES AND WAREHOUSE OUTLETS

Entry Strategy

The best method to import a product will depend upon the product, the importer, and retailers. However, successful trade depends upon the commitment of the exporter to devote the time and resources necessary for building a market for his/her product(s). In general, imported F&B come into Argentina through any of the following ways:

- **Direct imports by supermarkets.** Import or purchasing managers of large retail companies identify food products in international food shows, buying missions, etc. They establish a direct contact with the foreign supplier or local agent and import the products directly. Due to small initial volumes, it is common for them to use large wholesalers or consolidators in the U.S.

- **Local agents**, who work closely with large retail chains. Imports are done on behalf of supermarkets on a commission basis. They stay on top of the product to supervise its marketing and brand development.

- **Local F&B importers**, who import products at their own financial risk, and then market them in supermarkets and/or hotels, restaurants, and institutional (HRI) establishments. There are a few of these who have been in the market for several years and have well-established brands. They mainly specialize in gourmet foods.

- **Local processors** (mainly subsidiaries of multinational companies) such as Nestle, Kraft, Cadbury, Heinz, Mars, Danone, etc., who import and distribute products usually manufactured by their sister companies. Imports through this channel dropped significantly with the economic crisis, but some companies have reinitiated imports.

Market Structure
## Distribution Channel Flow Diagram

**Imported Foods & Beverages**

- Importer
- Wholesale
- Convenience Stores + kiosks
- Supermarket

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## Company Profiles (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retailer/ Mkt. Share (%)</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Est. F&amp;B Sales US$ Million</th>
<th>No. of Outlets</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Purchasing Agent Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carrefour/ Carrefour Express/Mini Carrefour/Dia (28.5)</strong></td>
<td>French</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Direct, agent, importer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jumbo/ Disco/Vea (26.8)</strong></td>
<td>Chilean</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Direct, agent, importer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coto (15.8)</strong></td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Buenos Aires City &amp; Province, &amp; Prov. of Santa Fe &amp; Entre Rios</td>
<td>Direct, agent, importer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>La Anonima/ Quijote/Best (9.6)</strong></td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>Primarily South of Argentina (Patagonia), and Buenos Aires and Santa Fe Provinces</td>
<td>Direct, importer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WalMart/ Chango Mas (9.6)</strong></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Buenos Aires/ Large Cities</td>
<td>Direct, agent, importer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Libertad/Leader Price (Casino) (4.4)</strong></td>
<td>French/Local</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Center-North of Argentina; Buenos Aires City and Province</td>
<td>Direct, agent, importer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toledo (2.2)</strong></td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>S.E. Buenos Aires Province</td>
<td>Direct, agent, importer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eki (1.3)</strong></td>
<td>US</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>Buenos Aires City &amp; Province, &amp; Province of Santa Fe</td>
<td>Direct, agent, importer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from Euromonitor and private sources

Argentina has mainly the following retail store formats:

- Hypermarkets (>5,000 sqm., >25 checkouts, driving distance, delivery)
- Supermarkets (400/5,000 sqm., 4/25 checkouts, walking distance, delivery)
- Small supermarkets or superettes (<400 sqm., less than 3 checkouts, proximity, delivery)
- Warehouse stores (270 sqm average, proximity, 2-3 checkouts, low prices, high percent of private label products and B-brands, increasing focus on first brands, 500-1,500 products, delivery)

- Buenos Aires city and suburbs are covered by all four above formats.
- Larger cities (mainly provincial capitals) have primarily supermarkets and superettes, and several have hypermarkets.
- Smaller cities (less than 100,000 people) have primarily superettes and some supermarkets.
- There are 607 warehouse stores in Argentina with annual sales in 2008 of approximately $450 million, accounting for over 1 percent of total grocery retail sales. This format has been expanding both in sales and number of outlets. Dia (owned by Carrefour), Eki, and Leader Price (owned by Casino) are the main warehouse store formats. They are primarily located in Buenos Aires and suburbs, and Rosario and Cordoba Cities.
- With the gradual recovery of the economy and a more stable “peso” (Argentine unit of currency), hypermarkets have managed to re-build their lines of imported F&B in recent years, targeting consumers with a higher purchasing power, mainly in stores located in the most affluent areas of Buenos Aires City and suburbs (where one third of the country’s population lives, and almost half of the sales are done). Overall, in the past few years, consumers have been coming back to making planned purchases in hypermarkets due to the recovery of the purchasing power and competitive prices offered by these types of stores.
- Approximately 70 percent of the upper class, 50 percent of the middle class and about 20 percent of the lower class shop in hypermarkets and superstores.
**Internet shopping**

* A few retail chains provide Internet and phone sales service. However, sales of foods through the web are not yet widely popular. The main disadvantage for consumers is that they usually have to wait several hours for the order to be delivered to their homes and, in many cases, orders are incomplete due to products being out-of-stock.

* As reported in Euromonitor report, the number of Internet users in Argentina continue to increase. Strong Internet sales growth of 195 percent is forecast over the 2008-2013 period, as there is a greater presence of middle-income consumers purchasing products on-line who are gaining confidence in using this shopping tool. In 2008, Internet retailing sales grew by 48 percent.

* According to the National Institute of Census and Statistics (INDEC, in Spanish), in June 2008, there were 3.2 million home Internet connections in Argentina, which accounted for about 30 percent of households.

* Coto Digital, the on-line service of Coto Supermarket, led Internet retailing with a share of 9 percent of total sales, as it is being perceived as having the best prices and most comprehensive product offer and reliable delivery system. It has proved popular due to its convenience and time saved.

* Disco Virtual (on-line service of Disco Supermarket) lost some share to Coto Digital as Coto managed to attract more users through advertising, and has a user-friendly website, and a larger product portfolio.

* Le Shop is the only pure Internet retailer.

* Carrefour and Wal-Mart, which are still not present in Internet retailing, are expected to launch shopping websites to take advantage of the low overhead costs and to avoid the cost of opening new stores, particularly as rents are currently very high.

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**B. CONVENIENCE STORES, GAS MARTS, KIOSKS**

**Entry Strategy**

* The best method for new-to-market exporters is to enter the market through importers who have their own distribution networks, and to a lesser degree, through wholesalers.

* It should be noted that participation in trade shows, especially SIAL Mercosur, and other professional trade shows fosters contact between U.S. suppliers and importers primarily from the Mercosur region.

* In general, a local representative is helpful in coordinating negotiations with retailers. Most food importers sell directly to this subsector.
* Selling to gas-marts owned by oil companies should be done via the purchasing managers. The owners of kiosks and convenience stores are the ones to take purchasing decisions.

**Market Structure**

Please refer to flow chart in Section II. A.

**Company Profiles (2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retailer Name</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>F&amp;B Sales ($ Million)</th>
<th>No. of Outlets</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Purchasing Agent Type</th>
<th>Mkt. Share %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repsol YPF (Full/Servi Compras)</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Importer, distributor</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrobras (Spacio 1)</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Importer, distributor</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shell (Select/Shop)</td>
<td>British/Dutch</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Importer, distributor</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esso Shop/Tiger Market Express</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Importer, distributor</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAS Buenos Aires based on data from Euromonitor and private sources

* Gas mart chains or convenience stores (C-stores) started operation in the late 1980s as a separate division of oil companies. Their F&B sales account for approximately 65 percent of their total sales.
* There are approximately 5,500 C-stores and gas marts all over the country. They are typically located within gas stations either in cities or on highways. They are open 24 hours a day and offer a wide variety of F&B products (approximately 2,000), such as frozen food, fast food, snacks, cookies, confectionery items, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, dairy products, etc. They also include a gift area and an eating area with microwaves. Some gas marts have ATM machines, Internet access, WI-FI technology, and telephone booths.
* During the past few years, they have been incorporating promotions based on price/value.
* Curiously, C-stores do not compete with each other but primarily with kiosks in proximity.
* Customers of C-stores in cities, mostly teenagers, usually make impulse purchases (e.g. confectionery items), or because of their proximity and the fact that they are open 24 hours a
Customers of C-stores on highways are primarily travelers.

* Twenty four-hour service and their relative security are some of the major attractive features of gas marts.
* C-stores represent a good channel for imported F&B since a high percentage of their customers belong to the more affluent stratum of society. Over 50 percent of C-store customers belong to middle class and 40 percent, to the upper/middle class.
* C-stores located in Buenos Aires City and suburbs account for more than half of the total sales of this format.

Kiosks are smaller than gas marts. They primarily sell confectionery products, snacks, cigarettes, soft drinks, ice cream, etc. They do not have eating areas, and most of them are family-run. Some kiosks have become maxikiosks, with self-service shelves and a wider product variety.

Kiosks account for approximately 10 percent of the total retail sales of F&B products.

Kiosk customers belong to all socio-economic classes. Maxikiosks are popular among students, and workers, who purchase inexpensive food.

Larger kiosks have incorporated vending machines.

Most imported items sold in C-stores and kiosks are chocolates, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, ice cream and confectionery products.

The location of C-stores and kiosks in Argentina is mostly related to consumption patterns. Buenos Aires City and suburbs show a higher concentration of outlets, followed by major cities such as Córdoba, Rosario, Mendoza, Tucumán, Mar del Plata, Bahía Blanca, Santa Fe, Paraná, Neuquén, and Salta.

C. TRADITIONAL MARKETS - "MOM & POP" SMALL INDEPENDENT GROCERY STORES (including small supermarkets)

Entry Strategy

* The best method to enter the market is the same as for convenience stores (please refer to Section B).

Market Structure

Please refer to flow chart in Section II. A.
Subsector Profile

* In 2008, traditional stores accounted for about 69 percent of the total retail sales of F&B products, compared with approximately 35 percent in 2001, and 73 percent fifteen years ago. At the beginning of the present decade, sales in both grocery stores and small supermarkets grew fast. Many customers with a lower purchasing power preferred these due to their proximity, and the fact that they made smaller purchases, many times with short-term credit. Moreover, prices at grocery stores had become similar to those in supermarkets. Then, a significant number of consumers returned to hyper and supermarket shopping, as a consequence of increased confidence in the economy, higher purchasing power, and convenience in terms of time and price. Despite a slowdown of the economy during the past couple of years, traditional stores have continued to lose some market share in favor of hyper and supermarkets as a consequence of their highly competitive prices and discounts.
* Customers of traditional stores primarily belong to the middle and lower-middle socioeconomic strata.
* Only a small percentage of imported F&B is sold through traditional stores.

SECTION III. COMPETITION

* Argentina is essentially a food-producing and exporting country.
* Of all retail F&B sold in 2008, only 7 percent was imported.
* Although volumes of imported F&B decreased significantly after devaluation in early 2002, supermarkets have been reincorporating imported U.S. consumer-ready food products and they have managed to rebuild their imported product line.
* Highly-rated hotels in Argentina continued using some imported premium products because of their high quality and variety.
* Food products are imported mainly from Mercosur countries (primarily Brazil and Chile) due to three main reasons: proximity, reduced preferential import tariffs, and favorable exchange rate. Imported products also come from Ecuador, European countries (especially Spain, France, Italy, and Germany) and the United States.

The following table lists the advantages and disadvantages of both local and imported F&B products:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


The following is a brief description of the market per major retail product categories:

* Snack food of U.S. origin has a very good reputation, but its demand dropped significantly after the peso devaluation. The main market player in Argentina is PepsiCo, which locally produces many U.S. brands.
* Domestic production of breakfast cereals is also very significant. U.S.-owned companies established in Argentina (Kellogg’s, Quaker and General Cereals) lead the market. However, some varieties are still imported, especially from Brazil. There are a few medium/large local companies as well.
* Argentina produces large volumes of beef. Thus, imports are not significant although some sweetbreads were imported from the United States until early 2002, when Argentina established new sanitary regulations banning imports.
* Imported pork accounted for approximately half the domestic demand until 2001. However, the economic crisis has forced its reduction to very low volumes. Product comes primarily from Brazil.
* Although Argentina’s poultry production and exports are increasing sharply, some very small volumes of inexpensive products are imported from Brazil.
* Argentina is self-sufficient in dairy production and exports high quality products to many markets. However, some imports of whey, special milks and specialty cheeses take place.
* There are large imports of preserved fish and seafood specialties (primarily canned tuna), coming from Ecuador, Thailand, and Brazil.
* Some fruits, which are not produced locally, are imported, such as bananas (Brazil and Ecuador) and kiwifruit (Chile, Italy, and New Zealand). There are imports of canned fruits, especially pineapple from Thailand, South Africa, and Indonesia. Canned palm hearts are also imported in significant quantities from Ecuador and Brazil.
* Argentine imports of tree nuts (primarily almonds) have recovered during the past few years. Of what is imported, Chile dominates the market, followed by the U.S.
* Regarding imports of soft drinks and mineral water, there are large local manufacturers, including Coca Cola and PepsiCo, which compete strongly in the market. Beer imports are recovering quite strongly. The main suppliers are Mexico and the EU. Wine imports almost disappeared after the devaluation in 2002 but are recovering slowly. France, Spain and Belgium are the main suppliers.
* Argentina has expanded its pet food production, especially after the opening of several manufacturing plants owned by foreign companies such as Procter & Gamble, Nestle/Purina, Heinz, Mars/Effem and Colgate Palmolive. However, some premium pet food is imported, primarily from Brazil and the U.S.

**SECTION IV. BEST PRODUCT PROSPECTS**

The best product prospects for U.S. F&B in the Argentine retail market are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Type</th>
<th>Present in the Market w/Good Sales Potential</th>
<th>Not Present in Significant Quantities but w/Good Sales Potential</th>
<th>Not Present because They Face Significant Barriers</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned Vgs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit &amp; Nut Prep.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Confection.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Citrus</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>** ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soups</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauces &amp; Prep.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies/Snacks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isotonic Bvgs./Energy Drinks</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fresh Stone Fruits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>** ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Deciduous Fruits</td>
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<td>** ***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Ingredients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenience Foods</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Please contact our office for current phytosanitary regulations

**SECTION V. POST CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION**
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