

# The Swedish Market

## Food ingredients



**Open Trade  
Gate Sweden**  
National Board of Trade

# Table of contents

<b>Get to know the Swedish market</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Understand the market structure</b>	<b>8</b>
Importers and processors	8
Agents	8
Other channels	8
Market analysis	9
<b>Keep up with the trends</b>	<b>14</b>
Rising consumer concerns about synthetic ingredients	14
Growing importance of ethical sourcing	14
Increasing demand for plant-based food	14
Mandatory requirements for exporting food ingredients in Sweden	15
Determine your logistics solution	20
<b>Find a business partner</b>	<b>21</b>
How do Swedish buyers typically find trade partners (importers)?	21
What trade shows/exhibitions are most important to access the Swedish market?	21
Buyers preferences for ingredients	22
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>23</b>

## Get to know the Swedish market

This report analyses the food ingredients market in Sweden. A wide range of ingredients are used by the food industry. In this report, “food ingredients” refer to food additives, which are substances added to foods for specific technical and/or functional purposes during processing, storage or packaging; such food ingredients include Enzymes and Anti-oxidants, Functional Ingredients, Natural Flavourings and Colours, Natural Sweeteners, Starches, and Vegetable Oils and Fats.

The Swedish food market was worth USD 32.3 billion in 2021, according to Statista. It is estimated to reach USD 41.5 billion by 2026. This growth translates into opportunities for a wide range of food ingredients.

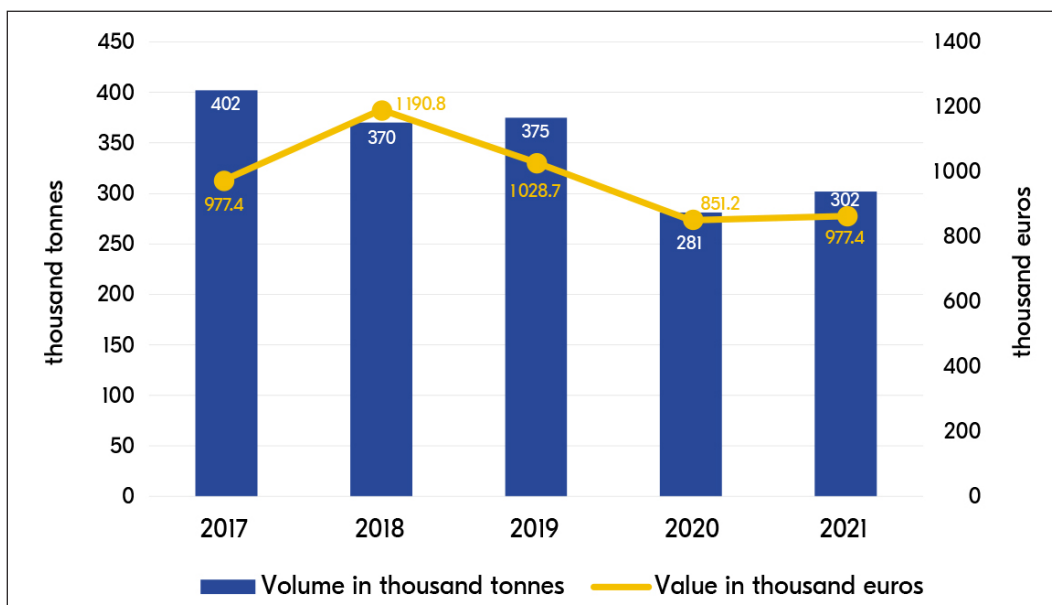
Table 1. Imports of selected food ingredients to Sweden, 2017–2021

Food ingredients	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change volume (2017– 2021) tonnes	m EUR	% Change value (2017– 2021)	Outside EU imports share (volume)
Enzymes	2041	1915	2011	2473	2637	29%	44.0	53.6%	1.9%
% Change		-6.2%	5.0%	22.9%	6.7%				
Colouring matter	309	385	448	432	478	55%	6.4	72.8%	10.8%
% Change		24.7%	16.3%	-3.6%	10.7%				
Flavoured or coloured isoglucose syrups	44	85	69	79	100	125%	0.3	271.1%	29.3%
% Change		92.3%	-18.8%	14.7%	25.7%				
Nuts and Seeds	16350.4	17936.3	20366.6	21401.9	18847.8	15%	63.4	-19.2%	31.1%
% Change		9.7%	13.5%	5.1%	-11.9%				
Animal or vegetable fats and oils	707785	716941	774714	741388	807829	14%	993.8	37.1%	33.3%
% Change		1.3%	8.1%	-4.3%	9.0%				
Total Spices and Herbs	13298	13376	14732	14938	15873	19%	82.8	14.8%	37.9%
% Change		0.6%	10.1%	1.4%	6.3%				
Total Sugars	99659	84386	99003	87074	75298	-24%	66.5	-6.7%	4.9%
% Change		17.3%	-12.0%	-13.5%	-15.3%				
Lac; gums, resins and other vegetable saps and extracts	1900	2127	2364	2718	2129	12%	23.5	20.6%	30.0%
% Change		11.9%	11.2%	15.0%	-21.7%				

**Turmeric** is one of the prospective food ingredients in the Swedish market. Although imports of turmeric decreased from 2019 to 2020, the volume and value started increasing in 2021 again. Turmeric is used as a spice in the food industry; it is also considered a super-food with beneficial health qualities. The popularity of turmeric is increasing due to rising consumer awareness of its health qualities and its use in ethnic cuisine.

Figure 1 shows that the level of imports of turmeric to Sweden has been fluctuating. The decrease in 2020 was because of logistics issues during the coronavirus pandemic. The level of imports grew by 7.4 per cent in 2021 in terms of volume compared to 2020. The share of outside the EU imports is 86 per cent.

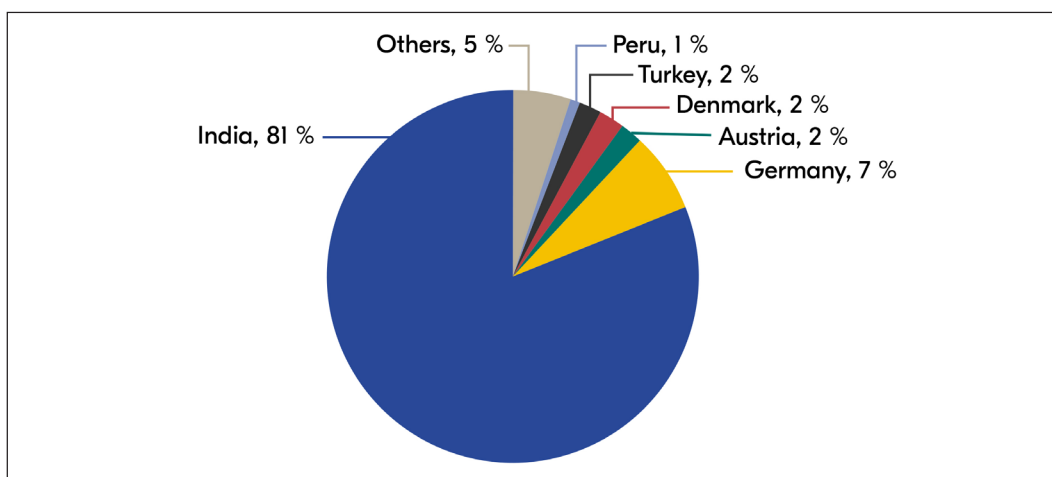
Figure 1. Imports of turmeric into the Swedish market, 2017–2021



Source: Eurostat

Figure 2 shows the main country suppliers of turmeric to Sweden. It is shown that more than 80 per cent of imports are from India. Other developing countries include Turkey and Peru.

Figure 2. Breakdown of turmeric imports by supplying country to Sweden

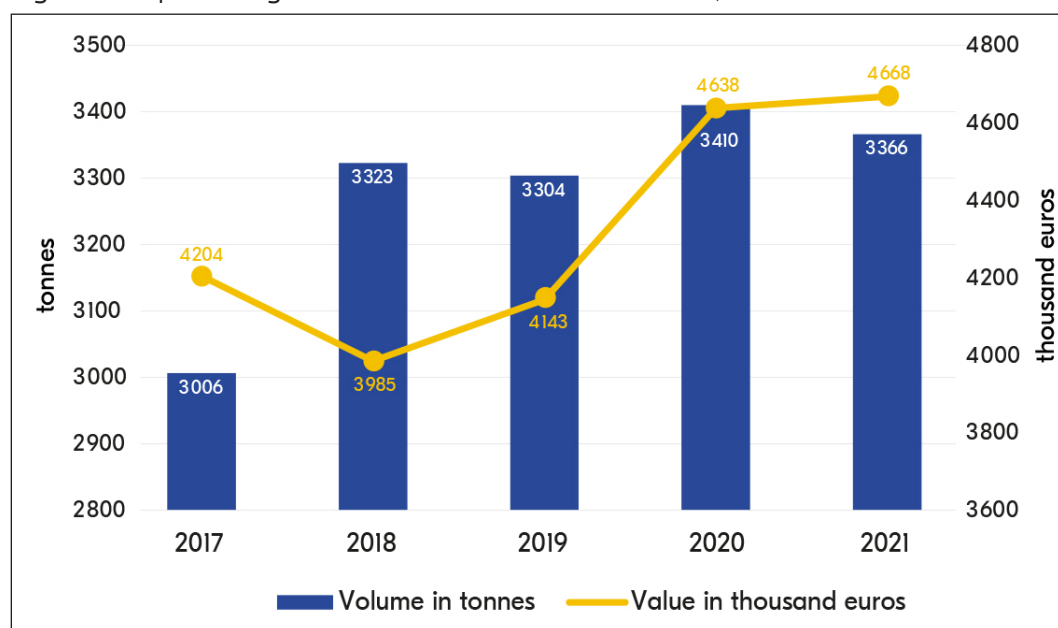


Source: Eurostat

**Groundnuts** is another prospective food ingredient in the Swedish market. Groundnuts have various applications in the food industry; apart from their use as a food ingredient, they are also consumed as snacks. Their main application is in a wide range of snacks; they are also used in confectionery products. Groundnuts are also increasingly used as a healthier alternative to snacks and bars. Groundnuts are becoming popular for consumers that follow both plant-based, as well as ketogenic diets.

More than 40 per cent of groundnuts imported to Sweden come from countries outside the EU. Between 2017 and 2021 the imports of groundnuts to Sweden increased by about 12 per cent in terms of volume and 11 per cent in terms of value.

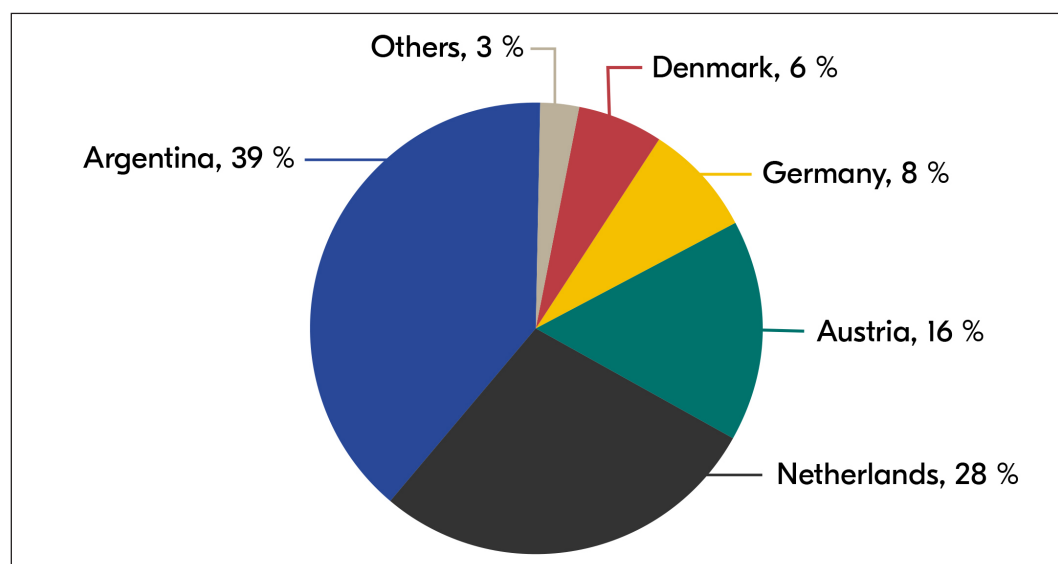
Figure 3. Imports of groundnuts into the Swedish market, 2017–2021



Source: Eurostat

About 39 per cent of groundnuts imported to Sweden come from Argentina. The Netherlands is also an importer supplier of groundnuts to Sweden. Other European suppliers of groundnuts include Austria, Germany and Denmark.

Figure 4. Breakdown of groundnuts imports by supplying country to Sweden

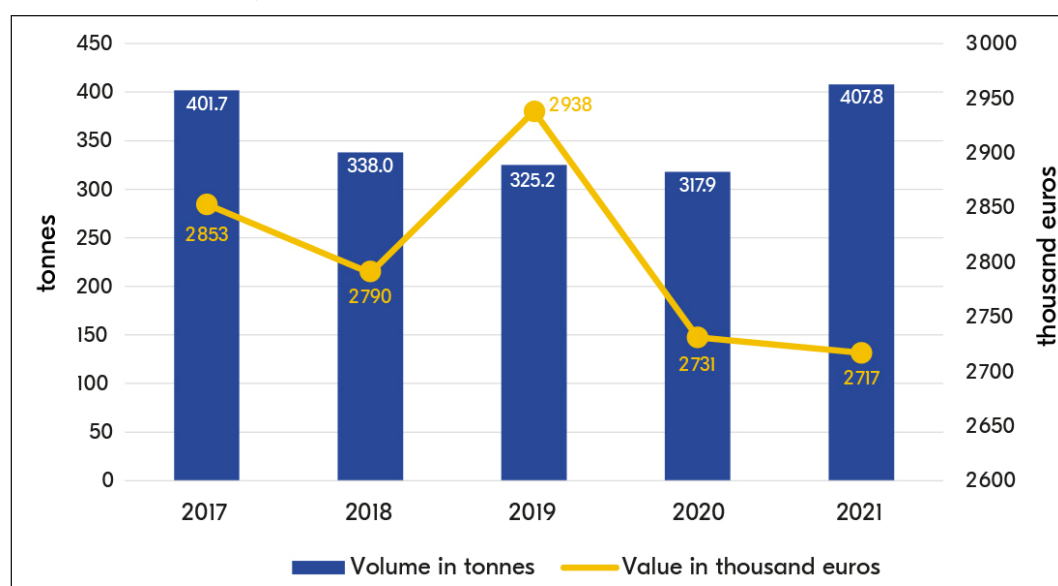


Source: Eurostat

**Carrageenan** is a seaweed extract or a seaweed hydrocolloid that is used as a gelling and thickening agent in food, pharmaceutical and other industries. It is cultivated from red edible seaweeds from around the world; Indonesia and China are the largest producers. There are three types of carrageenan: kappa, iota and lambda. Carrageenan has a wide range of applications in the food industry, including dairy products, ice cream, processed meats, salad dressings, sauces, beverages and dairy alternatives.

Carrageenan is traded under HS Code 130239 as mucilages and thickeners derived from vegetable products. Figure 5 shows that volume imports increased slightly (1,5 per cent) between 2017 and 2021. The volume of imports fluctuated during this time period. The fluctuations in value are because of price changes brought about by supply imbalances and growing demand for competing ingredients.

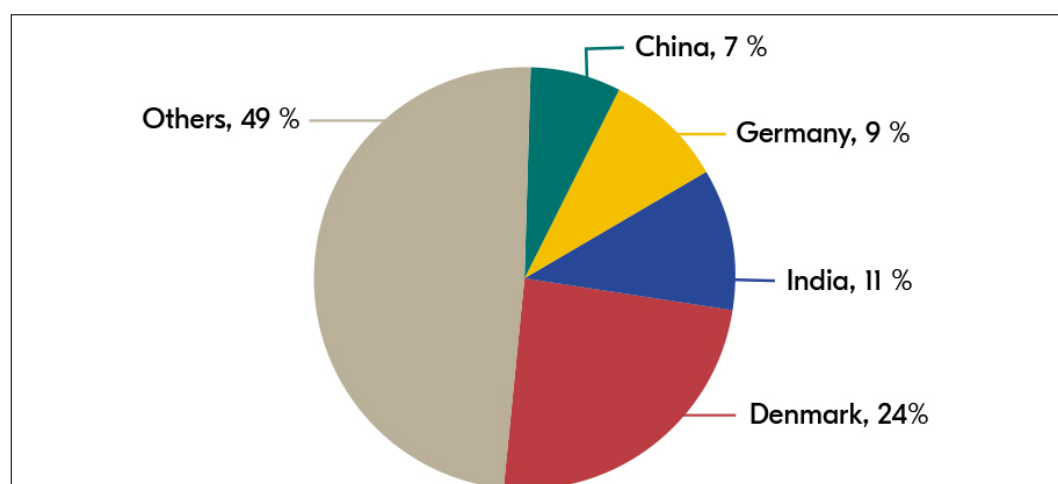
Figure 5. Imports of mucilages and thickeners derived from vegetable products into the Swedish market, 2017–2021



Source: Eurostat

About 63 per cent of mucilages and thickeners derived from vegetable products is imported from Extra-EU countries. Denmark is the leading supplier with 24 per cent share. India and China have 11 per cent and 7 per cent share respectively.

Figure 6. Breakdown of mucilages and thickeners derived from vegetable products imports by supplying country to Sweden

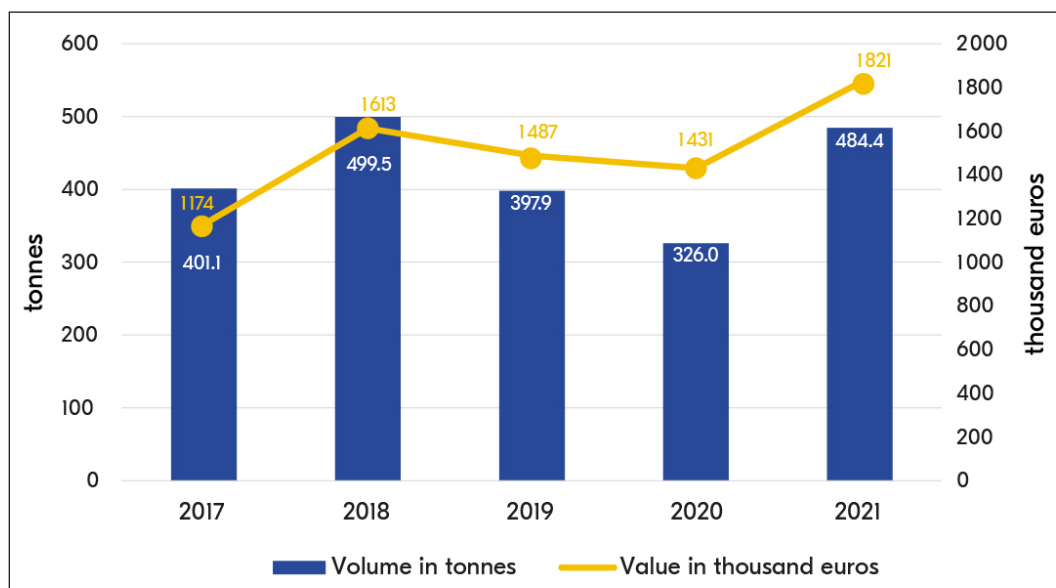


Source: Eurostat

**Guar gum** is another prospective food ingredient. Its main application is to stabilise and emulsify food and other industrial products. Its properties include water retention ability, fibre content enhancement, binding and texturing. It is mainly used as a gelling agent, thickening agent, and as an additive to add crystallization and volume to food products. Guar gum is mainly used in ice-cream, yoghurts, soups, and plant-based drinks. It has a low nutrient and calorie content, and is often used in fibre supplements.

Between 2017 and 2021, the volume of imports of guar gum increased by almost 21 per cent in volume and by 55 per cent in value. The price of guar is connected to crude oil prices, as one of its applications is in the fracking sector; this causes the prices of guar gum to fluctuate.

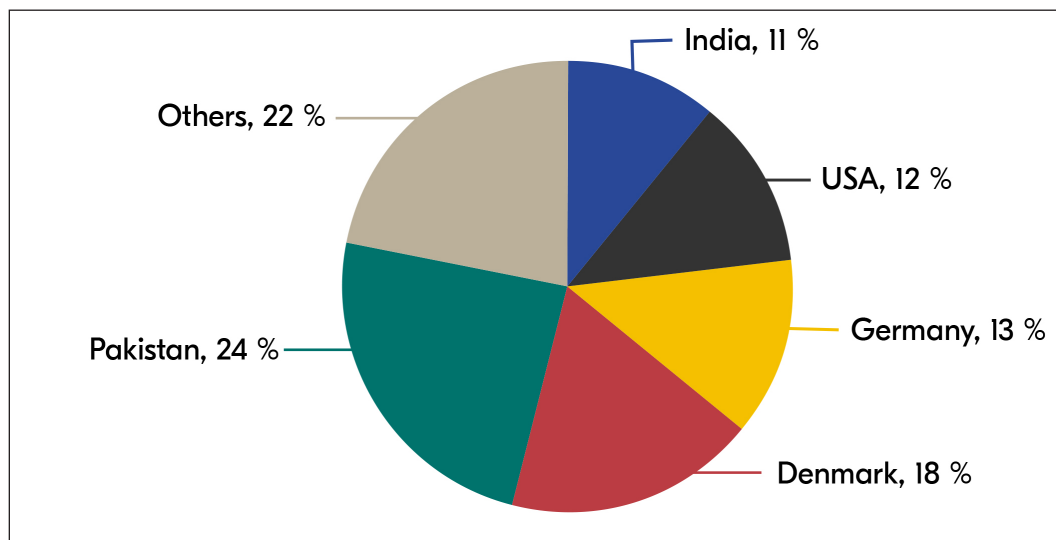
Figure 7. Imports of groundnuts into the Swedish market, 2017–2021



Source: Eurostat

More than 47 per cent of guar gum is imported from outside of the EU. Figure 8 shows that Pakistan is the leading supplier of guar gum to Sweden. Denmark is the second leading exporter with 18 per cent share, followed by Germany with 13 per cent share and the USA with 12 per cent share. India accounts for 11 per cent of imports.

Figure 8. Breakdown of guar imports by supplying country to Sweden



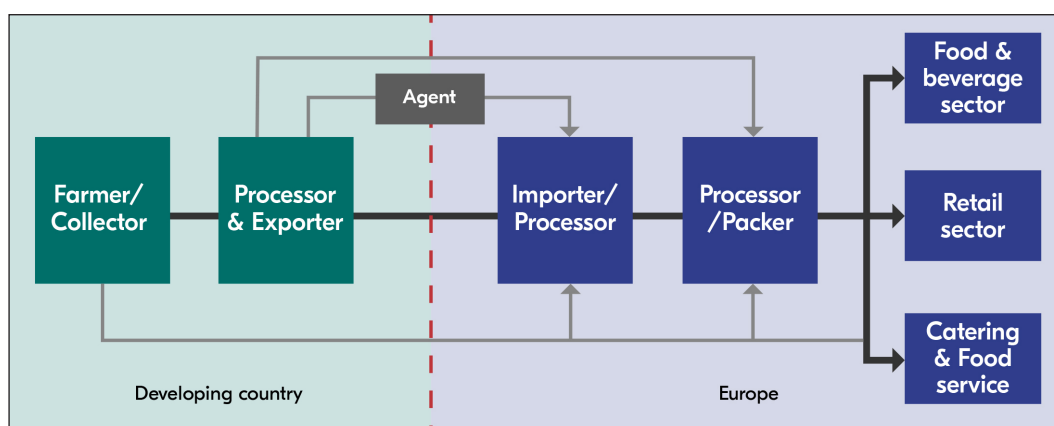
Source: Eurostat

## Understand the market structure

Importers are the main entry point for food ingredients entering the Swedish market. Food ingredients are sometimes processed in the country of origin and exported via agents and exporters. Large processors or retailers can source directly from exporters; this is not very common and it is only for certain food ingredients.

Figure 9 shows the general supply chain for food ingredients, however there are variations for certain types of food ingredients.

Figure 9. Supply chain of food ingredients



Source: Ecovia Intelligence

### Importers and processors

Importers are the main entry point for most food ingredients in Sweden. Importers take care of sourcing, quality control, documentary and regulatory compliance for processors, blenders and food manufacturers. Many companies act only as importers, whilst some large companies can be vertically integrated; they are involved in import, processing and packing.

### Agents

An agent deals in trading activities; they can be located in the country of origin or in the importing country. Agents tend to be individuals or firms that charge commission from trade transactions. However, it is not common for companies to use agents in the Swedish food market. Exporters could work with agents who represent and act on their behalf to access the Swedish market.

### Other channels

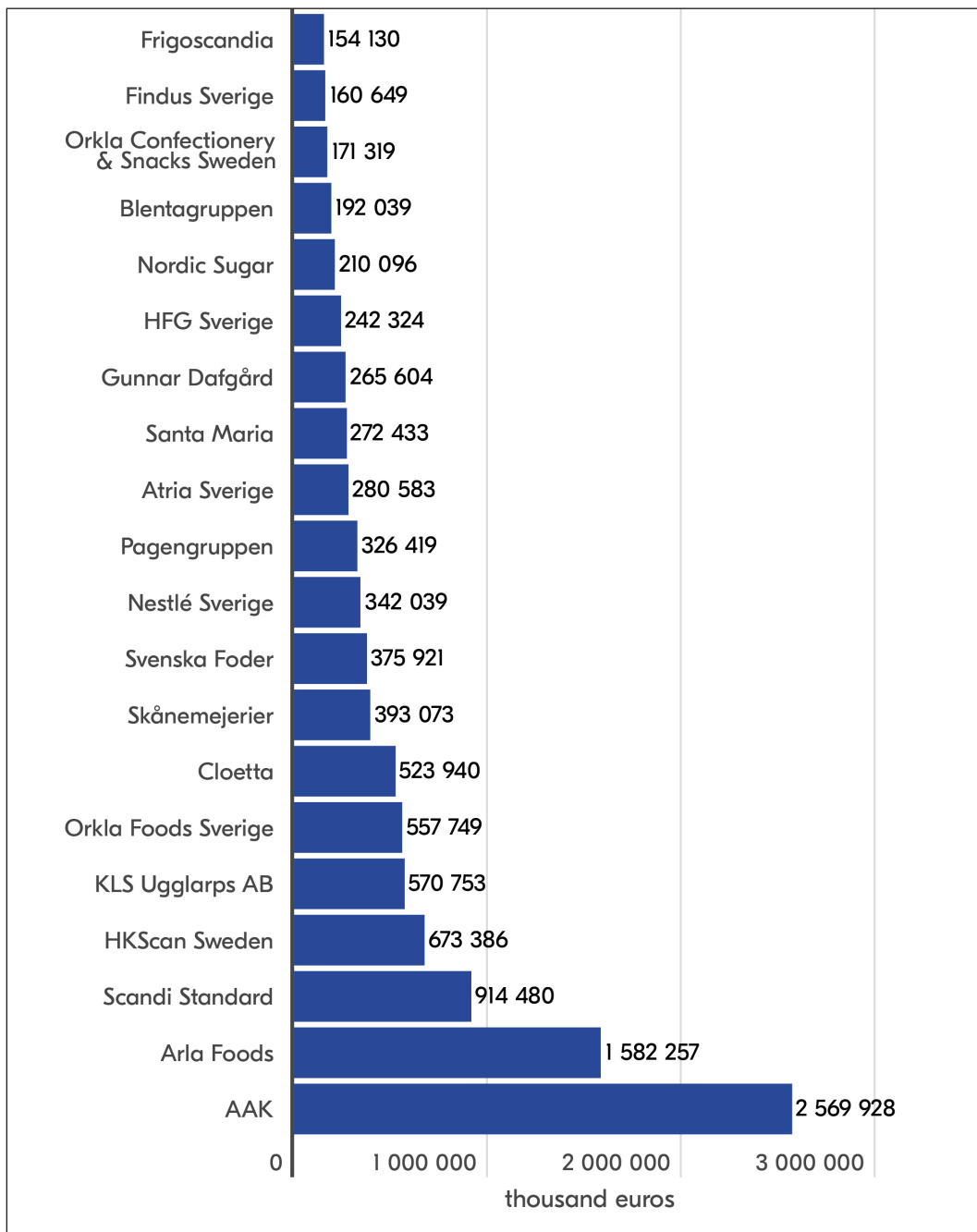
In case of large volumes, exporters could supply directly to retailers or food processors in Sweden. However, this is not that common in Sweden, since importing brings issues with quality and logistics. It is quite rare to enter direct sourcing partnerships with Swedish retailers and food processors.



## Market analysis

The Swedish market for food ingredients is highly fragmented, with several leading market players. There are many small and medium size companies that import food ingredients into the country. These companies can source from Europe and/or directly from producer countries. AAK is the largest importer in Sweden.

Figure 10. Leading food companies in Sweden



Source: largestcompanies.com

## AAK

The Swedish-Danish company **AAK** is one of the world's largest producers and processors of vegetable oils, including shea butter, cocoa butter and coconut oil. The company has a processing facility in Aarhus Denmark. AAK supplies various industries, including food and personal care.

## ARLA FOODS

**Arla Foods** is a Swedish-Danish dairy company based in Viby, Denmark. It is one of the largest dairy companies in Europe; it is also one of the most established with over 130 years of experience. The company is a co-operative, jointly owned by 13,500 dairy farmers in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

## ORKLA

Norwegian **Orkla** is one of the leading food processors on the Swedish market. Orkla Foods Sweden has processing facilities in various locations that include Eslöv, Tollarp, Fågelmara, Frödinge, Kungshamn, Kumla, Örebro, Vansbro, Vadensjö and Simrishamn. Its head office is in Malmö. The company owns many food producers, such as Procordia Food, Abba Seafood and Kååkå. Some of the leading food brands that belong to Orkla include OLW, Felix, Anamma, Göteborgs. OLW is one of the leading snacks producers in Sweden. Felix is a Swedish food products supplier that produces condiments, fries, ready-made meals, as well as porridge. The company offers plant-based products under Flix Veggie and Frankful brand names.

## CLOETTA

The Swedish company **Cloetta** is one of the leading confectionery companies in the Nordic region. It supplies confectionery products in Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. Its brands include Läkerol, Cloetta, Candyking, Jenkki, Kexchoklad, Malaco, Sportlife and Red Band.

## SKÅNEMEJERIER

Skane-based cooperative **Skånemejerier** is one of the leading dairy producers in the country. Founded in 1964, it is now part of the Lactalis Group. The company offers dairy product under brands, such as Skånemejerier, BARA, Åsens, Hjordnära Eko and Pannoumi.

## NESTLÉ SVERIGE

**Nestlé Sverige** is a subsidiary of the Swiss multinational company Nestlé. The company supplies baby foods, bottled water, cereals, chocolate, confectionery, coffee, dairy, drinks, food service, ice cream, and frozen food. Nestlé Sverige supplies its products worldwide.

## ATRIA SVERIGE

**Atria Sverige** is one of Northern Europe's leading food companies. Established in 1997, Atria Sweden is owned by the Finnish food group Atria ABP. It supplies a range of meat products that include charcuterie, beef, chicken, meal solutions and vegetarian products to food retailers. Atria has also developed fast food options for petrol stations, convenience stores, festivals, and events. Atria Sweden has approximately 870 employees, and reported SEK 3.6 billion sales in 2021.

## SANTA MARIA

Part of the Finnish Paulig group, **Santa Maria** is the leading importer of spices and herbs in the Swedish market. The company supplies spices and herbs to the retail, food processing and CFS sectors. It offers 28 organic and 191 conventional spices and herbs that are mostly dried. Santa Maria also offers a range of finished products, such as condiments, sauces, crisps and tortillas.

### **GUNNAR DAFGÅRD**

Founded in 1937, **Gunnar Dafgård AB** is one of Sweden's largest private food companies. It has a bakery in Källby. Gunnar Dafgård produces a wide range of foods that include meatballs, pizza, lasagne and ready-meals. Its brands include Billy's Pizza, Familjen Dafgård and Gorby's.

### **HFG SVERIGE**

Established in 2004, **HFG Sverige AB** is a leading meat processor. It has a wide range of frozen, cured, and processed meat products. HFG Sverige has also developed vegan and vegetarian products. Its products are in Swedish retailers; it also exports worldwide.

### **NORDIC SUGAR**

**Nordic Sugar AB** was founded in 1992. With headquarters in Germany, the company has 21 production facilities in various countries in Europe, as well as in Australia. The company produces granulated sugar, cube sugar, brown sugar, muscovado sugar, icing sugar, nib sugar, syrup, jam and jelly sugar, as well as organic sugar products. Its products are sold all over the world.

### **BLENTAGRUPPEN**

The Swedish food company **Blentagruppen AB** is a leading poultry meat processor. It owns Sweden's largest privately owned hatchery. It markets chicken and turkey under the Guldfågeln and Ingelsta Kalkon brands. It supplies poultry products to retailers and the foodservice sector.

### **ORKLA CONFECTIONERY & SNACKS SVERIGE**

**Orkla Confectionery & Snacks Sverige AB** is the leading company in the confectionery, biscuit and snacks categories in the Nordic region. It was formed in 2013 by the merger of two brands: the OLW brand (snacks) and Göteborgs Kex (biscuits). Orkla Confectionery & Snacks Sweden has its chips factory in Filipstad and its biscuit factory in Kungälv. It is one of the first companies to produce vegan products, such as vegan dip and vegan cheez doodles. Its brands include Cheez Doodles, Choco Crunch, Panda, Ballerina, Göteborgs Kex ANYDAY etc.

### **FINDUS SVERIGE**

**Findus Sverige AB** is the leading frozen food company in Sweden. It makes products for the retail and CFS sector. In 2015, it was acquired by Nomad Foods Europe, which markets products under various brands that include Findus, Birds Eye, Iglo, la Cocinera and Lutos. It markets plant-based foods under the Green Cuisine brand since 2020.

Founded in 1948, the Swedish company Frigoscandia AB supplies seafood, meat products, and related food products to the CFS sector. Its supplies operators in the Nordic region, Europe, and other parts of the world.

### **BARILLA SVERIGE**

**Barilla Sverige AB** is a leading supplier of Italian food. It is part of the Italian company Barilla Group, which reported EUR 3.9 billion sales in 2021. It supplies pasta, sauces and bakery products. In 2016, Barilla launched an organic pasta in the European and US markets.

### **SKÖVDE SLAKTERI**

**Skövde Slakteri AB** is a leading supplier of meat and charcuterie products. It is part of the Swedish-owned family group Ögren-Gruppen. It operates the largest privately owned slaughterhouse in Sweden.

### **SEMPER**

Established in 1939, **Semper AB** is the leading producer of baby food, gluten-free and related products in the Nordic region. It produces infant formula and gluten free mixers at its Götene facility, whereas the gluten-free crisp bread is produced in the bakery in Korsnäs. Semper has been part of the Hero Group since 2006.

### **DANISH CROWN FOODS JÖNKÖPING**

Established in 1887, **Danish Crown Foods Jönköping AB** is one of Europe's largest suppliers of pork products. It is involved in meat processing and retail packaging of beef and pork products. Approximately half of its products are sold in Nordic countries, while the other half is sold internationally. The company is investing in sustainability. For instance, 90 per cent of the pigs delivered to the slaughterhouses come from a farmer with a sustainability certificate. The company reported over SEK 1 billion in 2022.

### **ESTRELLA**

Formed in 1946, **Estrella AB** is Sweden's first chips manufacturer. It produces a variety of snacks, including potato chips, cheese puffs, peanut rings, and various others. Estrella has been part of Intersnack Group since 2014.

### **GELITA**

Founded in 1875, **GELITA Sweden AB** is the leading global supplier of gelatine. The company also supplies collagen and collagen peptides to the food, nutrition and health, pharmaceutical and other industries.

### **WERNERSSON OST**

**Wernersson Ost AB** is a dairy company that specialises in cheese. It produces a large range of products, including blue and white mould cheese, cream cheese, hard cheese, as well as plant-based cheese alternatives.

### **CHARKUTERIFABRIKEN SVERIGE**

Founded in 2011, **Charkuterifabriken Sverige AB** specialises in meat products. The company changed its name from Nordströms Sverige AB in 2015, and was acquired by KLS Ugglarps in November 2021. It has its production facility in Halmstad. Its turnover is about SEK 1 billion.

### **MARENOR**

Established in 1867, **Marenor AB** is a leading seafood producer in the Nordic region. It supplies a range of fish products, and is a leading producer of caviar. Marenor AB is owned by the Norwegian group Insula AS.

### **MÅRTENSSONS PARTIAFFÄR**

**Mårtenssons Partiaffär AB** is a leading slaughterhouse in Sweden. The company supplies meat products, as well as livestock by-products. It has beef, chicken and pork products.

### **O KAVLI**

Established in 1893, **O Kavli AB** is a part of the Kavli Food Group. It supplies a wide range of cheese products. The company reported about SEK 4.2 billion sales in 2021.

### **BARRY CALLEBAUT SWEDEN**

**Barry Callebaut Sweden AB** is a subsidiary of the Swiss chocolate manufacturer Barry Callebaut. The company was founded in 1996 as a joint venture between Callebaut and Cacao Barry. It is one of the world's leading producers of chocolate and cocoa products. It has a wide range of chocolates, including plant-based chocolate.

### **ABDON GROUP**

Established in 1976, **Abdon Group AB** is a leading grain producer in the Nordic region. Abdon has a variety of flours, breakfast cereals, and other products. The company sells over 350,000 tonnes of grain products each year. Its products are marketed under the Finax, Abdon Mills and Björnekulla brands.

### **FOODMARK**

Founded in 1885, **Foodmark AB** belongs to the food group Agra AS. Foodmark sells a range of products, including salads, sauces, dressings, butter and soft cheese. It markets its products under the Rydbergs, Lohmanders, Fjällbrynt and Delikatessfabriken brands. It reported over SEK 850 million sales in 2021.

### **JONKOPINGS STORMARKNAD**

**Jonkopings Stormarknad AB** is a part of the ICA group. Its product range includes canned foods, fresh fruits and vegetables, bakery products, dry goods, and ready-meals.

### **DAVA FOODS**

Founded in 1982, **Dava Foods AB** is a leading eggs producer in Scandinavia. It distributes a range of egg products. Dava has three different types of eggs: organic eggs, eggs from outdoor hens, and eggs from indoor hens.

### **ALVIKSGÅRDEN LANTBRUKS**

Founded in 1994, **Alviksgården Lantbruks AB** is a leading producer of meat and charcuterie products. The company also produces chilled ready-meals.

### **PROBI**

Established in 1991, **Probi AB** makes probiotic food and drink products. The company's product range includes dairy products, desserts, plant-based foods, fruit drinks, and carbonated beverages.

### **FAZER SWEDEN**

Founded in 1891, **Fazer Sweden AB** is a leading food company in the Nordic region. It has a range of bakery and confectionery products that include dairy-free and plant-based foods. Fazer operates in seven countries and export to more than 40 countries. The Fazer group reported SEK 2.2 billion sales in 2021.

## Keep up with the trends

### Rising consumer concerns about synthetic ingredients

There is a trend of removing synthetic ingredients from food products in Sweden and the Nordic region. The move is driven by rising consumer awareness, as well as media campaigns and pressure from NGOs. According to the European Research Council, *“those eating higher levels of ultra-processed foods had a higher risk of several chronic diseases”*

A NutriNet-Santé study in March 2022 showed a link between high consumption of artificial sweeteners and an increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular diseases. This is one such study showing a link between synthetic chemicals and higher incidence of health conditions. Consumers are looking for products that contain natural ingredients and/or clean label products.

### Growing importance of ethical sourcing

Ethical sourcing of raw materials is becoming more important in the food industry. There is greater scrutiny of supply chains of raw materials. The move is driven by greater consumer knowledge of environmental issues and supply chain pressure.

Food companies are asking producers and suppliers to commit to sustainable and responsible business processes. For example, the ingredients company AAK asks its suppliers to commit to the company’s code of conduct for raw materials. Its suppliers must comply with the documents and requirements of the code; failure to do so can result in the termination of business relationships. In the coming years, this trend will become even more important. Exporters of food ingredients in developing countries should incorporate ethical sourcing practices into their business operations.

### Increasing demand for plant-based food

Plant-based foods are gaining popularity in Sweden, creating an opportunity for food ingredients that can be used in such products; these include plant-based proteins, vegetable butter and oils, and plant-based food additives. The three main reasons for consumers to reduce meat intake are health benefits, ethical and environmental concerns.

Growing demand for plant-based foods creates an opportunity for plant-based products and food ingredients. Thus, exporters in developing countries can take advantage of the opportunity by supplying plant-based raw materials.

### Organic production methods

The share of organic land of total agricultural land is about 20 per cent. The Swedish government has set a target of organic farmland to reach 30 per cent of the cultivated land by 2030. Organic food sales are growing in Sweden, increasing from EUR 0.8 billion in 2010 in EUR 2.2 billion in 2020. Growing demand for organic foods is generating openings for organic ingredients.

There are two organic labels in the Swedish market: the EU organic logo, and the Swedish KRAV certification. The EU organic certificate is the basis for products marketed as organic in the EU; it is the minimum requirement for organic foods produced in Europe. Whereas, KRAV has higher consumer recognition in Sweden since the organic standard was launched in 1985. The KRAV organic standard is considered to be stricter than the EU organic standard.

## Sustainability schemes and other standards

Apart from organic, there are a number of other sustainability standards and schemes in the food industry. Some like Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, and Vegan Society are related to food ingredients. Others like Nordic Swan represent lower environmental impact products.

The Fairtrade Mark is on food products that contain fair trade ingredients, such as certified sugar, honey, cocoa; it is also on food and drink products like tea, coffee, bananas and other fruits.

Suppliers of food ingredients to the Swedish market need to keep sustainability schemes in mind. It is becoming more common for retailers and foodservice operators to request certified products. The downside is that standards require stricter production processes, as well as more paperwork, and certification costs.

## Mandatory requirements for exporting food ingredients in Sweden

### Legal requirements for exporters to comply with export to Swedish market

#### Safety of food ingredients

Exporter of food ingredients have to follow mandatory EU regulations, such as the [General Food Law](#). It ensures the safety of food ingredients in the EU. There is a traceability system in place that covers the complete supply chain under the General Food Law's legislative framework. Through the traceability system one can check and trackback the food supplied to consumers and its production. As stated by a Swedish manufacturer and importer of confectionery products: *"...traceability and food certified for hygiene; I would say are important factors while exporting food ingredients to EU"*.

The EU provides a wide range of information on the traceability aspect of EU General Food Law. The general guidelines are applied for the food ingredients from plant origin. There are more detailed guidelines applied for the following two sectors:

- foods of animal origin: [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) No 931/2011](#)
- sprouts and sprout seeds: [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) No 208/2013](#)

#### Contamination

In order to enter the Swedish market, the ingredients must stay within the limits for contamination set by the EU. Exporters must prove their food ingredients are not contaminated. An importer and distributor of spices in Sweden stated: *"... use of pesticides and other chemical needs to be checked while sourcing food ingredients"*.

The EU legally requires companies to show evidence and verify that the food ingredients are not contaminated or within the levels set by them on the basis of three elements.

These include:

1. **physical** – this concerns plastic, metal and dirt residues
2. **chemical** – this concerns pesticides
3. **biological** – this concerns bacteria.

The EU has established Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides ([EC Regulation 396/2005](#)) and heavy metals ([EC Regulation 1881/2006](#)) for food items. There is also a regular testing of food ingredients on per batch basis by the Swedish and European buyers, to check whether they comply with these regulations.

Food ingredients can be contaminated by following:

- microbiological contaminants
- foreign bodies
- plant toxins
- polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

### **Classification, labelling and packaging**

The EU regulations for classification, labelling and packaging of food items help in the identification of any hazardous substances through symbols or phrases. European weighing regulations must be followed for export packaging. The export packaging quantity must be same as specified on the label and material used in packaging must be of food grade and safe. There are strict health regulations for packaging of finished products. In this regard, an importer and supplier of bakery ingredients stated: *“food grade type of packaging is preferred with regards to logistics and transportation of food ingredients”*.

The European Union allows people to obtain in-depth information about the composition and quality of food ingredients as per the labelling regulations. So, buyers can make an informed decision when purchasing food items by proper labelling. It highlights the amounts of sugars, salt, energy content and fats, saturates, carbohydrates and protein content through proper labelling.

The following information must be included on the label in Swedish:

- name of the product
- country of origin
- weight/volume
- contact details of the packer or dispatcher.

The EU legally requires special packaging to be used for hazardous food ingredients. Exporter of food ingredients to the EU are legally required to use the [Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals \(GHS\)](#) labels for food ingredients if they are hazardous.

An importer of food ingredients stated: *“We want good packaging; we want spices to be packed in some water proof/moisture proof covering, so no water/moisture is coming in or nothing can affect the spices”*. Another supplier and importer of bakery ingredients pointed that: *“The packaging we need very much depends upon the type of products, for some products we require it in big bag for bulk deliveries and sometimes smaller bags are needed, but most importantly it needs to be of food grade type of packaging”*. Therefore, based on the type of food ingredients and order importers have specific requirements that need to be checked.



**Substances allowed in the European Union**

There are strict regulations with regard to safety of food additives. There are a number of food ingredients which are used as sweeteners, natural colouring agents, flavourings, and other food additives. Exporters must ensure that their ingredients are allowed to be used according to EU regulations. The key EU regulations are [EU Regulation 1333/2008](#) and [EU Regulation 1334/2008](#) which set directions for the use of food additives, such as colours and thickeners and use of flavourings, such as essential oils.

**Documentation**

Exporters have to have documentation available for Swedish buyers of food ingredients. These include Safety Data Sheets (SDS), Technical Data Sheets (TDS) and Certification of Analysis (CoA).

**Safety Data Sheets** contains the following information:

- product description
- classification
- hazard identification
- information on safety measures.

**Technical Data Sheets** contains the following information:

- product description
- product classification
- quality analysis
- information on applications
- certificates.

**Certification of Analysis** includes:

- certification of analysis matches
- data mentioned in the TDS
- pre-shipment sample that was approved by the buyer
- the contractual agreements with the buyer.

**Supplementary requirements and certifications for food ingredients**

Besides the mandatory requirements established by EU there are some additional requirements of food ingredients by Swedish buyers. Exporters should meet these additional requirements to be successful in the Swedish market.

## Private standards/certification schemes preferred by Swedish importers

### Quality management systems

Swedish buyers of food ingredients can request for certificate of food safety management system. For instance, a Swedish bakery ingredients importer and supplier commented: *“we are BRC certified i.e. all raw materials we used should be BRC certified, FSSC, IFS there are some other as well, but there are most important. We have the drive to source locally as much as possible, and also need to have right quality certificate so that we have the ability to deliver”*.

Common quality certifications include:

- ISO [9001:2015](#) quality management systems certification and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) [22000](#) food safety management system certification;
- Certification by [Global Food Safety Initiative](#) (GFSI)
- Certification by [International Food Standard](#) (IFS)
- Food Safety Certification ([FSSC 22000](#)) which is based on ISO 2200 and is specifically aimed towards food manufacturers; and
- Certification for technical standards of food safety given by the British Retail Consortium Global Standard for Food Safety ([BRCS](#)).

Illustration 1. Example of quality certifications



Source: Various

### Quality Requirements

Swedish buyers of food ingredients have additional demands based on regulations. They consider various factors when assessing the quality of food ingredients. The following factors are considered by buyers, depending on the food ingredient:

- Moisture content
- Purity
- Aroma and flavour

### Samples

Swedish buyers usually request samples of food ingredients. The samples help them check the safety and quality of food ingredients. Based on per batch testing, it is usually done at in-house facilities or external laboratories.

### Certification of organic production

There is a growing market for organic food products in the Swedish market. Organic foods and ingredients must meet EU organic standards. Thus, suppliers of organic ingredients must ensure the ingredients meet EU standards. Check the [EU organics](#) website for further information on organic certification.

The EU requires a [Certification of Inspection](#) (COI), for any organic ingredient to be traded on the European market. COI is also frequently requested by Swedish buyers.

The new EU regulation ([EU\) 2018/848](#) has been in place since January 2021. To determine whether imported products meet the European rules, a new official control regulation has been introduced.

There are two organic labels in the Swedish market: the EU organic logo, and the Swedish KRAV certification. KRAV has higher consumer recognition in Sweden since the organic standard was launched in 1985. The KRAV organic standard is considered to be stricter than the EU organic standard.

Illustration 2. EU Organic and KRAV certified logos



Source: EU Organic and KRAV

### Environmental and Social Sustainability

European and Swedish buyers are increasingly seeking ethically sourced food ingredients. As one Swedish importer and distributor of food ingredients stated: *“it is important to have the fair trade certification in the Swedish market”*.

There are three main fair trade standards for food ingredients:

- [Fairtrade International](#) standard covers economic, environmental and social criteria;
- [Fair for Life](#) standard covers fair trade and Corporate Social Responsibility
- [FairWild](#) standard covers wild collected plants

There is growing demand for ethical products in the Swedish market. In particular, food ingredients like spices (chillies and peppers) are adopting social and environmental certifications. A Swedish importer of spices commented: *“... looking at the sustainability aspect transparency is must when sourcing food ingredients”*.

Illustration 3. Examples of environmental and social standards



Source: Various

## Determine your logistics solution

### **Transportation and logistics chain for food ingredients**

Shipping is considered the preferred way of transport and logistics for Swedish food ingredients importers. Air freight is considered less sustainable and cost effective. However, in case of smaller order and faster orders, air freight is preferred. This also depends on the volume and type of the ingredient.

A supplier and importer of food ingredients stated: *“It needs to arrive in a good quality and we have loads of goods that arrive in containers, it is really important that the food ingredients should come in a good way”*.

The below factors should be considered as an exporter of food ingredients in Sweden:

1. Time of delivery
2. Delivery volume and order quantity
3. Cost of delivery method

## Find a business partner

### How do Swedish buyers typically find trade partners (importers)?

Swedish buyers look for potential business partners in several ways. The most preferred way is by visiting trade shows. Here, they can arrange meetings with potential suppliers, try their samples, as well as meet in person and assess their professionalism. This can create trust and increase chances of further cooperation.

Another option is to look for suppliers online. This is usually the case for smaller orders and short term business cooperation. COVID-19 also forced buyers to move online to look for new suppliers. As physical trade shows are taking place again, buyers prefer this option. A supplier and importer of food ingredients states: *“we usually look for new suppliers at the trade shows”*. Similarly, a manufacturer and importer of food ingredients also pointed out *“trade shows as a good platform to enter Swedish market”*.

### What trade shows/exhibitions are most important to access the Swedish market?

There are various advantages to visit and participate in industry trade fairs so exporters are advised to attend. They enable exporters to find potential buyers, and help them in networking and increasing their chances of entering the Swedish market. The key trade shows in the Nordic region are:

- **Nordic Organic Food Fair** (Malmo) – focusing on the natural and organic products industry in the Nordic region. However, many exhibitors from outside the region also come here. The trade fair focuses on finished products.
- **Fastfood, Cafe & Restaurant Expo** (Stockholm) – focuses on the foodservice sector in Sweden and the Nordic region.
- **Nordic Food Industry Fair** (Gothenburg) – covers the food sector in the Nordic region. The trade show focuses on finished products, as well as ingredients.
- **Gastro Nord** (Stockholm) – important trade show for the HoReCa (Hotel, Restaurant and Catering) sector in the Nordic region.
- **Nordic Food Industry Fair** (Gothenburg) – covers food ingredients and food products in the Nordic region.
- **STHML Food and Wine** (Stockholm) – one of the leading trade shows for food and drink products in Northern Europe. It covers beverages and spirits, baking, confectionery, as well as vegetarian and vegan products.
- **ELMIA Agriculture** (Jönköping) – focuses on sectors, such as forestry, agriculture, seeds, farming, vegetables and food products.

Prospective exporters should also consider European trade shows to meet Swedish buyers. Trade shows like ANUGA and SIAL attract buyers of specialty and retail products and are therefore suited for exporters of processed foods like confectionary products and snacks. The most important European trade fairs include:

- **ANUGA** (Cologne) – one of the world’s leading trade fair for the food and beverage industry. This trade show is very important in the European food industry. It is a platform to connect with buyers and decision-makers.
- **Fi Europe & Hi** (Paris/Frankfurt) – the leading trade show in Europe for food ingredients. This show is worth visiting to meet companies that supply food ingredients.
- **SIAL Paris** (Paris) – a leading food trade show for foods and beverages in Europe.
- **BIOFACH** (Nuremberg) – the world’s largest trade show for organic products. This show is worth visiting for exporters of organic ingredients. You can meet organic food and ingredient producers.
- **Natural & Organic Products Europe** (London) – focuses on natural and organic products in Europe. It covers a wide range of natural and organic product categories.
- **NATEXPO** (Lyon) – the leading French trade show for the natural and organic products sector. This is important for companies wanting to target the French market.
- **JTIC International** (Dijon) – international milling and cereal trade show that takes place in France. It is a good platform for to meet operators in the grains and cereal industry.
- **Free From Expo: Functional Food & Health Ingredients Expo** (various) – covers free-from products, such as plant-based, gluten-free, dairy-free, sugar-free and meat-free, as well as, functional and healthy lifestyle food and beverages.
- **IBA** (Munich) – leading international trade show for bakery, confectionery and snack products. It covers the baking industry and related products and services.

## Buyers preferences for ingredients

Swedish buyers look for transparency and good quality systems from exporters of food ingredients. As stated by one of the manufacturer and importers of ingredients: *“it is very important to have ethical sourcing, transparency, social aspect, and traceability”* when sourcing food ingredients.

Consumer demand for specialty foods is increasing, driven by rising consumer awareness of health and wellness issues. There is also a strong preference for local and regional foods over imported foods in Sweden. A manufacture and importer of food ingredients stated that *“we source local mainly; but for few things like sesame seeds we cannot grow on large scale so we need to import”*. Thus, exporters of food ingredients should assess the current market situation based on the food choices, consumer demand and preferences of buyers.

The price, quality and efficient delivery are the major requirements of Swedish buyers from a new supplier. An importer and supplier of food ingredients commented: *“Its quality and the steady delivery which we usually look from a new supplier.”* While another manufacturer and importer of food ingredients stated: *“of course quality is important, but if quality is bad we can find a new supplier. However, price is a very important factor nowadays; as prices are increasing everywhere. Because it’s not difficult to find an exporter but price is a very important factor to sell any product”*.

## Conclusions

Sweden is prospective market for food ingredients coming in from developing countries. Although Swedish food processors and importers tend to source food ingredients via European countries, some ingredients are sourced directly. This is mainly done by large importers in Sweden. Prospective ingredients from developing countries include turmeric, groundnuts, carrageenan and guar gum. These food ingredients have high share of imports from outside Europe. Turmeric is used in ethnic cuisine as a spice as well as in various health products. Groundnuts are a popular snack and food ingredient. Carrageenan and guar gum have several applications as food additives; it can also be used as a plant-based alternative to gelatine.

Exporters of food ingredients in developing countries have to meet EU regulations when exporting to the Swedish market, as well as additional requirements of Swedish buyers. This is necessary in order to ensure safety, quality of food ingredients. Issues, such as sourcing and production, traceability, as well as packaging and also covered by EU regulations. Logistics and delivery terms depend on the type of ingredient, but shipping is considered cheaper and more sustainable. There are a number of trade shows that take place in the Nordic region and in Sweden. Exporters can also attend European trade shows, as Swedish importers regularly attend them.