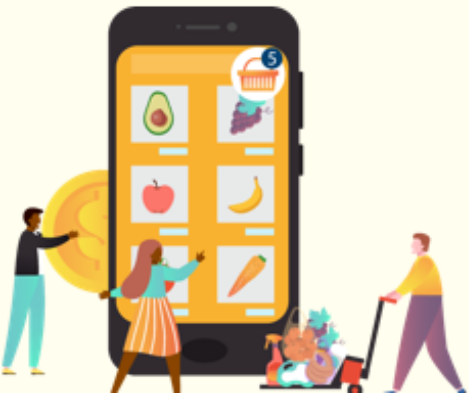


22 September 2026



Session n°22:

Exploring international and intra-regional market opportunities for Caribbean agrifood MSMEs



Caribbean Agrifood Business Series ...



Funded by
the European Union



Trading Inside & Outside Our Own Market

CARICOM agri-food trade, HS Chapters 01–24, and ten opportunities for
Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs)

FOCUS

HS 01–24 agri-food

PERIOD

2020–2024

MEMBERS

15 CARICOM states

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Grenada · Georgia, USA

The region's trade problem is a food problem

US\$23.5bn

spent on food imports

Five years of agri-food purchases —
16.1% of everything CARICOM buys

US\$14.9bn

agri-food trade deficit

Food exports cover just 37% of the food
import bill

55%

of the merchandise deficit

The whole-economy gap over the same
five years was US\$27.0bn

16.1%

of the food bill is regional

CARICOM supplies US\$3.8bn of its own
bill — and the share is rising

US\$19.7bn

left the region as food spend

Five years of demand met from outside
CARICOM

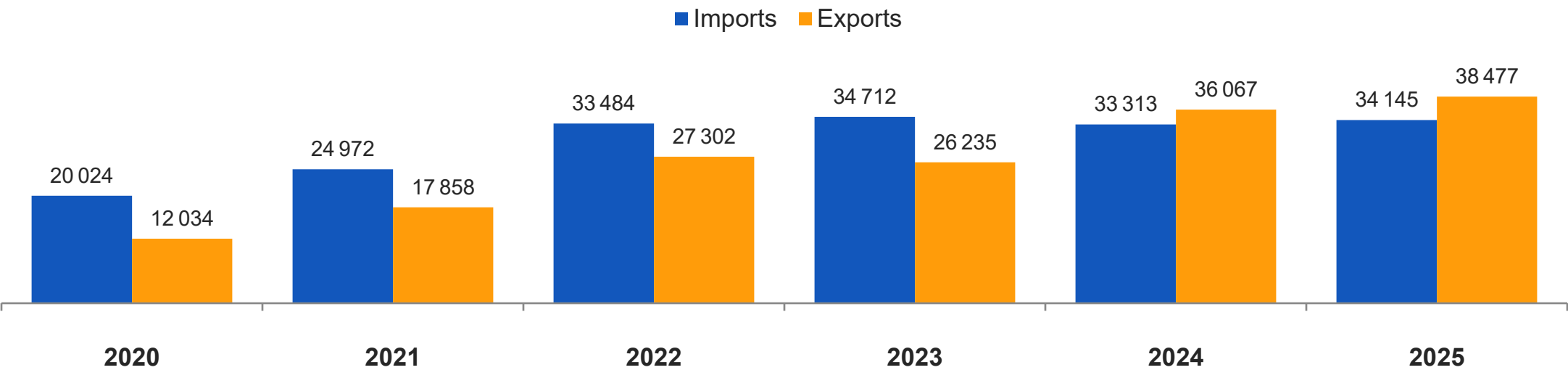
+44%

growth in food imports

2020 to 2024, against 25% growth in food
exports

ALL MERCHANDISE · HS 01–99 · US\$ MILLIONS PER YEAR

CARICOM buys more than it sells — but only just



IMPORTS 2020–2025

US\$180.6bn

Six-year cumulative merchandise imports

EXPORTS 2020–2025

US\$158.0bn

Exports overtook imports in 2024 and 2025

TRADE DEFICIT

US\$22.7bn

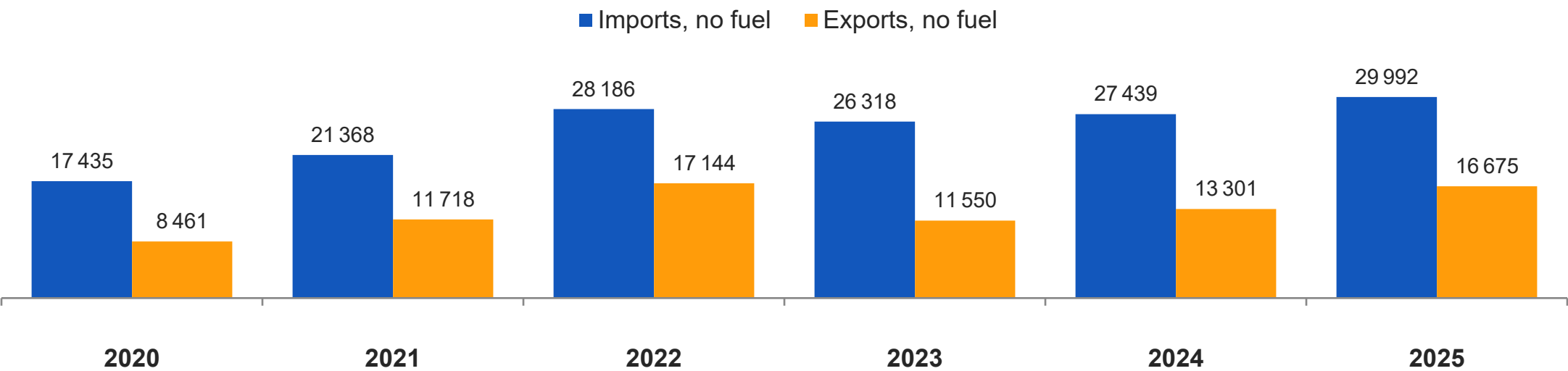
Narrowing on energy prices, not diversification

Eight extractive, energy and chemical chapters supply 80.4% of all exports; mineral fuels alone are 50.1%. Source: CARICOM Imports / Exports HS 1–99, Total by Chapter.



HS 01–99 EXCLUDING MINERAL FUELS (CHAPTER 27) · US\$ MILLIONS PER YEAR

Remove fuel, and the deficit triples



IMPORTS, NO FUEL

US\$150.7bn

Down from US\$180.6bn — fuel is 16.6% of imports

EXPORTS, NO FUEL

US\$78.8bn

Down from US\$158.0bn — fuel is 50.1% of exports

DEFICIT, NO FUEL

US\$71.9bn

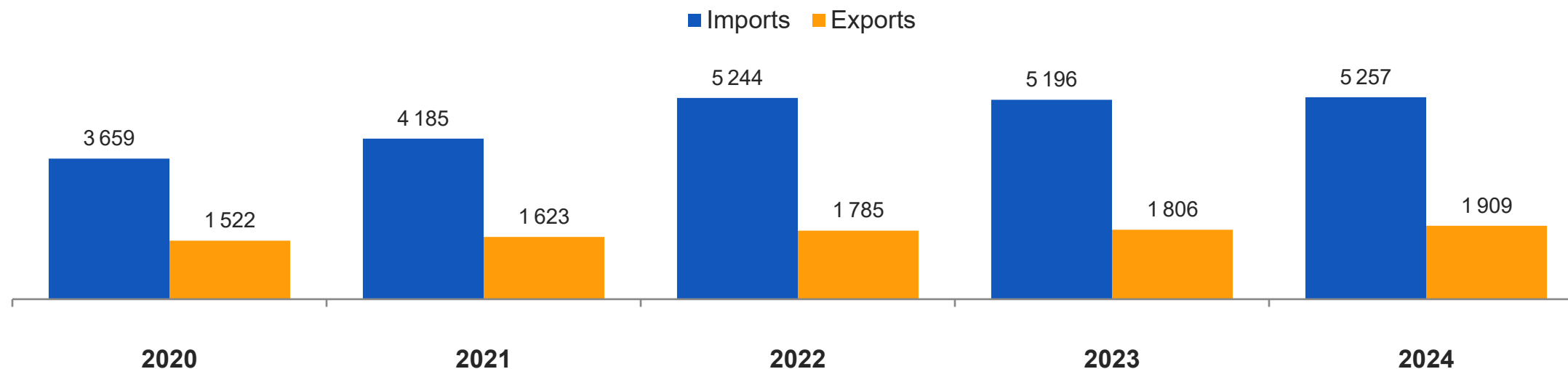
Against US\$22.7bn with fuel — 3.2 times larger

Non-fuel exports cover only 52% of non-fuel imports. Source: CARICOM Imports / Exports HS 1–99, Total by Chapter.



AGRI-FOOD · HS CHAPTERS 01–24 · US\$ MILLIONS PER YEAR

Take out oil and gold, and the picture inverts

**FOOD IMPORTS****US\$23.5bn**

16.1% of everything CARICOM imports

FOOD EXPORTS**US\$8.6bn**

Only 7.2% of everything CARICOM exports

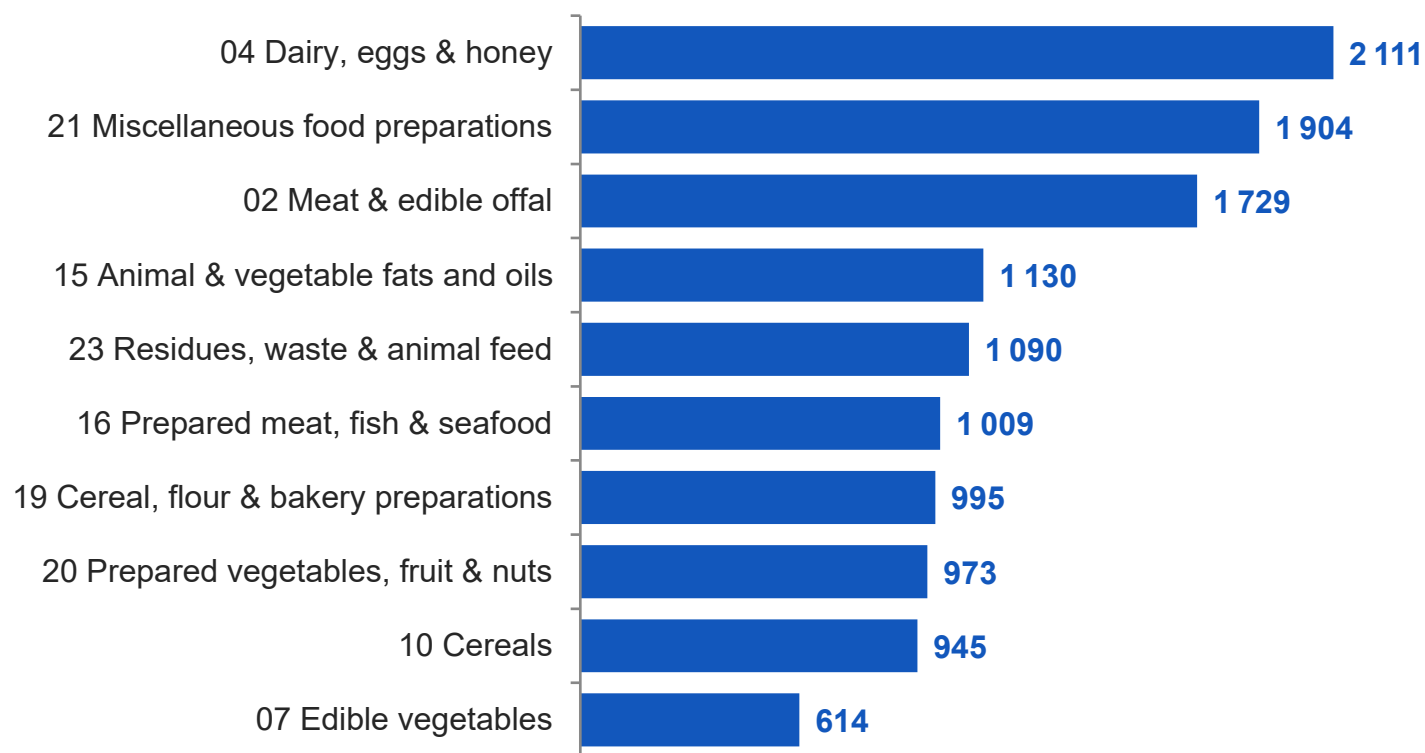
AGRI-FOOD DEFICIT**US\$14.9bn**

55% of the merchandise deficit over the same years

Food exports cover only 37% of the food import bill. Source: CARICOM agri-food national returns, HS 01–24 — Dominica and Montserrat do not report and Guyana is preliminary.

CUMULATIVE CHAPTER DEFICITS, 2020–2024 · US\$ MILLIONS

Every food chapter is in deficit — and the biggest are processed



NO SAFE HARBOUR

All 24 chapters run a deficit

Even fish and seafood, the region's strongest food export at US\$581m, buys in US\$184m more than it sells.

Read this as a processing gap

Seven of the ten largest deficits are in manufactured food — preparations, oils, prepared meats, bakery and prepared produce. These are categories small firms can enter: modest capital, short runs, room to differentiate.

Ten largest chapter deficits, of twenty-four. Source: CARICOM agri-food national returns, HS 01–24, 2020–2024.

TOP 15 EXPORTS BY TARIFF LINE · HS 01-24 · 2020-2024

What the region already sells, and how much stays at home

#	HS8	Tariff line	US\$m	CARICOM
1	17011490	Raw cane sugar	426.4	21.7%
2	21039090	Sauces & condiments	375.1	8.7%
3	10063049	Milled white rice, bulk	351.6	35.8%
4	22084090	Rum & cane spirits, bulk	338.8	5.5%
5	22084010	Rum & cane spirits, bottled	329.9	9.0%
6	22029990	Non-alcoholic beverages	258.9	57.8%
7	22030010	Beer made from malt	257.5	48.0%
8	24022000	Cigarettes	255.8	66.9%

#	HS8	Tariff line	US\$m	CARICOM
9	22021010	Aerated waters, sweetened	249.7	75.4%
10	19049000	Prepared cereals	239.7	86.8%
11	08039011	Bananas, fresh	221.2	3.8%
12	10063041	Milled rice, retail packs	208.9	1.1%
13	07143000	Yams	195.0	0.6%
14	10063019	Semi-milled white rice	172.8	0.4%
15	19053100	Sweet biscuits	170.1	81.0%

The “CARICOM” column is the share of that line’s exports sold inside the region. These fifteen lines are 47% of all agri-food exports, from 1,166 lines in total.

TOP 15 IMPORTS BY TARIFF LINE · HS 01-24 · 2020-2024

Where the food dollar goes, and how little of it stays

#	HS8	Tariff line	US\$m	CARICOM
1	21069099	Food preparations n.e.s.	1,265.5	4.7%
2	10019900	Wheat & meslin	630.1	0.0%
3	17019990	Refined cane / beet sugar	567.6	2.3%
4	10059000	Maize (corn)	513.0	0.4%
5	23040000	Soya-bean oilcake	499.2	2.2%
6	22029990	Non-alcoholic beverages	471.5	40.8%
7	24022000	Cigarettes	441.3	36.1%
8	04069000	Cheese	436.5	1.2%

#	HS8	Tariff line	US\$m	CARICOM
9	02071490	Frozen chicken cuts	367.3	1.0%
10	23099090	Animal feed preparations	359.9	1.4%
11	19059090	Bread, pastry & bakery	354.7	41.8%
12	20041090	Frozen prepared potatoes	316.1	0.2%
13	04071120	Fertilised hatching eggs	303.1	0.0%
14	21039090	Sauces & condiments	294.4	14.8%
15	19053100	Sweet biscuits	287.5	47.2%

The “CARICOM” column is the share of that line’s imports sourced from within the region. These fifteen lines are 30% of all agri-food imports, from 1,335 lines in total.

A big market for exporters, a small supplier to shoppers

16.1%

of the food import bill comes
from CARICOM

US\$3.8bn of US\$23.5bn, and the share is rising — 16.2% in 2020 to 16.8% in 2024.

38.2%

of food exports stay inside
CARICOM

US\$3.3bn of US\$8.6bn, and rising fast — 33.4% in 2020 to 42.9% in 2024.

Most integrated chapters

Ch	Chapter	Sourced in region	Sold in region
22	Beverages, spirits & vinegar	38.8%	39.6%
19	Cereal & bakery preparations	32.5%	66.2%
24	Tobacco & products	32.2%	66.5%
18	Cocoa & chocolate	26.0%	66.9%
11	Milling products	25.7%	75.0%
20	Prepared fruit & vegetables	17.9%	58.4%

Least integrated chapters

Ch	Chapter	Sourced in region
06	Live plants & flowers	0.6%
02	Meat & edible offal	1.0%
05	Other animal products	1.3%
12	Oil seeds	2.1%
04	Dairy, eggs & honey	2.2%
13	Gums & resins	2.7%

Shares are CARICOM-partner trade as a proportion of each side's own total. Source: CARICOM agri-food national returns, HS 01-24.

INTRA-REGIONAL AGRI-FOOD TRADE BY MEMBER STATE · 2020–2024 · US\$ MILLIONS

One country supplies half the regional food trade

Member state	Sells into the region	Buys from the region	Net
Trinidad & Tobago	1,888	406	+1,481
Jamaica	360	823	-462
Guyana	455	490	-35
Barbados	236	368	-133
Suriname	346	202	+144
Saint Lucia	95	252	-156
St Vincent & the Gren.	121	150	-29
Grenada	64	185	-121
Belize	181	66	+115
Antigua & Barbuda	5	162	-157
St Kitts & Nevis	39	82	-43
Dominica	10	111	-102
Montserrat	0	9	-8

Sellers are CARICOM imports by source state; buyers are CARICOM exports by destination state. Dominica and Montserrat do not file returns, so their sell-side is partner-reported only; Guyana's figures are preliminary.

49.7%

is supplied by Trinidad & Tobago

US\$1.9bn of the US\$3.8bn traded inside the region.

3 of 13

are net sellers

Only Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname and Belize sell more than they buy.

32x

Antigua & Barbuda's gap

Buys US\$162m from the region, sells back US\$5m — the most lopsided of the thirteen.

THE TEN BIGGEST IMPORT GAPS AND THE STATES ALREADY BUYING THEM REGIONALLY

Where to sell first: the biggest gaps and their readiest buyers

Barbados & Guyana
appear in 9 and 8 of the ten clusters

Import cluster	Regional import bill US\$m	Already sourced in region	Preferred markets — who already buys it regionally, US\$m
Food preparations, blends & concentrates	1,679	4.6%	Guyana 8 · Barbados 6 · St Vincent 5
Prepared vegetables, fruit & juices	1,524	17.9%	Jamaica 108 · Guyana 53 · Barbados 34
Bakery, biscuits & cereal snacks	1,180	45.6%	Jamaica 189 · Guyana 121 · Barbados 49
Prepared meat & fish	1,097	7.5%	Guyana 15 · Barbados 15 · Saint Lucia 9
Non-alcoholic beverages & waters	958	54.9%	Jamaica 153 · Guyana 90 · Suriname 62
Fresh vegetables	702	1.1%	St Vincent 3 · Grenada 3 · Barbados 1
Milling products & flours	565	25.7%	Guyana 25 · Barbados 22 · Antigua 16
Sauces, seasonings & condiments	497	26.6%	Guyana 44 · Barbados 24 · Jamaica 12
Cocoa & chocolate	315	26.0%	Jamaica 45 · Guyana 11 · Barbados 9
Spices, coffee & botanicals	241	11.4%	Barbados 6 · Saint Lucia 5 · Trinidad 5

Preferred markets are CARICOM exports of that cluster by destination state, 2020–2024 — demand already met by a regional supplier, so the route to shelf is proven. Jamaica is the largest buyer by value (US\$823m); Barbados and Guyana are the broadest by category.



RANKED ON MARKET PULL, CAPABILITY, HEADROOM, MOMENTUM AND MSME FIT

Ten places where an MSME can sell into demand that already exists

US\$7.7bn

addressable across the
ten, 2020–2024

#	Opportunity cluster	HS headings	Addressable US\$m	Regional share now	Regional export base US\$m	Export growth
1	Bakery, biscuits & cereal snacks	1904, 1905	642	45.6%	778	+50%
2	Non-alcoholic beverages & waters	2202	432	54.9%	692	+86%
3	Prepared vegetables, fruit & juices	2001–2009	1,251	17.9%	551	+28%
4	Sauces, seasonings & condiments	2103	365	26.6%	539	+42%
5	Seafood & aquatic products	03, 1604–05	1,005	24.0%	587	–4%
6	Sugar & confectionery	17	1,082	11.6%	624	+30%
7	Milling products, flours & starches	11	420	25.7%	156	+34%
8	Cocoa & chocolate	18	233	26.0%	121	+45%
9	Food preparations, blends & concentrates	2106	1,602	4.6%	106	+29%
10	Fresh vegetables (protected agriculture)	0701–0710	694	1.1%	31	+13%

Addressable = five-year imports less the part already sourced from CARICOM. Regional export base = what CARICOM producers already sell of that cluster. Dairy is the single largest gap at US\$2.1bn but needs industrial-scale investment, so it sits outside this MSME list.



Six moves to put small firms in the regional market

01

Treat CARICOM as the first export market

The CET and CSME already give regional goods an advantage that is only half used. Put one MSME-facing origin and compliance desk in each member state.

02

Start with Barbados and Guyana

They already buy across nine and eight of the ten clusters. Proven routes, proven compliance, the shortest path to a first export order.

03

Make standards the priority, not an afterthought

Leakage concentrates in processed lines where labelling, shelf-life and SPS certification decide shelf access. Fund shared regional testing capacity.

04

Build the shared capacity no single firm can afford

Aggregation points, cold chain, co-packing and small-batch processing lines, operated regionally. Protected agriculture belongs here too.

05

Fix bankability, not just access to finance

MSMEs fail on project preparation, not ideas. A standing preparation facility plus a common due-diligence standard makes them fundable.

06

Sequence the ten clusters and measure one number

Do not chase the whole sector. Start with the scale-up clusters. Report against one indicator: the regional share of the food import bill.

16.8% → 30%

The regional share of the food bill has crept up 0.6 points in five years. Taking it to 30% by 2035 would add roughly US\$694m a year in sales for regional producers — most of it in processing, most of it reachable by firms that already exist.

Thank you

