

K-Food exports hit all-time high in 2024, surpassing \$13Bn

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South Korea's agri-food industry has grown remarkably, with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) reporting a record-breaking \$13.03 billion in K-Food Plus exports for 2024. This represents a 6.1 per cent increase from the previous year, driven by the rising global popularity of Korean culture and cuisine and innovations in related industries such as smart farms and agricultural equipment. The achievement underscores the strategic significance of K-Food Plus as a key contributor to South Korea's export economy, with its reach expanding to 207 countries worldwide.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) announced that K-Food Plus's cumulative export value in 2024 reached a record-breaking \$13.03 billion, a 6.1 per cent increase from the previous year. This marks a significant achievement for South Korea's agri-food sector and related industries, positioning them as a "strategic export industry" in the global market.

Export growth and market expansion

The export value of K-Food Plus rose consistently from \$11.83 billion in 2022 to \$12.28 billion in 2023, achieving its current peak in 2024.

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Top performing products

Ramyeon: Leading the surge, ramyeon exports grew by 31.1 per cent, reaching \$1.25 billion, thanks to trends like its frequent appearances in K-content and viral challenges.

Processed Rice-Based Products: The highest growth rate at 38.4 per cent, driven by demand for gluten-free, healthy, and convenient food options.

Kimchi: Exports hit \$163.6 million, supported by innovative products such as vegan kimchi and room-temperature storage options.

Regional insights

The U.S. emerged as the largest market, with exports increasing by 21.2 per cent to \$1.59 billion, fueled by large-scale retail partnerships and consumer trends favouring Korean food.

Europe and Latin America saw growth rates of 25.1 per cent and 21.8 per cent, respectively, highlighting the increasing global appeal of K-Food Plus.

Exports to Japan declined by 4.3 per cent, affected by exchange rate issues and weak consumer sentiment.

The success of K-Food Plus in 2024 reflects strategic investments in product innovation, market diversification, and leveraging global cultural influence. By integrating smart farms and high-demand agri-food products, South Korea is exporting goods and building a sustainable ecosystem of interlinked industries.

The record-breaking performance of K-Food Plus in 2024 highlights the synergy between cultural influence, product innovation, and strategic market expansion. From the growing demand for Korean staples like ramyeon and kimchi to the integration of forward-thinking technologies in agriculture, South Korea has solidified its position as a global leader in the agri-food sector. As the industry looks to 2025 and beyond, addressing challenges in traditional markets and capitalising on emerging opportunities will be critical to sustaining this momentum and unlocking even greater growth potential.