Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A report summary from the Economic Research Service

Most Favored Nation Tariffs and U.S. Agricultural Trade

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Key Points

- This report compares most favored nation (MFN) average applied and bound tariffs across agricultural commodity groups between the United States and its foreign trading partners.
- Global simple average MFN applied tariffs are 8.1 percent across all traded products; however, the average MFN applied tariff on agricultural goods is 13.4 percent compared to 7.2 percent on nonagricultural products.
- The United States imposes lower average MFN applied tariff rates on agricultural goods than more than 90 percent of countries.
- U.S. agricultural exporters across all 10 examined agricultural commodity groups face higher MFN applied tariffs that provide them with less market access, on average, relative to foreign exporters seeking to sell to the U.S. market.
- For half of the agricultural commodity groups examined, U.S. exporters face average MFN applied tariffs that are approximately 10 percentage points higher than the U.S. MFN applied tariff rate.
- At the commodity level, the largest differences in average MFN applied tariffs are in live animals and meat; beverages and tobacco; fruits and vegetables; coffee, tea, cocoa, and spices; and cereals and food preparations. The smallest average differences are in cotton, silk, and wool; oilseeds, fats, and oils; and sugars and confectionery products.

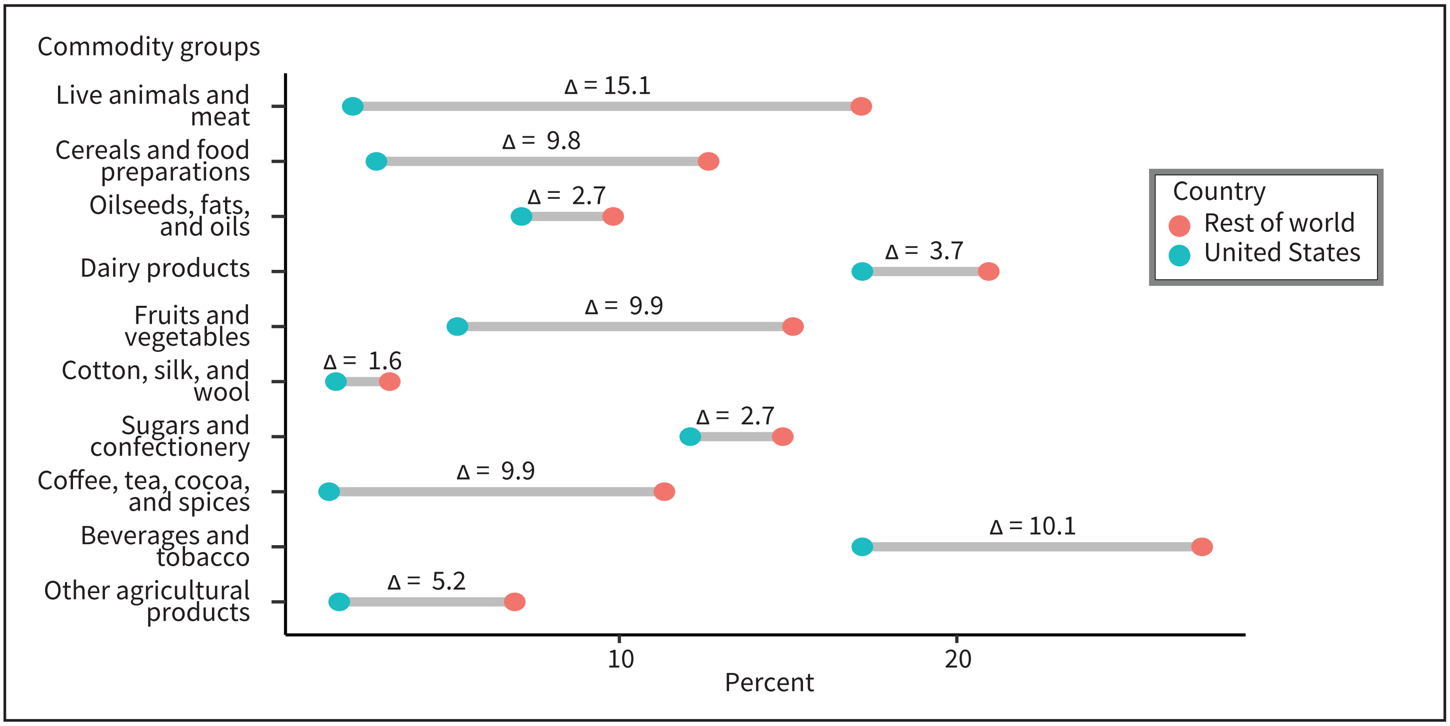
Why Does This Matter?

Tariffs are a tool used by countries to protect domestic producers from foreign competition, to raise revenue, and to negotiate new economic and non-economic agreements. This report compares agricultural tariff rates by analyzing whether foreign trading partners enact the same or similar average MFN applied or bound tariff rates on agricultural commodity groups as the United States. This report reveals new insights on the differences—across countries and commodity groups—in MFN tariffs faced by U.S. exporters relative to those faced by foreign exporters to the United States.

A Few More Details

This report draws on tariff data from the 2025 release of publicly available WTO tariff profiles. It compares MFN tariff rates between the United States and more than 150 WTO trading partners for agricultural goods, focusing on comparisons across 10 different commodity groups. Specifically, this report analyzes two different tariff rates, MFN applied and bound rates. The MFN applied rate is the actual tariff rate used for a given commodity in the most recent trade data. MFN applied tariff rates can be lowered by preferential trade agreements but otherwise apply to all WTO trading partners. The bound rate is the maximum MFN applied rate that a country can charge for a given commodity under its WTO commitments. This analysis of MFN rates does not take trade agreements or preferential tariff policies into account; nor does it analyze the prevalence of nontariff measures, which can also represent large barriers to agricultural trade.

Comparing U.S. and trading partner average most favored nation (MFN) applied import tariffs by commodity



Δ = Represents the percentage point difference in the average tariff rate between the United States and the rest of the world.

Note: Calculations do not take into account any existing trade agreements or preferential tariff policies.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service calculations using data from 2025 World Trade Organization tariff profiles.

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