



London, 1st May 2025

Opposition to the application of retaliatory tariffs on dried nuts and fruits

The Nut and Dried Fruit Trade Association (NDFTA) is a UK body that represents the interest of traders, importers, manufacturers, agents, and brokers in a wide range of dried fruit and nut products. We have so far welcomed the cautious approach taken by the UK government in response to the US tariffs.

NDFTA members strongly oppose the application of additional tariffs on all dried fruit and nuts and we are concerned to find that some of our products have been added to the UK's Department of Business and Trade's indicative long list for potential retaliatory tariffs.

Applying tariffs would damage UK businesses potentially prompting processors and manufacturers to consider restructuring their operations. Moreover, depending on the terms of existing contracts, in many cases businesses may not be able to pass the tariff on to their customers.

UK Market Dried Fruit and Nuts Market

The value of UK imports of dried fruit and nuts is worth £1 billion a year with the US imports contributing £166 million (see Chart 1&2 in Annex). Core commodities that are supplied from the US include: Almonds, Cranberries, Prunes and Walnuts. The US is a key supplier of nuts with over 24% of all nuts supplied to the UK coming from the US.

The US provides a significant proportion of core dried fruit and nut commodities imported into the UK. For example, data from the last five years of imports show that 74% of Almonds and 58% of Cranberries originated from the US (see Chart 3 in Annex). These core commodities are not available from other origins in significant enough quantities to meet demand.

Economic and Industrial Consequences

The NDFTA members trading in dried fruit and nut products are almost all exclusively small and medium sized enterprises, for whom these products are an essential part of their business and trading activities. They have already concluded supply contracts for 2025, and these contracts offer no possibility of cushioning or absorbing the cost from any additional tariffs. Where this additional tariff is passed on to their customers, it is ultimately the consumer who will pay. If they cannot be passed on, then the businesses may need to make redundancies and for some of the smaller businesses, they may be forced into liquidation.

Applying tariffs will lead to more market volatility, leading manufacturers to select ingredients primarily around price stability. This will restrict the choices of ingredients available which will lead to lasting changes in recipes. It will also stifle future product innovation. This will result in less choice for consumers and will limit their access to healthy and nutritious foods.

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Food security

US imports of dried fruits and nuts make up a significant proportion of the dried fruits and nuts consumed in the UK. There is not sufficient supply available from other origins that will be able to meet the shortfall in supply if retaliatory tariffs are applied. The actions that other markets take in response to US tariffs such as the EU, who will be taking retaliatory actions on commodities such as almonds will only exacerbate an already challenging situation if the UK decides to proceed with applying retaliatory tariffs.

There will be some cases where it is possible to supply from other origins, but the standards in quality will be significantly lower. The US is ranked as third in the recent global food safety index 2022 for quality and safety¹. Sourcing from origins where there are differences in standards will only increase the likelihood of food safety issues and instances of food fraud. This will lead to poor quality products and disruption to the supply chain when products do not meet the required quality standards, harming both businesses and restricting consumer choice.

Climate change presents a significant challenge to the global production of fruit and nut crops, impacting both their productivity and quality. Effects of climate change are becoming more prominent recently in the form of rising temperature and the increase in extreme weather events. Many of the alternative origins to US supplied dried fruits and nuts are less resilient to these changes and therefore supply will be more prone to unexpected shocks. These factors will limit the supply of dried fruits and nuts in the UK.

All of this will lead to reduced consumer choice in purchasing healthy foods and will affect the security of supply, increasing supply chain uncertainty in an already fragile global food system.

Consumer choice and health

We urge the government to reconsider the inclusion of healthy food products in retaliatory tariff actions such as nuts and dried fruits. Such measures would directly contradict the goals outlined in the recent National Food Strategy², which emphasises the importance of making nutritious food more accessible to all citizens. At a time when public health concerns are paramount, policies that inadvertently raise the cost of healthy foods risk undermining efforts to encourage better dietary habits and combat food-related health issues.

The Global Burden of Disease study³ clearly identifies low consumption of fruits and nuts as key contributors to diet-related diseases and deaths. Rather than imposing barriers that could restrict consumption, we should be prioritising actions that boost the availability and affordability of these essential foods. This approach would support public health and align with efforts to build a healthier, more resilient population.

Applying tariffs will lead to the loss of vital funding US producers provide in educating consumers about the health benefits of dried fruit and nuts. Much of the work undertaken by the US producer is complimentary to the UK National Food Strategy. Producers from other origins do not provide this type of support and so we will lose this important avenue promoting the benefits of healthy eating with consumers.

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A negotiated resolution is needed – tariffs are detrimental to UK consumers and industry

NDFTA strongly encourages the UK Government to continue to maintain a cautious approach to US relations and to not place tariffs on dried nuts and fruits from the United States. The application of tariffs will only be detrimental to UK consumers and industry, who in the past five years alone have had to navigate recovery from Brexit, the global coronavirus pandemic, inflationary pressures and geopolitical uncertainty due to the conflict in Ukraine.

In these uncertain and chaotic times, it is incumbent on the UK Government to support the competitiveness of the UK and the health of consumers. Regrettably, imposing tariffs only serves to undermine both goals.

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ANNEX: CHARTS

Chart 1 UK Dried Fruit and Nut Imports – Total Value

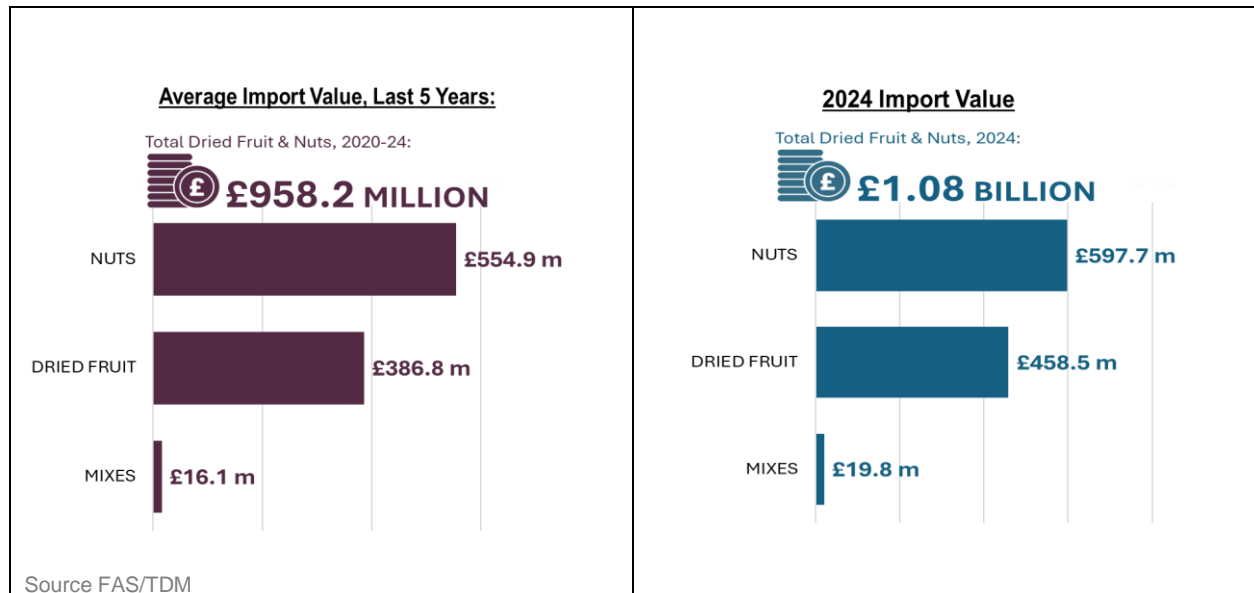
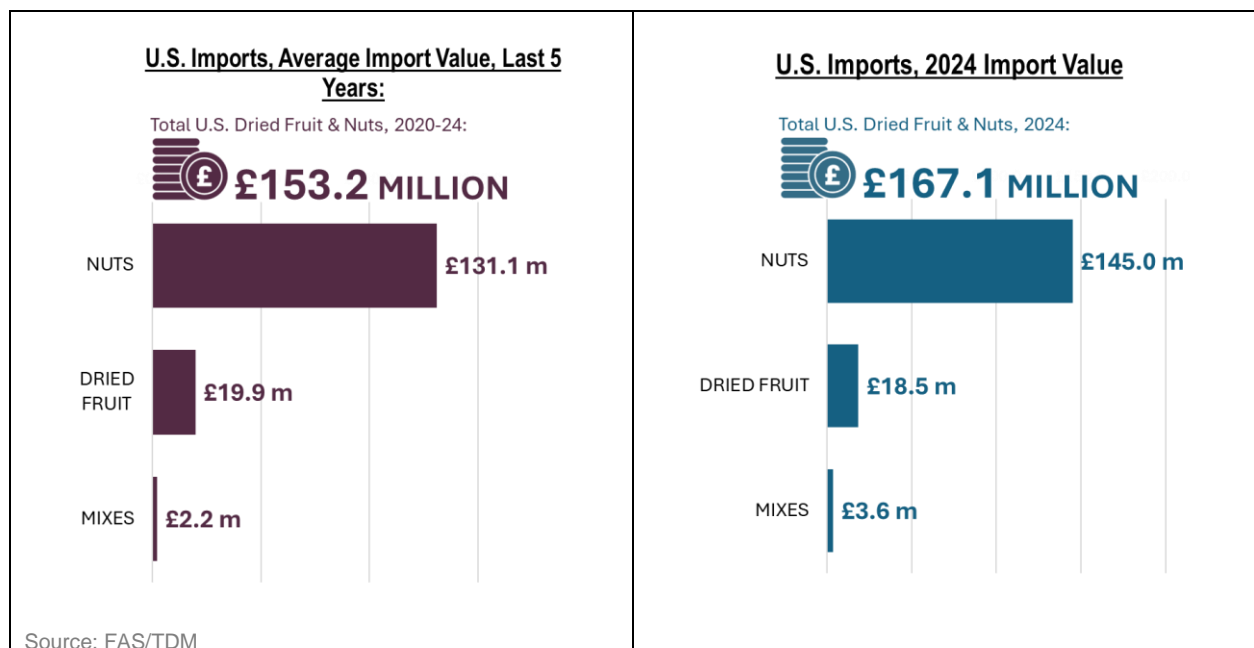


Chart 2 UK Dried Fruit and Nut Imports – US Value



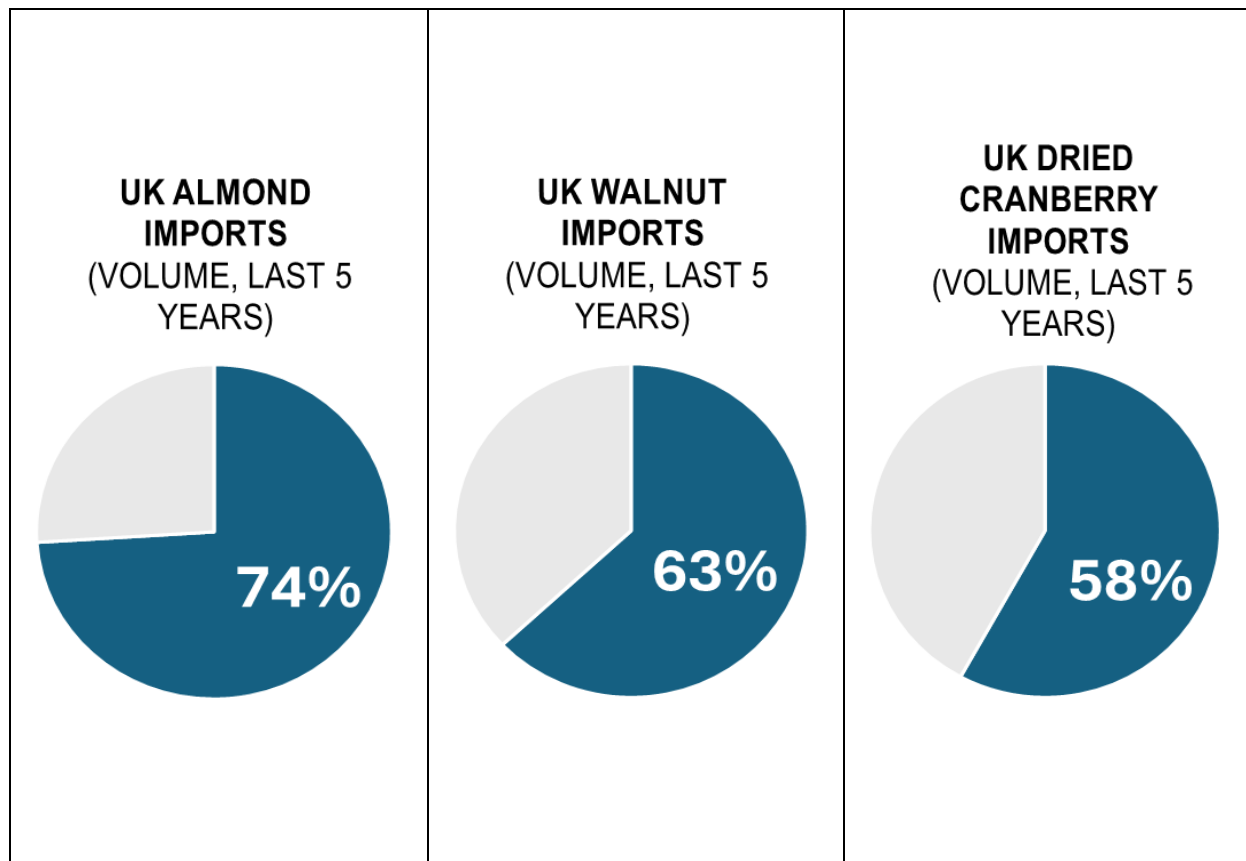
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Chart 3 Core commodities dried fruit and nut volumes - US



SOURCE: FAS / TDM.

REFERENCES

- 1) Global Food Security Index
<https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/project/food-security-index/>
- 2) National Food Strategy <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-food-strategy-for-england>
- 3) Global Burden of Disease Study
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-burden-of-disease-for-england-international-comparisons>

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