

Salty Snacks Are Becoming A French Treat

By Roselyne Gauthier

U.S. sales of snack foods to France in 2001 totaled \$6.8 million according to French customs statistics, up 5 percent from the previous year. Not that much when compared to the whole French snack food sector, valued at \$4 billion a year.

But innovative products in U.S. confectionery, biscuits and chips could make significant inroads in the fast-developing French snack food market. The French snack food sector has been growing 7 percent annually, with expectations of doubling over the next several years.

Most French snack foods are sold in supermarkets, and the more successful products have common characteristics: they are easy to consume, sold in individual portions and moderately priced. Today's best prospects reside with high-value products

Labeling in French—and Metric

Product labeling should be in French and, at a minimum, include:

- Product definition
- Shelf life
- Precautionary information or usage instructions, if applicable
- Statement of contents (weights and volumes of ingredients in metric; additives, preservatives and color agents with specific group name or "E" number)
- Product's country of origin and name of importer or vendor within the EU
- Manufacturer's lot or batch number

that offer a sporty, healthy or exotic appeal.

Having plumbed the development of sweet snack products, the French snack marketplace is now concentrating on developing salty products to gain market share. Three growing segments that U.S. exporters should consider include:

- Salty snacks (including dairy, delicatessen and grocery)
- Sandwiches (and ingredients)
- Salty products for aperitifs (seeds, extruded products and crackers)

CONFECTIONERY ITEMS, BISCUITS AND CHIPS REPRESENT SALES POTENTIAL.

Entry Strategy Important

It is crucial for new U.S. exporters to have local representation and personal contacts who can provide current information on business practices, trade laws, sales leads and marketing and distribution strategies.

New-to-market and niche products usually first enter France through importers/distributors. Look for an importer experienced with the operations of the French Central Buying Office and supermarkets.

What To Expect

Food products entering the European Union (EU) are subject to customs duties. Most processed products, including snacks, are subject to additional import charges based on contents. Also, some U.S. food additives are not approved for use in France.



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Once approved, arriving products are sent to regional warehouses and distribution centers that coordinate delivery to retailers. ■

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For more in-depth information on French snack foods, see FAS Report FR1051 at www.fas.usda.gov, then select **Attaché Reports** and follow the prompts.

