

# South Korea Meat Market By Product (Chicken, Beef, Mutton, Pork, Others), By Type (Raw, Processed), By Distribution Channel (Hypermarket/Supermarket, Specialty Stores, Online, Others), By Region, Competition, Forecast & Opportunities, 2020-2030F

<https://marketpublishers.com/r/S05F8FCB2297EN.html>

Date: January 2025

Pages: 81

Price: US\$ 3,500.00 (Single User License)

ID: S05F8FCB2297EN

## Abstracts

South Korea Meat Market was valued at USD 6.08 billion in 2024 and is anticipated to grow USD 7.66 billion by 2030 with a CAGR of 3.99% during forecast period. The South Korea meat market has been witnessing robust growth, fueled by several factors such as rising disposable incomes, shifting consumer preferences, and the increasing demand for premium meats. As consumers are becoming more health-conscious, the demand for high-quality meats, such as Wagyu and Hanwoo beef, is surging. South Korea's demand for processed meat products, like sausages and ready-to-eat meals, is also increasing as consumers seek convenience in their food choices.

Pork remains the dominant meat consumed in South Korea, accounting for nearly half of the total meat sales. However, beef and chicken are also gaining popularity, particularly with rising international trends in meat consumption. The increasing popularity of processed meat and ready-to-eat products, which are often sold through e-commerce platforms, is changing the dynamics of meat consumption in the country. As per the study, E-commerce stands as one of the leading retail channels and a crucial element of South Korea's consumer market. In 2023, food-related online sales, encompassing food, agricultural products, and food delivery services, remained the largest category, representing approximately 30% of total online sales for the third consecutive year.

## Key Market Drivers

## Rising Disposable Incomes and Affluent Consumer Base

One of the primary drivers of the meat market in South Korea is the increasing disposable income of its population. As South Korea is one of the most technologically advanced and developed economies in the world, the income levels of its citizens have been rising steadily. The growing economic prosperity has led to a shift in consumer preferences, particularly towards higher-quality and premium meats, such as Wagyu and Hanwoo beef. Consumers in South Korea are increasingly willing to spend more on meat products, especially those perceived to be of superior quality, such as organic and grass-fed meats. According to the USDA production, supply and distribution, in 2023, South Korea's total meat production reached 2.7 million tonnes, with pork comprising 1.4 million tonnes, chicken at 935 thousand tonnes, and beef accounting for 360 thousand tonnes.

This rising income trend is particularly significant in urban areas where people have more access to a variety of meat options. With higher disposable incomes, urban consumers are more likely to purchase premium meats and invest in healthier and more sustainable food choices. Consequently, this segment of the population is fueling the demand for more diverse, specialized meat products, further supporting the expansion of the market.

## Increasing Popularity of Processed Meat Products

South Korea has seen a marked shift toward processed meat products, including sausages, ready-to-eat meals, and frozen meats. As consumers lead increasingly busy lives with less time for traditional meal preparation, the demand for convenient, processed meat products has surged. Products like instant noodles with added meat, pre-cooked sausages, and ready-to-eat snacks have become popular choices in South Korean households. This convenience-driven demand is bolstered by the country's fast-paced lifestyle, especially in urban areas where working professionals and younger generations rely on processed meals for quick solutions.

The expanding variety of processed meat products, ranging from traditional Korean options to international varieties like hot dogs, bacon, and cold cuts, has further cemented processed meats as an essential category in South Korean diets. The trend also includes a growing preference for healthier processed options that are lower in sodium, fat, and preservatives, as consumers become more health conscious.

Additionally, technological advancements in meat processing, such as improved

preservation techniques and new flavors, are enhancing the quality and shelf life of these products. With growing convenience and diverse options, the processed meat sector continues to drive growth in the South Korean meat market.

### Health and Wellness Trends Driving Meat Consumption

In recent years, health and wellness have become a central focus for South Korean consumers, influencing their food choices. As people become more aware of the impact of their diets on overall well-being, there has been a growing interest in health-conscious food choices, including healthier types of meat. For example, lean meats like chicken, turkey, and grass-fed beef are gaining popularity due to their perceived health benefits. Furthermore, a segment of consumers is moving towards organic meats, as they are seen as free from harmful additives and pesticides.

The demand for premium meats that are raised without antibiotics, hormones, or genetically modified feed is rising among health-conscious South Koreans. This trend is expected to fuel the demand for organic, free-range, and sustainable meat options. Additionally, with growing concerns about animal welfare, consumers are increasingly looking for ethically produced meats, pushing suppliers to focus on higher welfare standards.

Moreover, the wellness trend is also influencing the rise of plant-based meat substitutes, such as plant-based burgers, sausages, and even plant-based versions of traditional Korean dishes. Although still a small segment, plant-based meats are gaining traction in South Korea, especially among younger consumers who are exploring more sustainable and health-conscious alternatives to traditional meat.

### Key Market Challenges

#### Fluctuating Meat Prices and Supply Chain Instability

One of the most significant challenges in the South Korean meat market is the volatility in meat prices, which is largely influenced by external factors such as global supply chain disruptions, environmental conditions, and fluctuating commodity prices. South Korea, a major importer of meat, particularly beef and pork, is highly vulnerable to changes in global prices due to its dependence on imported meat.

The recent global disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events, have created significant instability in the global supply chain. These disruptions

have led to reduced production capacity and delayed shipments of meat from exporting countries, driving up prices. Furthermore, fluctuations in global feed prices and the rising cost of transportation have contributed to increasing meat costs in South Korea.

This volatility in meat prices presents a challenge for both consumers and producers. While higher meat prices can be difficult for consumers, particularly low- and middle-income households, they also create challenges for suppliers and retailers who must balance profitability with consumer demand. Moreover, the rising prices may push consumers to reduce their consumption of meat or seek more affordable protein sources, such as plant-based alternatives, which could impact the growth of the meat market.

### Concerns over Food Safety and Animal Welfare

Food safety and animal welfare are critical issues in the South Korean meat market. South Koreans are highly concerned about the quality of the meat they consume, particularly regarding issues such as antibiotic use, foodborne illnesses, and the ethical treatment of animals. These concerns are amplified by a growing awareness of the potential health risks associated with consuming meat that is contaminated with harmful substances or produced under unsustainable conditions.

In recent years, food safety scandals involving contaminated meat products have caused significant public concern. For example, outbreaks of foodborne illnesses, such as *E. coli* and salmonella, have affected the meat supply chain, damaging consumer confidence in the safety of certain types of meat. Additionally, concerns over the use of antibiotics and hormones in meat production have led to growing demand for organic, hormone-free, and antibiotic-free meat products. However, the higher cost of producing such meats presents challenges for both producers and consumers, as the price of organic or sustainably produced meat is often higher than conventional options.

Animal welfare concerns are also on the rise, as consumers increasingly prioritize the ethical treatment of animals in meat production. The welfare of animals in factory farms, as well as the methods of slaughter, have sparked debates among South Korean consumers. In response, some meat producers and retailers have taken steps to improve animal welfare standards by adopting more humane farming practices, such as cage-free environments and improved living conditions for livestock. However, these practices can increase production costs, which may be passed on to consumers, potentially limiting the market's growth for certain types of ethically produced meat.

## Key Market Trends

### Increasing Demand for Premium and Specialty Meats

As disposable incomes rise and consumers become more discerning about food quality, there has been a significant shift toward premium and specialty meats in South Korea. Traditional meat consumption patterns have been evolving, with a growing preference for high-quality meats, such as Wagyu beef, Hanwoo beef (a prized native Korean breed), and organic or grass-fed varieties. These premium meats are perceived as healthier and more sustainable options, appealing to health-conscious consumers who are willing to pay a premium for higher quality and ethically sourced products.

The demand for Wagyu beef, in particular, has surged due to its perceived superior taste and texture. South Korean consumers increasingly view premium meats as a symbol of status and luxury, particularly in urban areas where higher disposable incomes are prevalent. Furthermore, the growing interest in home cooking and gourmet dining at home has spurred demand for higher-end cuts of meat that are often seen in fine dining restaurants.

The trend toward specialty meats also extends to niche markets, such as halal and kosher meats, driven by both the growing number of Muslim and Jewish populations and the broader trend toward meat that meets specific ethical or dietary guidelines. This segment of the market is expected to continue growing, driven by both domestic and international demand.

### Rising Popularity of Plant-Based and Alternative Proteins

The rise of plant-based and alternative proteins is another key trend impacting the South Korean meat market. While meat remains a staple of the South Korean diet, the growing awareness of environmental sustainability, health concerns, and animal welfare issues has led to an increasing interest in plant-based meat alternatives. Companies such as Impossible Foods, Beyond Meat, and local startups have been making inroads into the market by offering plant-based products that mimic the taste and texture of traditional meat.

The younger generation, in particular, is driving this shift. Millennial and Gen Z consumers are more likely to experiment with plant-based diets and adopt flexitarian eating habits, incorporating plant-based meats into their diets while still consuming animal proteins. These consumers are motivated by various factors, including concerns

about personal health, climate change, and the ethical treatment of animals.

In response to growing demand, South Korean food manufacturers and retailers are expanding their portfolios of plant-based options. These products are becoming more widely available in supermarkets, restaurants, and fast-food chains. Notably, South Korean foodservice chains have begun introducing plant-based items, such as plant-based burgers and vegan bibimbap (a popular Korean dish), to cater to the evolving tastes of their customers. This trend is expected to continue gaining momentum as more consumers opt for plant-based alternatives and as technological advancements in plant-based meat production improve the flavor, texture, and nutritional profile of these products.

## Segmental Insights

### Distribution Channel Insights

The hypermarket/supermarket segment was the dominating channel in the South Korea meat market, driven by consumer preference for convenience, variety, and accessibility. Hypermarkets and supermarkets offer a wide range of meat products, including fresh, frozen, and processed meats, catering to diverse consumer needs. These retail formats provide competitive pricing, promotions, and bulk purchasing options, making them the preferred choice for most South Korean consumers.

Additionally, hypermarkets and supermarkets offer the advantage of one-stop shopping, where consumers can purchase not only meat but also complementary grocery items, enhancing the overall shopping experience. The rise of large retail chains such as E-Mart, Lotte Mart, and Homeplus has further bolstered the dominance of this segment, with these retailers continually expanding their meat product offerings. With the growing trend toward convenience and efficient shopping, hypermarkets and supermarkets are expected to maintain their leadership in the South Korean meat market.

## Regional Insights

The Northern region of South Korea is the dominating area in the meat market, primarily due to its high population density, urbanization, and greater purchasing power. Major cities in the northern part, such as Seoul and Incheon, are key hubs of commerce and trade, driving substantial demand for meat products. The region's advanced retail infrastructure, including a high concentration of hypermarkets, supermarkets, and online platforms, makes meat easily accessible to consumers.

Furthermore, the northern region's affluent consumer base, which is more likely to spend on premium meat products, fuels the demand for high-quality meats like Hanwoo beef, imported beef, and specialty meats. The region also benefits from strong distribution networks and efficient supply chains, ensuring the availability of a wide variety of meat options. Given these factors, the Northern region is poised to remain the dominant market segment in South Korea's meat industry.

### Key Market Players

CJ CheilJedang Corp.

Hormel Foods Corporation

Lotte Corp.

Jungdawn Co., Ltd.

Dongwon Group

Daesang Corporation

Harim Holdings Co., Ltd.

SAJO HAEPYO Corp.

Vion N.V.

Sysco Corporation

### Report Scope:

In this report, the South Korea Meat Market has been segmented into the following categories, in addition to the industry trends which have also been detailed below:

South Korea Meat Market, By Product:

Chicken

Beef

Mutton

Pork

Others

South Korea Meat Market, By Type:

Raw

Processed

South Korea Meat Market, By Distribution Channel:

Hypermarket/Supermarket

Specialty Stores

Online

Others

South Korea Meat Market, By Region:

Northern

Southern

Central

Competitive Landscape

Company Profiles: Detailed analysis of the major companies presents in the South Korea Meat Market.

### Available Customizations:

South Korea Meat Market report with the given market data, TechSci Research offers customizations according to a company's specific needs. The following customization options are available for the report:

#### Company Information

Detailed analysis and profiling of additional market players (up to five).

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