



Market information summaries

China

Health foods and nutrition
June 2021



Introduction

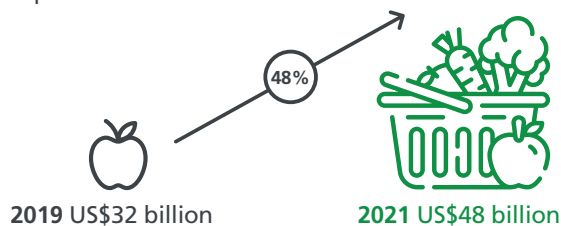
This is a summary of the health food and nutrition market in China, and compliance requirements for market access. It is based on multiple published sources.

The summary aims to address challenges that small biotrade companies have in finding information on markets and industry trends.

The data was compiled by Kruger Swart Associates, Proof Africa and Profound. Although every effort has been made to provide accurate information, circumstances change and users of the information are encouraged to do their own research before using this data to guide business strategy or investments.

The health food and nutrition market in China

- Health food in China refers to products which claim to have specific health functions. It has two primary categories: functional health food and nutritional supplements.
- The market is growing fast with potential for expansion:



- **Total sales of health food in China grew 18.5% to about US\$32 billion in 2019 and are expected to reach US\$48 billion in 2021, with growth around 48%.**



The per-capita consumption of health food is moderate in China at US\$17, compared with mature markets like the US (US\$133) and Japan (US\$96).

- The size of the children's probiotic supplements market in China expanded rapidly from US\$362 million in 2015 to US\$1 billion in 2018.
- As Chinese society begins to age, the market for health food products for the elderly is set to increase.
- The traditional Chinese culture of medicinal food and therapeutic cuisine has a strong influence on consumers.

- The main sales channels used by health food enterprises are direct selling, conference marketing, traditional marketing, e-commerce and academic marketing.

Compliance and market entry

- Imported health food products must have been sold in another foreign market for more than a year before being registered and filed in China:
 - Health food registration applications should be made after passing toxicology tests.
 - The validity period of health food approval is five years, and should be extended before expiration.
- Registration of imported and domestic health food is done by SAMR¹.
- Technical evaluation is by SAMR's Health Food Evaluation Center.
- Formulation and amendments to the national food safety standard is by the NHC².
- Inspection and quarantine are by GAC³.
- Technical standards of ingredients are regulated by:
 - [Health Food Raw Materials Directory \(1st Batch\)](#), specifically for food supplements.
 - [List of Auxiliary Materials for Health Food Filing and Terms of Use \(Trial\)](#).
- The functions and ingredients of products must be consistent with those on the label and in the instructions, and should not claim that the function of the product is to prevent or treat disease.
- Categories of materials to which require pre-market authorisation are:
 - New food additives
 - Novel food materials
 - Functional ingredients (related to pre-market authorisation of health foods)
- Businesses must be registered as a food business for authorisation and must provide evidence that the product is safe and meets specified requirements regarding functionality.
- Contents of a health food advertisement must be consistent with the contents of the user manual and the label approved by the food and drug administration.

¹ State Administration for Market regulation: [State Administration for Market Regulation \(SAMR\) >> globalEDGE: Your source for Global Business Knowledge \(msu.edu\)](#)

² National Health Commission: <http://en.nhc.gov.cn/>

³ General Administration of Customs: <http://english.customs.gov.cn/>

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- Advertisers must first apply to the provincial-level food and drug administration before releasing health food advertisements.
- China has five main pieces of regulation guiding the use of new food raw materials domestically and overseas. The US, Australia and New Zealand have two each and the EU has one.
- China defines novel food raw material as items which do not have the traditional history of consumption, production and/or distribution in China for the last 30 years.