

# Croatian Pets Scarf Down Imported Food

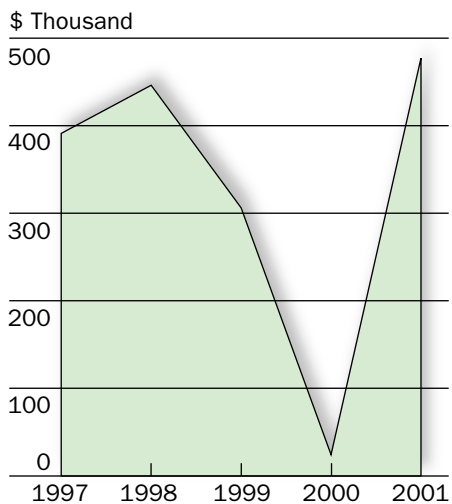
By Andreja Misir

Since Croatia does not produce pet food commercially, dotting owners spent \$20 million on imported pet food in 2001.

Official figures showed U.S. pet food sales to Croatia at only \$478,000 in 2001. However, U.S. pet food products transshipped through other countries would likely bring the value of U.S.-branded imports closer to \$1.2 million.

With the Croatian population aging and standards of living slowly rising, pampered pets are becoming more commonplace. About 300,000 dogs are registered; an estimated half million cats have adopted families.

## Direct U.S. Pet Food Exports to Croatia Reach New High



The strong U.S. dollar and U.S. franchises in Europe contributed to declining direct sales figures in 1999-2000; in 2001 a strengthening euro and outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Europe increased demand for U.S. products.

The market for dog and cat food, which rose a robust 19 percent over the past three years, is largely supplied by Hungary, Austria, the United States and Italy. In 2001, Croatia also re-exported \$96,000 worth of dog and cat food, a 26-percent increase over 1999.

Croatia does not distinguish between food for commercial and pet fish. With sales of \$4.4 million in 2001, imports of fish food accounted for over a fourth of total pet food sales, largely coming from Italy, Denmark, France and The Netherlands.

## U.S. Suppliers Pay Tariffs

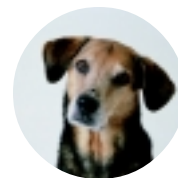
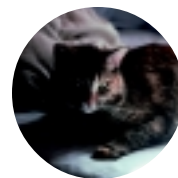
With a 5-percent tariff, dog and cat food products from the United States are at a slight disadvantage compared to tariff-free imports from European countries. The U.S. tariff rate for fish food is 2 percent and can be as high as 13 percent for other pet food products.

While Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia pay no tariffs on any pet food products, European Union (EU) members pay 1.8 percent on fish food and up to 11.7 percent on other pet foods.

## Import Requirements

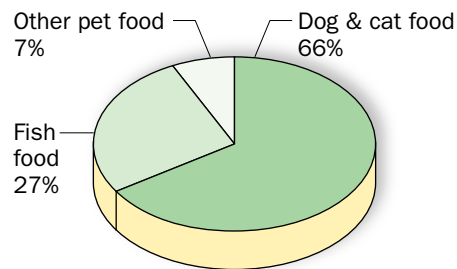
The Croatian government monitors compliance with legislation pertaining to marketing pet food products. Pet food importers must register with the government and have access to a bonded warehouse.

Two certifications are required for all pet food imports—one from Croatia and one from the originating country. The Croatian Ministry of Agriculture charges about \$121 to process an application for a document that attests to the safety of the import. This permit is valid for six months, or until the quantity requested on the permit has been reached.



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## Croatian Pet Food Purchases Top \$20 Million



Dog and cat food accounted for two-thirds of sales in 2001.

U.S. suppliers must also have in hand a veterinary export certificate from USDA.

Upon entry into the country, pet food products must be accompanied by a declaration with the following information:

- Name of supplier and importer
- Official name of product
- Quality category, if applicable
- Net weight
- Date of production and best-use date
- Instructions on use and storage
- Chemical composition by percentage of volume or weight
- If applicable, information on composition and quantity of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antibiotics and other components ■

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