

# COUNTRY SNAPSHOT: PANAMA

Panama ranked as the 31st largest U.S. agricultural export market in 2020, with exports totaling \$695 million. In fiscal year 2021, U.S. agricultural and related product exports to Panama grew 27% to \$892.5 million. The country's economy is the 76th largest in the world and 3rd largest in Central America. Panama imports all its soybean meal, about 200,000 MT per year, with demand driven by the poultry, swine and feed manufacturing sectors, which have remained stable. Improvements to the Panama Canal made in the last four years increased efficiency and capacity; still, its value-added opportunities in agriculture remain untapped.

U.S. Soy has collaborated with Panama since the 1990s.

## COUNTRY STATS

**POPULATION (2022):**  
4.35 million (Urbanization – 68.41% in 2020)

**POPULATION (2050):**  
~5.99 million

**GDP (2021):**  
USD 63.61 billion

**AVG. ECONOMIC GROWTH (2016-2021):** 15.3%

**PER CAPITA INCOME (2021):** USD 14,617.60

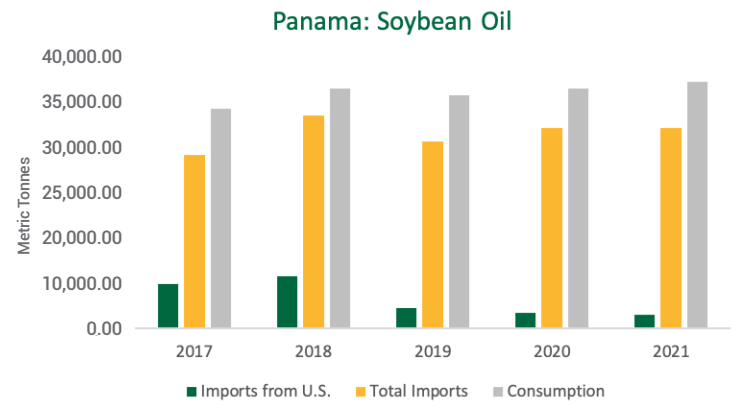
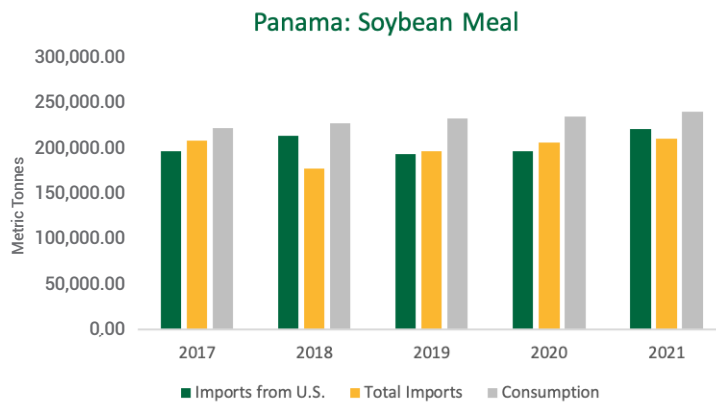
## MARKET STATS

Soy usage market size by Volume, 2020

Animal Protein (total)	240,000 MT	Aquaculture, cattle, other species	8,400 MT
Pork	39,900 MT	Poultry	161,700 MT

### Soy market size vs U.S. Soy:

- Soy complex (whole soybean, meal, oil): 365,244 MT.
- Whole bean: 42,448 MT. U.S. Soy Whole Bean: 42,448 MT.
- Soybean Meal: 274,376 MT. U.S. Soy Meal: 270,194 MT.
- Soybean Oil: 48,420 MT. U.S. Soy Oil: 3,796 MT.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Trade Data, FAS USDA GATS, Industry estimations

## STRENGTHS

- Panama imports its entire soybean meal requirements of about 200,000 MT per year, with demand driven by the feed manufacturing, poultry and sectors; industries were stable and even grew during the pandemic.
- Appreciation for U.S. Soy has resulted in a solid preference over other origins.
- Having an FTA with the U.S. coupled with a generally competitive freight spread makes U.S. products more competitive.
- Solid relationships with relevant industries and stakeholders across the poultry, pork and aquaculture sectors; the latter continues to grow in shrimp and other local species.
- All sectors have benefited from technical and trade assistance and their participation in diverse events implemented by USSEC, which caters to a range of needs including nutrition, formulation, purchasing.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- With market share for soybean meal close to 100%, optimization would come from increasing demand with USSEC collaborating in campaigns to leverage animal protein consumption.
- A relatively high income level and considerable urbanization rate could mean opportunities to further collaborate and communicate on sustainability and U.S. Soy nutrition and health advantages.
- An increased use of full fat soybean meal in animal diets continues leveraging U.S. Soy imports.
- Industry will benefit from participating in the growing America's Soy Excellence Center (SEC) programs.
- Regarding aquaculture, foreign investors have arrived thus output has recovered to levels observed 5 years ago.

## CHALLENGES

- The poultry feed industry is heavily concentrated; imports of animal protein are poised to grow under the FTA with the U.S.
- Panama represents a very small soybean oil market and as such, has only marginal increases in sales opportunities. Work with processed food stakeholders could incentivize the use of soybean oil.

Sources:

- Macro Trends
- Population Pyramid
- Trading Economics
- World Bank, Statista
- Statista
- USDA FAS Panama
- World in Figures
- Soy and Soy Product S and D 2021-22 Marketing Year (J. Baize)
- Industry estimates

