



Report on the South African Customs Union (SACU) Dairy Intra Trade exports from South Africa to the BeLN* countries for 2025

** Botswana, eSwatini, Lesotho, Namibia*

Synopsis:

- On a mass basis, the total intra dairy exports to the BeLN countries has decreased by 6.59% between 2021 and 2025. Despite the overall decline, the downward trend reversed in 2024, with exports rising 2.40% compared to 2023, and continuing to grow by 0.99% between 2024 and 2025. The mass of intra dairy exports of buttermilk powder and yoghurt remained relatively stable between 2024 and 2025, recording a slight increase of 2.04%. Exports of milk and cream unsweetened showed the strongest growth over the period, rising by 25.09%. In contrast, exports of milk concentrate as well as whey and whey powder declined significantly, decreasing by 77.53% and 16.74%, respectively.
- The average free-on-board (F.O.B.) prices in 2025 showed mixed trends across tariff headings. Three of the six categories experienced price decreases, while milk concentrates (04.02) saw the largest increase of 207.47%. This sharp rise reflects the return of the average F.O.B. price for exports to Botswana to around R43.88/kg, compared to the unusually low R8.79/kg in 2024. Smaller price increases were observed for buttermilk powder and yoghurt (04.03), and butter, butter spreads, and butter oil (04.05). The average FOB price for sales to the BeLN countries during 2024 compared to 2025 for milk, concentrated (04.02) increased the most by 207.50% while the price for milk and cream, unsweetened (04.01) decreased the most with 9.62%.
- The total value of the sales to the BeLN countries has increased by 24.13% between 2021 and 2025. The total value of sales between 2024 and 2025 increased slightly by 2%, the value of sales for concentrated milk (04.02) and whey and whey powder (04.04) decreased the most by 30.91% and 17.96%, respectively. Butter, butter spreads and butter oil (04.05) increased the most with 27.55%.



This report was compiled by the Economic Desk of the MPO as part of the Economies and Markets project of MilkSA. A market economy is dependent on available information, evenly distributed between role players that enables the “invisible hand” to optimally distribute production factors. The objective of MilkSA and the Economic Desk of the MPO is to provide market signals and market trends to the dairy industry, organised agriculture, and policymakers, to enhance the functioning of the value chain – with a strong scientific approach.

The Economic Desk of the MPO produces several reports some as part of the Economies and Markets project of MilkSA and others as an independent market contributor focusing on supply and demand variables and dynamics, both within an international and domestic ambit. These reports embody the Industry Information Project of the MPO.

The outputs and deliberations of the Desk should assist role players in the value chain to better prepare for market developments and empower role players to engage at a higher level. While the Milk Producers’ Organisation and Milk SA cannot and will not try to predict the future in any detail, the possible general impact and/or possible outcomes of specific changes or trends will be discussed in this document. This information should not be regarded as financial advice. While this report is compiled from sources that are deemed reliable, MilkSA and the MPO cannot take responsibility for any decisions based on the information in this report.

Background

1. Typically, 75% of the combined categories, namely sales to BeLN countries together with exports, manifests as sales to the BeLN countries every year.
2. The source of the document is the South African Revue Services.
3. The report is produced quarterly with a once-off calendar year amalgamation of all the quarters.

Section 1: Intra Dairy Exports from South Africa to the BeLN countries

This section will analyse intra dairy exports per tariff heading on an annual basis.

Table 1: The mass (kg) of intra dairy exports for the period 2021 to 2025, per tariff heading is compared.

Tariff Heading	Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
04.01	Milk and cream, unsweetened	70 823 703	66 615 733	67 875 272	78 587 741	98 302 371
04.02	Milk, concentrated	41 751 506	36 556 346	34 806 486	24 165 861	5 430 034
04.03	Buttermilk powder, yoghurt	24 485 179	23 431 712	20 085 206	21 266 899	21 700 339
04.04	Whey, whey powder, etc	3 344 211	3 067 708	2 538 149	4 141 066	3 447 885
04.05	Butter, butter spreads and butter oil	1 543 004	1 828 965	2 025 637	1 581 391	1 854 227
04.06	Cheese and curd	5 682 357	6 838 854	6 278 434	7 072 458	7 429 717
	Total	147 907 621	138 339 318	133 609 184	136 815 416	138 164 573

Table 2: The average F.O.B. (ZAR) price of intra dairy exports for the period 2021 to 2025, per tariff heading is compared.

Tariff Heading	Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
04.01	Milk and cream, unsweetened	9.43	10.10	11.77	11.42	10.32
04.02	Milk, concentrated	12.44	11.72	12.21	17.68	54.37
04.03	Buttermilk powder, yoghurt	15.38	16.58	19.66	22.36	22.64
04.04	Whey, whey powder, etc	8.90	11.08	13.34	13.02	12.83
04.05	Butter, butter spreads and butter oil	47.94	49.36	52.12	57.30	62.33
04.06	Cheese and curd	63.69	63.02	75.25	75.65	76.54

Table 3: Value of sales (R) to BeLN countries per tariff heading: The value of the sales for the period 2021 to 2025 is compared.

Tariff Heading	Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
04.01	Milk and cream, unsweetened	668 091 377	672 117 035	798 756 998	897 397 423	1 014 506 623
04.02	Milk, concentrated	519 369 791	428 575 283	425 154 074	427 292 982	295 210 940
04.03	Buttermilk powder, yoghurt	376 697 270	388 505 485	394 821 730	475 565 848	491 325 597
04.04	Whey, whey powder, etc	297 515 051	33 986 987	33 864 663	53 924 220	44 239 885
04.05	Butter, butter spreads and butter oil	739 730 551	90 285 157	105 584 690	90 608 572	115 573 478
04.06	Cheese and curd	361 924 141	431 006 606	472 458 472	535 037 796	568 655 675
	Total	2 037 792 891	2 044 476 553	2 230 640 627	2 479 826 841	2 529 512 198

- On a mass basis, the total intra dairy exports to the BeLN countries has decreased by 6.59% between 2021 and 2025. Despite the overall decline, the downward trend reversed in 2024, with exports rising 2.40% compared to 2023, and continuing to grow by 0.99% between 2024 and 2025.
- The average free-on-board (F.O.B.) prices in 2025 showed mixed trends across tariff headings. Three of the six categories experienced price decreases, while milk concentrates (04.02) saw the largest increase of 207.47%. This sharp rise reflects the return of the average F.O.B. price for exports to Botswana to around R43.88/kg, compared to the unusually low R8.79/kg in 2024. Smaller price increases were observed for buttermilk powder and yoghurt (04.03), and butter, butter spreads, and butter oil (04.05).
- The total value of the sales to the BeLN countries has increased by 24.13% between 2021 and 2025.

Table 4: The mass (kg) of intra dairy exports for the period 2025, per tariff heading, is compared to 2024.

Tariff Heading	Description	2025	2024	% change
04.01	Milk and cream, unsweetened	98 302 371	78 587 741	25.09
04.02	Milk, concentrated	5 430 034	24 165 861	-77.53
04.03	Buttermilk powder, yoghurt	21 700 339	21 266 900	2.04
04.04	Whey, whey powder, etc	3 447 885	4 141 066	-16.74
04.05	Butter, butter spreads and butter oil	1 854 227	1 581 391	17.25
04.06	Cheese and curd	7 429 717	7 072 458	5.05
	Total	138 164 573	136 815 417	0.99

- On a mass basis, intra dairy exports of buttermilk powder and yoghurt remained relatively stable between 2024 and 2025, recording a slight increase of 2.04%. Exports of milk and cream unsweetened showed the strongest growth over the period, rising by 25.09%. In contrast, exports of milk concentrate as well as whey and whey powder declined significantly, decreasing by 77.53% and 16.74%, respectively.

Table 5: The average F.O.B. (ZAR) price for 2025, per tariff heading, is compared to 2024.

Tariff Heading	Description	2025	2024	% change
04.01	Milk and cream, unsweetened	10.32	11.42	-9.62
04.02	Milk, concentrated	54.37	17.68	207.50
04.03	Buttermilk powder, yoghurt	22.64	22.36	1.26
04.04	Whey, whey powder, etc	12.83	13.02	-1.45
04.05	Butter, butter spreads and butter oil	62.33	57.30	8.78
04.06	Cheese and curd	76.54	75.65	1.17

- The average FOB price for sales to the BeLN countries during 2024 compared to 2025 for milk, concentrated (04.02) increased the most by 207.50% while the price for milk and cream, unsweetened (04.01) decreased the most with 9.62%.

- The sharp rise for milk, concentrated (04.02) reflects the return of the average F.O.B. price for exports to Botswana to around R43.88/kg, compared to the unusually low R8.79/kg in 2024.

Table 6: Value of sales (R) to BeLN countries per tariff heading: The value of the sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Tariff Heading	Description	2025	2024	% change
04.01	Milk and cream, sweetened	1 014 506 623	897 397 423	13.05
04.02	Milk, concentrated	295 210 940	427 292 982	-30.91
04.03	Buttermilk powder, yoghurt	491 325 597	475 565 848	3.31
04.04	Whey, whey powder, etc	44 239 885	53 924 220	-17.96
04.05	Butter, butter spreads and butter oil	115 573 478	90 608 572	27.55
04.06	Cheese and curd	568 655 675	535 037 796	6.28
	Total	2 529 512 198	2 479 826 841	2.00

- The total value of sales between 2024 and 2025 increased slightly by 2%, the value of sales for concentrated milk (04.02) and whey and whey powder (04.04) decreased the most by 30.91% and 17.96%, respectively. Butter, butter spreads and butter oil (04.05) increased the most with 27.55%.

Sections 2 to 7 will analyse sales per tariff heading to BeLN countries

Section 2: Sales of tariff heading 04.01 to the BeLN countries: Milk and cream, unsweetened.

Table 7: Sales for tariff heading 0401: Milk and cream, unsweetened.

The mass (kg) of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024, on a per BeLN country basis.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	55 818 903	35 610 105	56.75
Eswatini	15 964 121	14 459 465	10.41
Lesotho	10 663 925	11 264 233	-5.60
Namibia	15 885 442	17 253 938	-7.93
Total	98 302 371	78 587 741	25.09

Table 8: Average F.O.B. (ZAR) price for tariff heading 0401: The average F.O.B. price for sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	6.81	7.76	-12.24
Eswatini	11.87	11.41	4.03
Lesotho	21.03	19.34	8.74
Namibia	13.95	13.81	1.01
Average	10.32	11.42	-9.62

Table 9: Value of sales (R) for tariff heading 0401: The value of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	379 876 688	276 346 966	37.46
Eswatini	189 425 517	164 961 814	14.83
Lesotho	223 595 656	217 894 613	2.62
Namibia	221 608 762	238 194 030	-6.96
Total	1 014 506 623	897 397 423	13.05

- Between 2024 and 2025, the mass of sales of milk and cream, unsweetened (04.01), to Lesotho and Namibia declined, while sales to Botswana recorded the strongest growth, increasing by 56.75%. Over the same period, the FOB price to Botswana decreased by 12.24%, whereas the price to Lesotho increased the most, rising by 8.74%. In value terms, sales to Botswana showed the largest increase (37.46%), followed by Eswatini (14.83%), while Namibia was the only market to record a decline in sales value, decreasing by 6.96%.

Section 3: Sales of tariff heading 04.02 to the BeLN countries: Milk concentrated.

Table 10: Sales for tariff heading 0402: Milk, concentrated.

The mass (kg) of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024, on a per BeLN country basis.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	1 852 007	20 250 912	-90.85
Eswatini	1 231 450	1 062 225	15.93
Lesotho	295 548	392 931	-24.78
Namibia	2 051 030	2 459 794	-16.62
Total	5 430 034	24 165 861	-77.53

Table 11: Average F.O.B. (ZAR) price for tariff heading 0402: The average F.O.B. price for sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	43.88	8.79	399.16
Eswatini	77.59	80.46	-3.56
Lesotho	112.44	91.85	22.42
Namibia	41.52	51.94	-20.05
Average	54.37	17.68	207.47

Table 12: Value of sales (R) for tariff heading 0402: The value of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	81 259 331	177 981 829	-54.34
Eswatini	95 552 465	85 466 343	11.80
Lesotho	33 231 303	36 090 019	-7.92
Namibia	85 167 841	127 754 791	-33.33
Total	295 210 940	427 292 982	-30.91

- Between 2024 and 2025, the mass of concentrated milk (04.02) exports to Botswana declined sharply by 90.85%. This contraction coincided with a substantial increase in the average F.O.B. export price, which rose to R43.88/kg from an unusually low R8.79/kg in 2024 — representing a 399.16% increase.
- Over the same period, export volumes to Lesotho (-7.92%) and Namibia (-33.33%) also recorded negative growth, while Eswatini was the only market to reflect positive growth, with sales increasing by 11.80%.

Section 4: Sales of tariff heading 04.03 to the BeLN countries: Buttermilk powder and yoghurt.

Table 13: Sales for tariff heading 0403: Buttermilk powder, yoghurt.

The mass (kg) of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024, on a per BeLN country basis.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	10 347 262	11 218 986	-7.77
Eswatini	5 229 121	4 291 317	21.85
Lesotho	1 887 431	1 885 556	0.10
Namibia	4 236 526	3 871 041	9.44
Total	21 700 339	21 266 900	2.04

Table 14: Average F.O.B. (ZAR) price for tariff heading 0403: The average F.O.B. price for sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	22.04	21.42	2.90
Eswatini	18.85	20.12	-6.33
Lesotho	34.83	29.96	16.25
Namibia	23.36	23.87	-2.13
Average	22.64	22.36	1.25

Table 15: Value of sales (R) for tariff heading 0403: The value of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	228 076 292	240 325 780	-5.10
Eswatini	98 546 478	86 326 161	14.16
Lesotho	65 733 677	56 496 360	16.35
Namibia	98 969 150	92 417 547	7.09
Total	491 325 597	475 565 848	3.31

- Between 2024 and 2025, the mass of sales of buttermilk powder and yoghurt (04.03) increased to all BeLN countries, with the exception of Botswana, which recorded a decline of 7.77%. Over the same period, the FOB price to Lesotho rose the most, increasing by 16.25%, while the price to Eswatini declined by 6.33%. In value terms, sales to Lesotho and Eswatini showed the strongest growth, increasing by 16.35% and 14.16%, respectively.

Section 5: Sales of tariff heading 04.04 to the BeLN countries: Whey and whey powder etc.

Table 16: Sales for tariff heading 0404: Whey, whey powder, etc.			
The mass (kg) of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024, on a per BeLN country basis.			
Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	303 308	318 404	-4.74
Eswatini	472 438	1 147 961	-58.85
Lesotho	1 975 621	1 800 939	9.70
Namibia	696 518	873 762	-20.29
Total	3 447 885	4 141 066	-16.74

Table 17: Average F.O.B. (ZAR) price for tariff heading 0404: The average F.O.B. price for sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.			
Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	22.38	22.79	-1.81
Eswatini	11.90	10.54	12.89
Lesotho	12.35	14.80	-16.54
Namibia	10.66	9.06	17.71
Average	12.83	13.02	-1.47

Table 18: Value of sales (R) for tariff heading 0404: The value of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.			
Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	6 787 547	7 256 381	-6.46
Eswatini	5 621 256	12 103 578	-53.56
Lesotho	24 402 946	26 645 373	-8.42
Namibia	7 428 136	7 918 888	-6.20
Total	44 239 885	53 924 220	-17.96

- Between 2024 and 2025, the mass of sales of whey and whey powder (04.04) declined to all BeLN countries, except Lesotho, which recorded an increase of 9.70%. Over the same period, the FOB price to Namibia increased by 17.71%, while the price to Lesotho decreased by 16.54%. In value terms, sales declined across all BeLN countries, with Eswatini recording the largest decrease (53.56%). Overall, the average value of sales decreased by 17.96%.

Section 6: Sales of tariff heading 04.05 to the BeLN countries: Butter, butter spreads and butter oil.

Table 19: Sales for tariff heading 0405: Butter, butter spreads and butter oil.			
The mass (kg) of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024, on a per BeLN country basis.			
Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	556 527	517 411	7.56
Eswatini	42 428	74 329	-42.92
Lesotho	554 077	216 313	156.15
Namibia	701 194	773 338	-9.33
Total	1 854 227	1 581 391	17.25

Table 20: Average F.O.B. (ZAR) price for tariff heading 0405: The average F.O.B. price for sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.			
Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	54.58	55.29	-1.29
Eswatini	84.66	40.56	108.74
Lesotho	46.12	54.23	-14.95
Namibia	79.94	61.11	30.81
Average	62.33	57.30	8.78

Table 21: Value of sales (R) for tariff heading 0405: The value of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.			
Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	30 374 675	28 608 018	6.18
Eswatini	3 592 151	3 014 600	19.16
Lesotho	25 555 104	11 729 624	117.87
Namibia	56 051 548	47 256 330	18.61
Total	115 573 478	90 608 572	27.55

- Between 2024 and 2025, on a mass basis, sales of butter, butter spreads, and butter oil (04.05) reflected mixed trends: export volumes increased to Lesotho and Botswana, while declining to Eswatini and Namibia. Over the same period, the FOB price to Lesotho decreased by 14.95%, with Botswana recording a marginal decline of 1.29%, whereas Eswatini registered the largest price increase at 108.74%. In value terms, sales to Lesotho increased the most (117.87%), contributing to an overall average sales value growth of 27.55%.

Section 7: Sales of tariff heading 04.06 to the BeLN countries: Cheese and curd.

Table 22: Sales for tariff heading 0406: Cheese and curd.

The mass (kg) of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024, on a per BeLN country basis.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	2 324 614	2 143 198	8.46
Eswatini	831 881	794 456	4.71
Lesotho	766 402	790 087	-3.00
Namibia	3 506 820	3 344 717	4.85
Total	7 429 717	7 072 458	5.05

Table 23: Average F.O.B. (ZAR) price for tariff heading 0406: The average F.O.B. price for sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	64.18	69.77	-8.01
Eswatini	79.90	81.60	-2.09
Lesotho	55.04	39.78	38.35
Namibia	88.63	86.48	2.49
Average	76.54	75.65	1.17

Table 24: Value of sales (R) for tariff heading 0406: The value of sales for 2025, is compared to 2024.

Country	2025	2024	% change
Botswana	149 197 792	149 524 508	-0.22
Eswatini	66 465 052	64 829 852	2.52
Lesotho	42 180 728	31 433 033	34.19
Namibia	310 812 103	289 250 403	7.45
Total	568 655 675	535 037 796	6.28

- Between 2024 and 2025, the mass of sales of cheese and curd (04.06) increased most significantly to Botswana (8.46%), while Lesotho recorded the only decline, decreasing by 3.00%. Over the same period, the FOB price to Lesotho rose the most, increasing by 38.35%, in contrast to a notable decline of 8.01% to Botswana. On average, the value of sales to the BeLN countries increased by 6.28%, with Botswana being the only market to register a slight decrease of 0.22%.

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