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International Demand Analysis

Data Through:
December 2025

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NATIONAL MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION

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U.S. DAIRY EXPORT COUNCIL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Executive Summary

II. Cheese

III. NFDM/SMP

IV. Whey Products (0404.10)

V. WPC80+ (3502.20)

VI. Other Products

- I. Lactose
- II. Butter
- III. WMP

A Note from the Authors

- This is the **International Demand Analysis** from the Dairy Economics Team at National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC). This monthly report outlines the latest global dairy trade trends and data combined with our own commentary analyzing demand in key markets for **cheese**, **NFDM/SMP**, **whey (0404.10)** and **WPC80+**, alongside shorter summaries for **lactose**, **butterfat** and **WMP** – all with a forward-looking lens and US exporter viewpoint.

- **Data Notes**
  - All comparisons are year-over-year unless otherwise noted.
  - 3-Year CAGR is calculated from most recent 12-months and not from calendar year.

- If you have any questions, comments or suggestions on how to improve the report, send us an email at:
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  - **mganley@usdec.org**

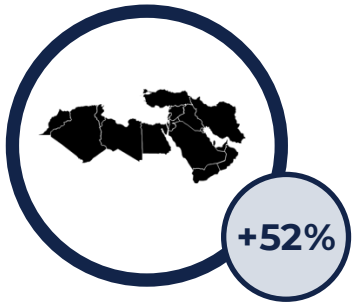
Global Dairy Demand Market Commentary

KEY TAKEAWAYS

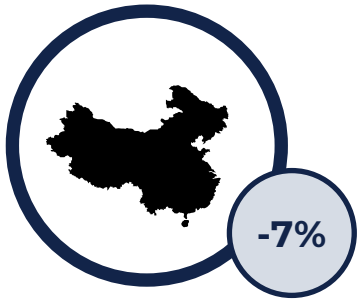
- **Despite all the volatility and emotion surrounding trade at the start of 2025, it was in fact a remarkably strong year for dairy.** Total dairy trade volumes, in milk solids equivalent terms, bested prior year levels in all but two months. And a particularly strong December (+13%, +120,921 MT MSE) helped to deliver a 3% (+323,284 MT MSE) increase for the year against 2024 volumes.
- **A total of 11.322 million MT MSE of dairy products circled the globe in 2025, the second largest amount ever**. In fact, dairy trade was just 1% (-116,612 MT MSE) shy of the record set in 2021. After plateauing over the last few years, the increase is an encouraging indication that global dairy trade is once again expanding in earnest.
- Southeast Asia was the top destination for global dairy exports in 2025, wresting first place from China for the second year in a row. A surge in milk powder shipments during the fourth quarter boosted trade to the region by 2% (+37,294 MT MSE) for the year. China remained in second place also seeing a 2% (+33,549 MT MSE) rise in trade as stronger cheese shipments compensated for continued weakness in powders.

Global Milk Solids Trade	+12.7%	+2.9%	+2.9%	+1.1%
	Dec YoY	YTD, Ending Dec	Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	3-Year CAGR

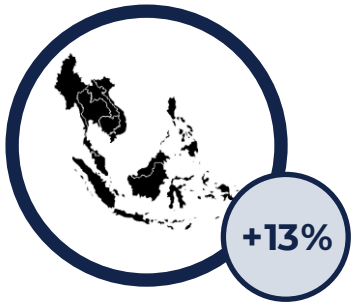
December Standout Markets



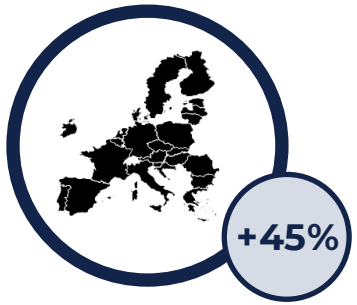
MENA
+72,145 MT



CHINA+HK
-14,443 MT



SOUTHEAST ASIA
+19,740 MT



EU27
+16,419 MT

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Anyone who followed dairy markets in 2025 surely heard ad nauseum about the phenomenal growth in milk supplies the world over. But how did that translate to success in the export market? Nearly every major supplier saw volumes rise except for Australia (-6%, -26,173 MT MSE) and Canada (-4%, -8,518 MT MSE). In absolute terms, the U.S. grew exports more than any other region, adding an additional 79,217 MT MSE (+4%) to global volumes on the back of strong milk output and tepid domestic demand, especially for cheese. Close on the heels of the U.S., however, was both the EU and New Zealand, which added 76,739 MT MSE (+2%) and 74,572 MT MSE (+3%), respectively. But perhaps no country posted such impressive growth as the UK which saw export volumes in 2025 soar by 14% (+68,645 MT MSE) though the vast majority of this increase reflects stronger shipments to the EU. All told, 2025 provided a clear example of the benefits of growing demand and how a rising tide of dairy demand can lift all suppliers' boats.

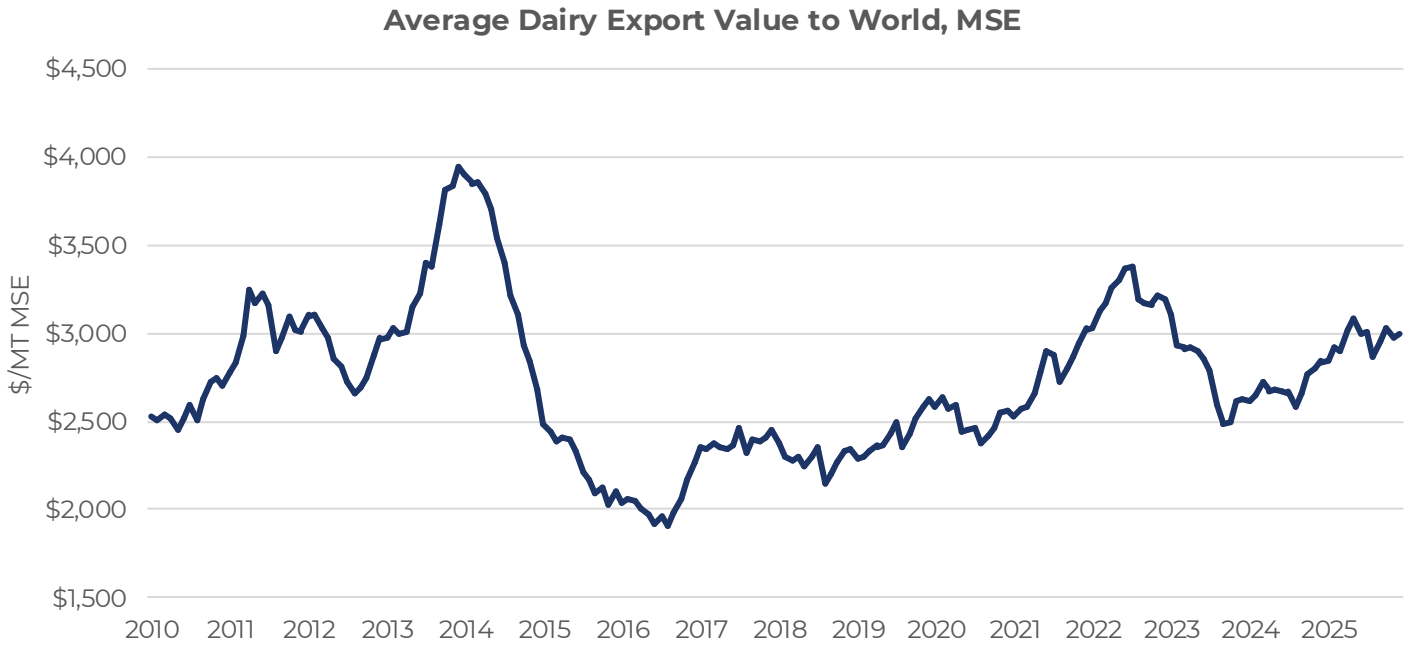
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Dairy Demand Market Commentary

LOOKING AHEAD

- After finishing the year on a strong note, it is easy to be optimistic about the outlook for global dairy trade in 2026. **Dairy demand appears to have turned a corner** following the inflation-laden early 2020s and has recalibrated in response to China's new role in the marketplace. This should set trade up to continue expanding.
- However, **risks to the outlook are plentiful.** Recent current events, namely the developing conflict in the Middle East, have the potential to disrupt this positive trend. Even if direct dairy impacts remain limited to the affected region, the secondary effects of the turmoil are likely to be widespread. Dramatically higher energy prices are likely to boost inflation which could dampen dairy demand across the globe. In addition, logistics complications are adding costs and delays to shipping across the world not only to those routes directly impacted. The situation is evolving and the severity of the impacts on dairy trade will likely hinge critically on the length of the conflict.
- Dairy markets have rallied in recent weeks, likely reaching levels rejected by the world's most price sensitive buyers. But with global milk production still expanding rapidly, we continue to question how sustainable these price levels are.

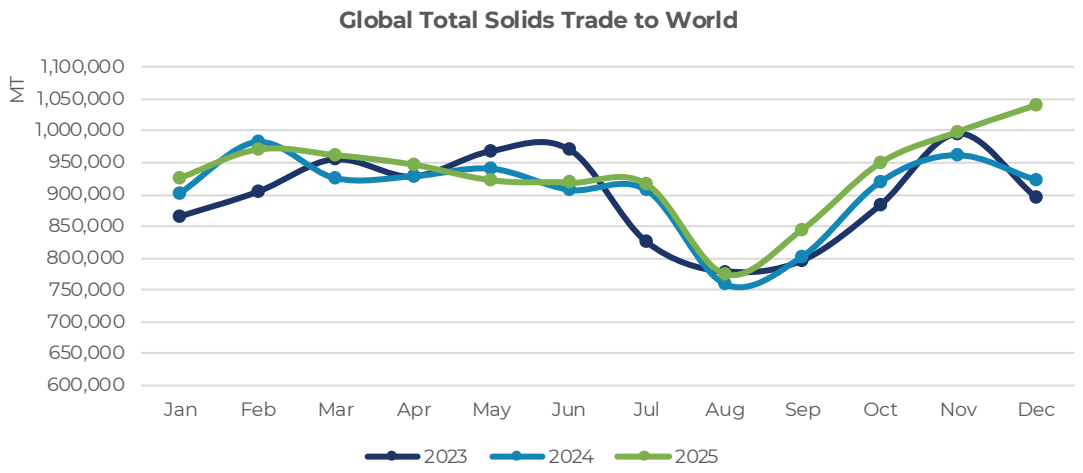
U.S. Milk Solids Exports[1]	**+12.3%** Dec YoY	**+3.5%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+3.5%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+1.2%** 3-Year CAGR
EU Milk Solids Exports	**+16.5%** Dec YoY	**+1.8%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+1.8%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+0.6%** 3-Year CAGR
NZ Milk Solids Exports	**+6.6%** Dec YoY	**+2.7%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+2.7%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+0.9%** 3-Year CAGR

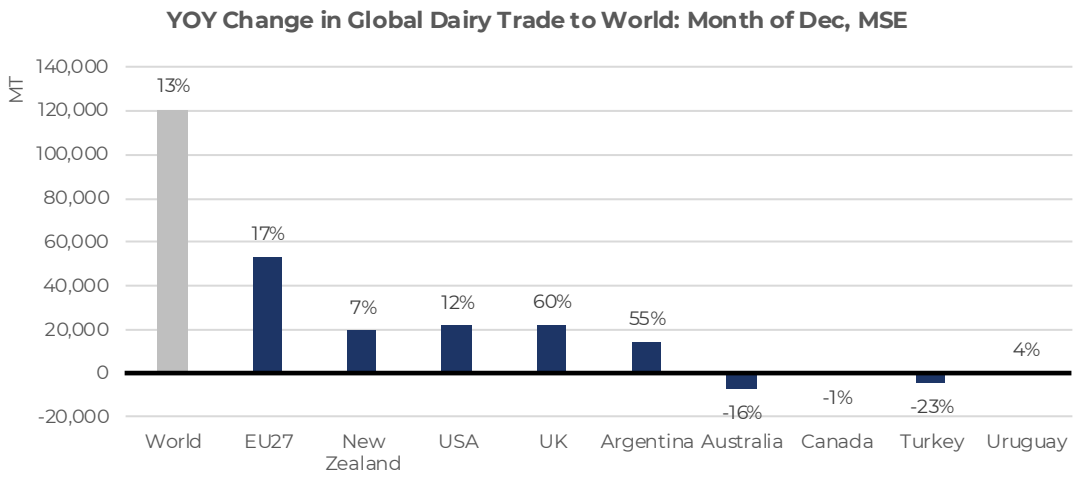


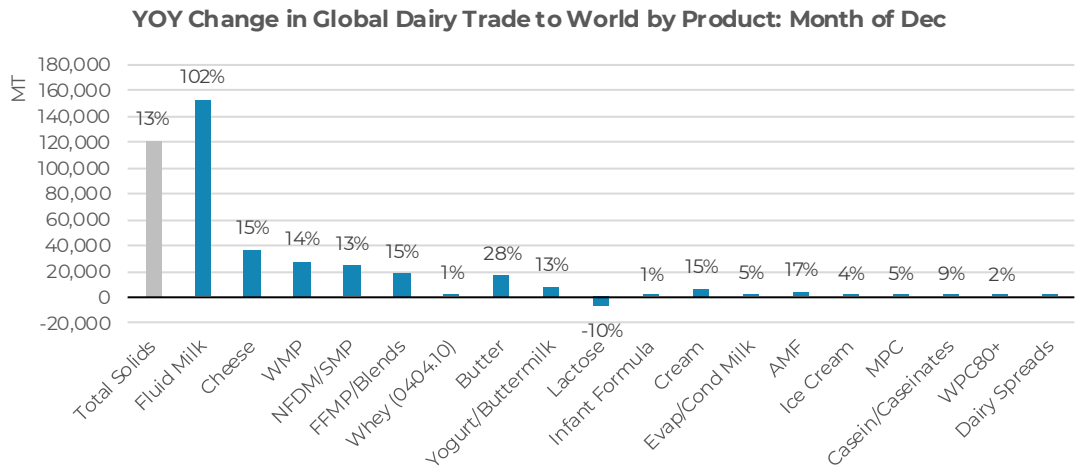
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

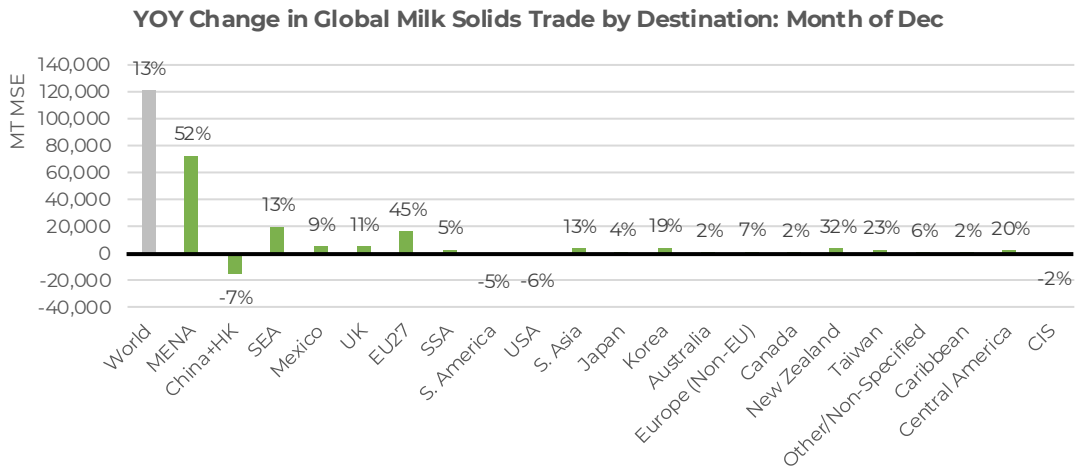
[1]U.S. Milk Solids Exports reflect trade data aggregated from 6-digit HS codes (global HS codes are harmonized at the 6-digit level). This number will differ slightly from U.S. Milk Solids Exports reported in our U.S. Trade Data Release which takes a more granular look at U.S. specific, 10-digit HS codes.

Executive Summary: December 2025



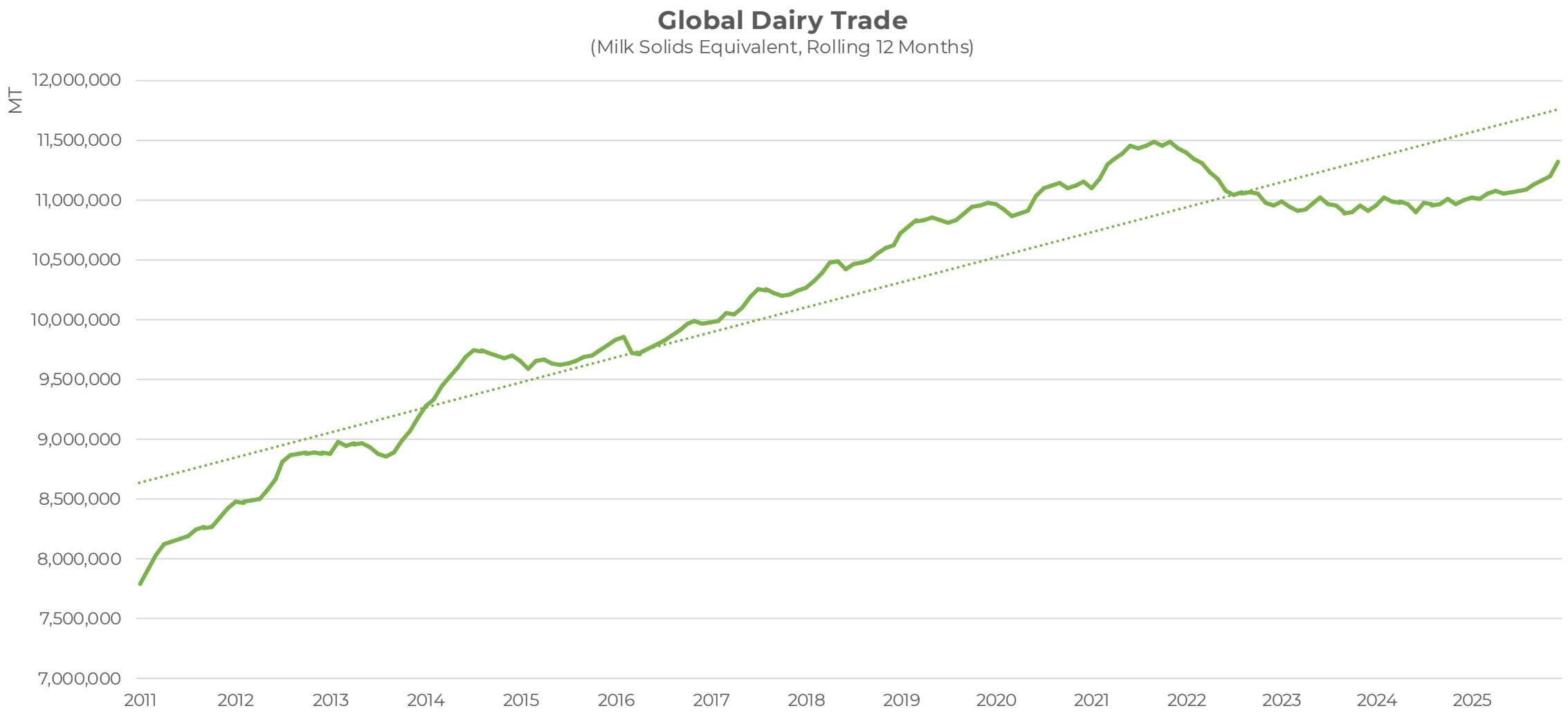






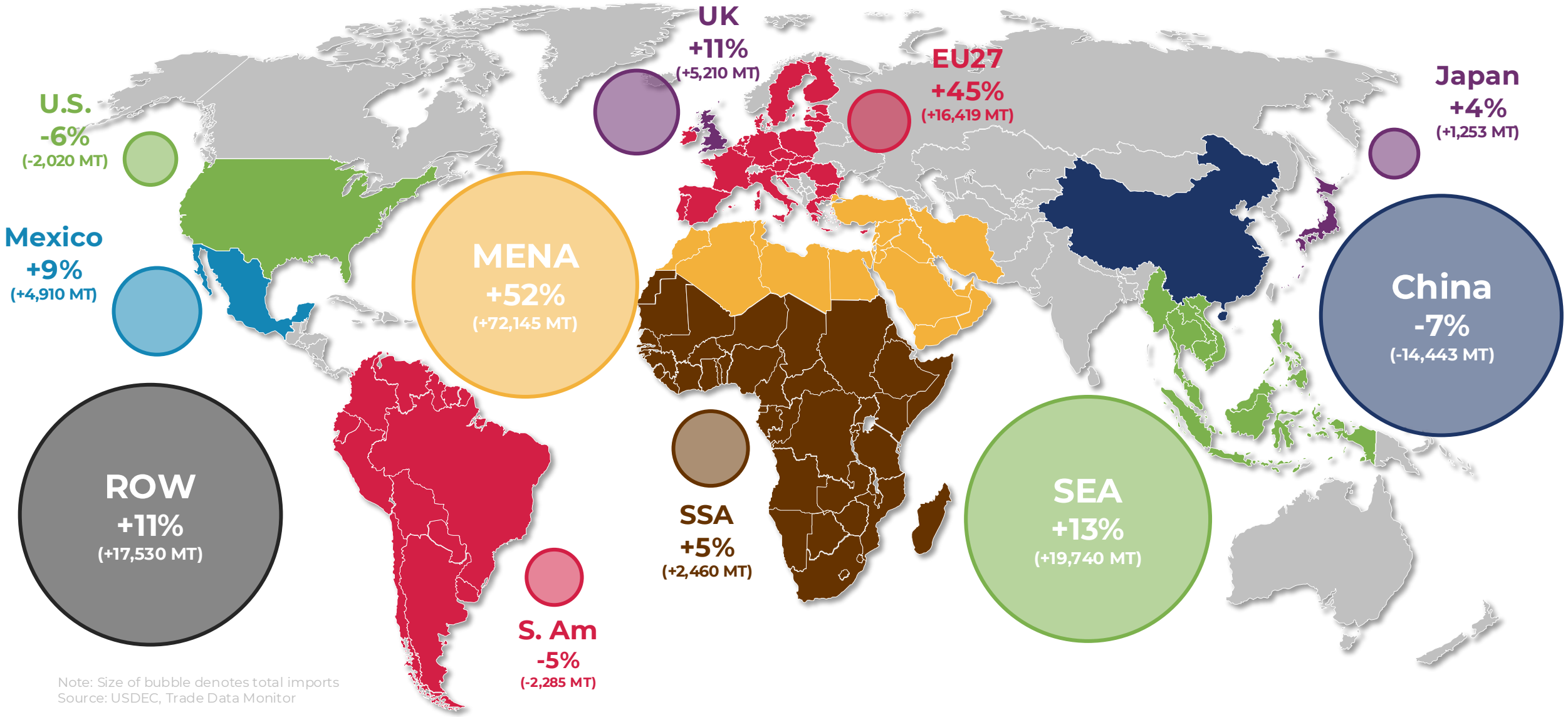
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Dairy Trade



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

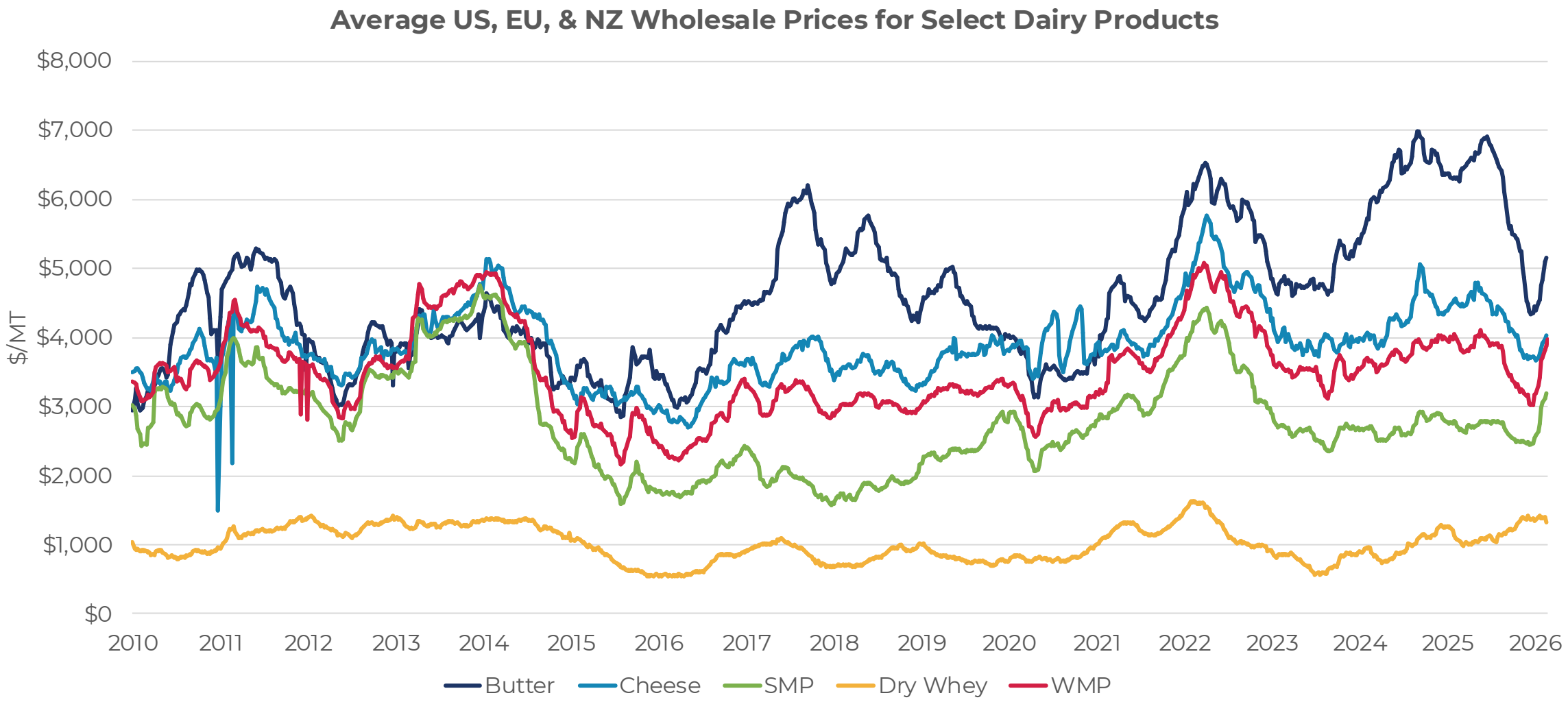
Select Markets – Month of Dec. 2025, Milk Solids Equiv.



Note: Size of bubble denotes total imports
Source: USDEC, Trade Data Monitor

Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Dairy Spot Prices



Source: NMPF-USDEC, CME, NDPSR, Eurostat, EEX, GDT

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Cheese

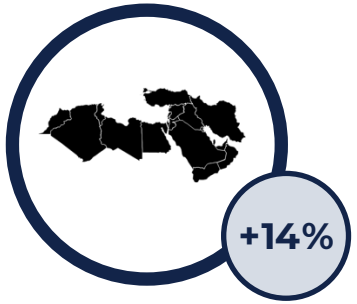
Cheese Market Commentary

KEY TAKEAWAYS

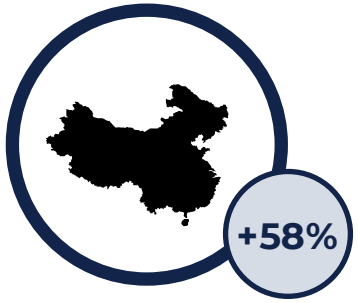
- **Global cheese trade was nothing short of phenomenal during 2025 as volumes smashed through previously held records. For the first time ever, annual shipments eclipsed the 3 million MT mark,** finally coming in at 3.011 million MT for the year. This represented a 7% increase over 2024's figure which, at the time, was the largest volume ever witnessed by a sizeable margin.
- A strong increase in December (+15%, +36,995 MT) capped off a year during which cheese trade grew during every month. In fact, volumes have now risen against prior year levels for 18 consecutive months, a simply astonishing feat. Even so, it is notable that December's increase in absolute terms was significantly larger than any other seen over the past year and a half. This strength at the finish line suggests that upbeat cheese trade is likely to persist into 2026.
- Once again, nearly every destination saw cheese volumes rise in December though the largest gain was posted by China (+58%, +9,085 MT), extending the trend seen in recent months.

Global Cheese Trade	+15.2%	+7.2%	+7.2%	+5.0%
	Dec YoY	YTD, Ending Dec	Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	3-Year CAGR

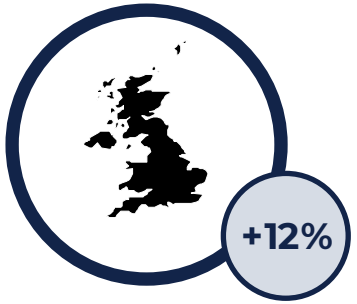
December Standout Markets



MENA
+4,769 MT



CHINA+HK
+9,085 MT



UNITED KINGDOM
+4,567 MT

KOREA
+3,997 MT

ADDITIONAL NOTES

By now this may seem a familiar refrain, but one of the most striking and encouraging characteristics of the cheese trade growth in 2025 was that it was truly driven by an incredibly broad cross section of geographies. Only two regions saw annual volumes fall last year – the U.S. (-2%, -2,717 MT) and South America (-6%, -9,042 MT) – both of which saw shipments slip at the hand of market-specific idiosyncrasies. Apart from these two cases, the fact that growth has been so widespread is a testament to the global consumer's growing appetite for cheese and bodes well for the future of the category. Notably some of the largest demand drivers on an annual basis were Asian regions such as China (+24%, +42,268 MT), SEA (+17%, +25,479 MT), and Korea (+18%, +24,166 MT). Since these are not places that leverage cheese in their traditional cuisines, their growth provides further proof that the proliferation of western diets combined with localization of application in these regions has provided a critical and incremental boost to global cheese trade volumes.

Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Cheese Market Commentary

LOOKING AHEAD

- It appears likely that with the global appetite for cheese continuing to accelerate, global cheese demand should remain buoyant in the coming months. As cheese becomes a fixture in an increasing number of global diets and the global population continues to expand, **the fundamentals appear poised to continue supporting cheese demand into the future.**
- Favorable pricing is also likely to continue motivating an upbeat tempo for global trade. Even as cheese prices across the globe have rallied in recent weeks, they remain affordable compared to both recent historical values as well as to other sources of protein. Deteriorating geopolitics and the ensuing possibility of higher inflation could dampen some of this buying enthusiasm, but nevertheless, the overall tone remains positive.
- **The U.S. remains particularly well positioned to satisfy growing global cheese demand into the future.** With milk production on the rise and cheese production capacity at the ready, the U.S. is likely to see its cheese exports continue to expand substantively in the coming months and years.

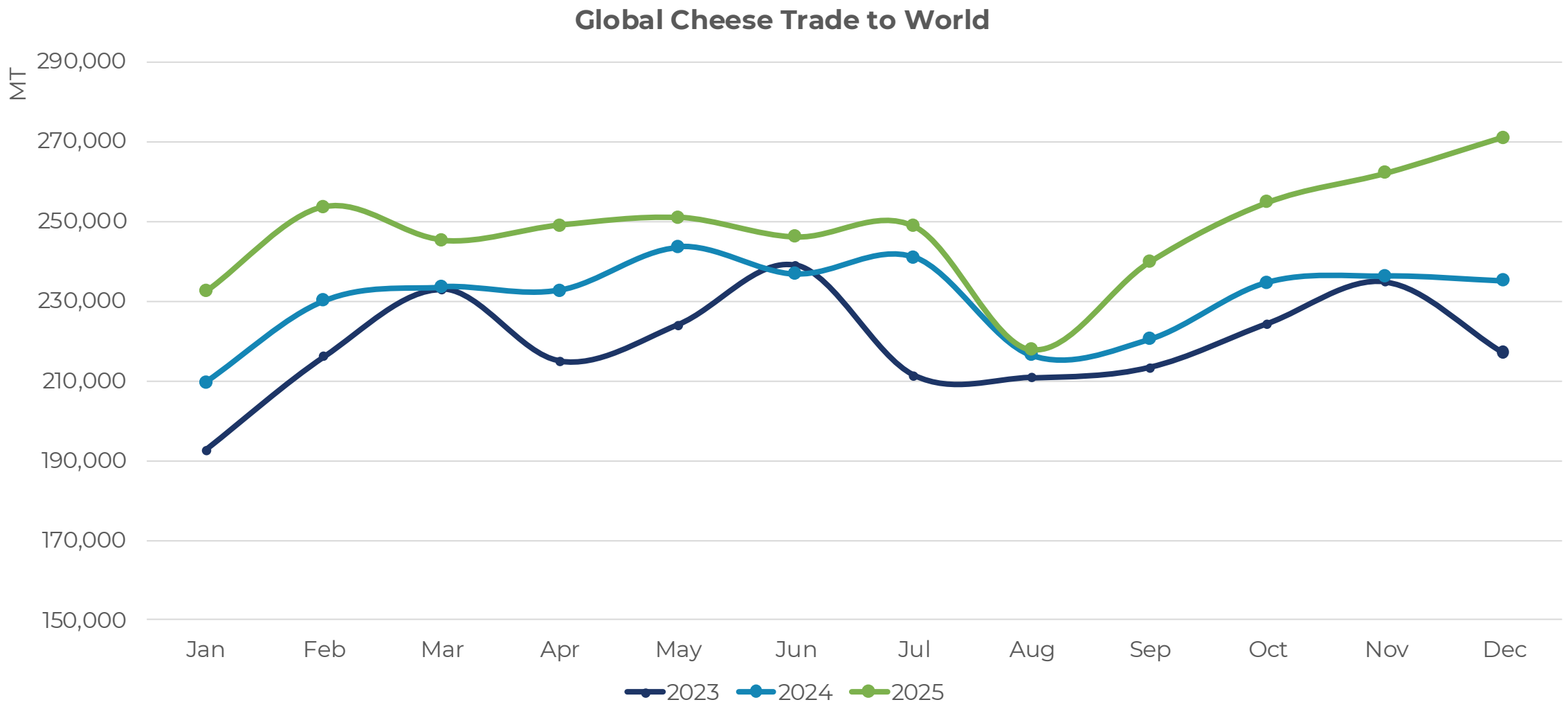
U.S. Cheese Exports	**+24%** Dec YoY	**+20.5%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+20.5%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+6.4%** 3-Year CAGR
EU Cheese Exports	**+17.3%** Dec YoY	**+2.8%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+2.8%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+0.9%** 3-Year CAGR
NZ Cheese Exports	**+10%** Dec YoY	**+13.8%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+13.8%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+4.4%** 3-Year CAGR

Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: Cheese

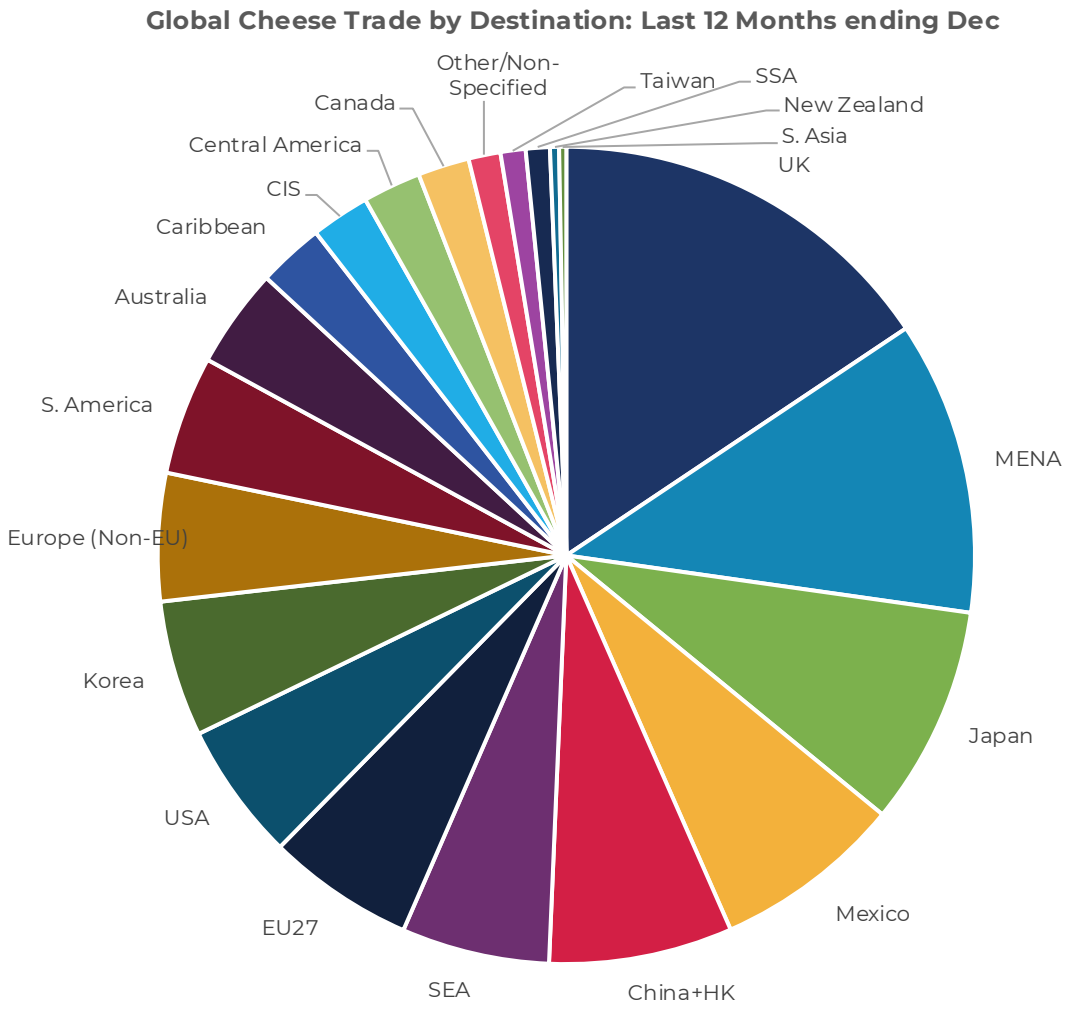
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

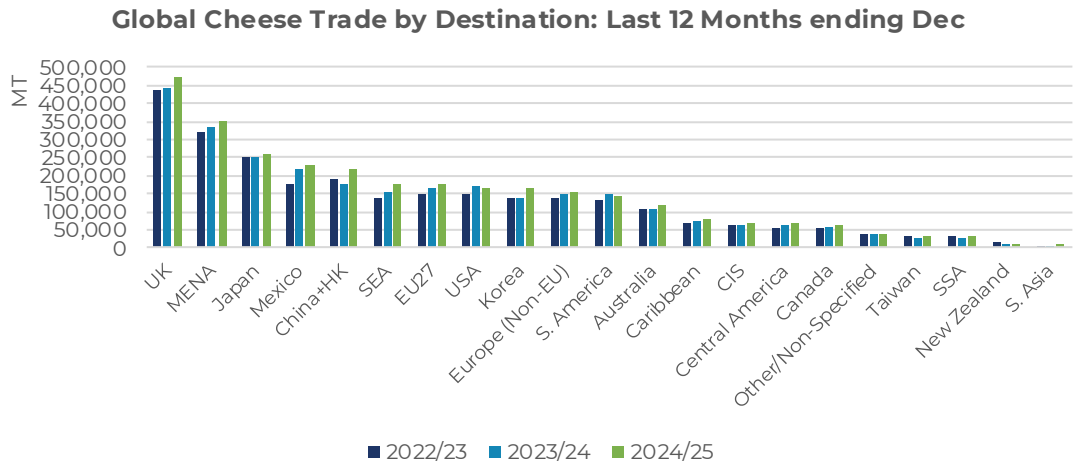
Global Overview: Cheese

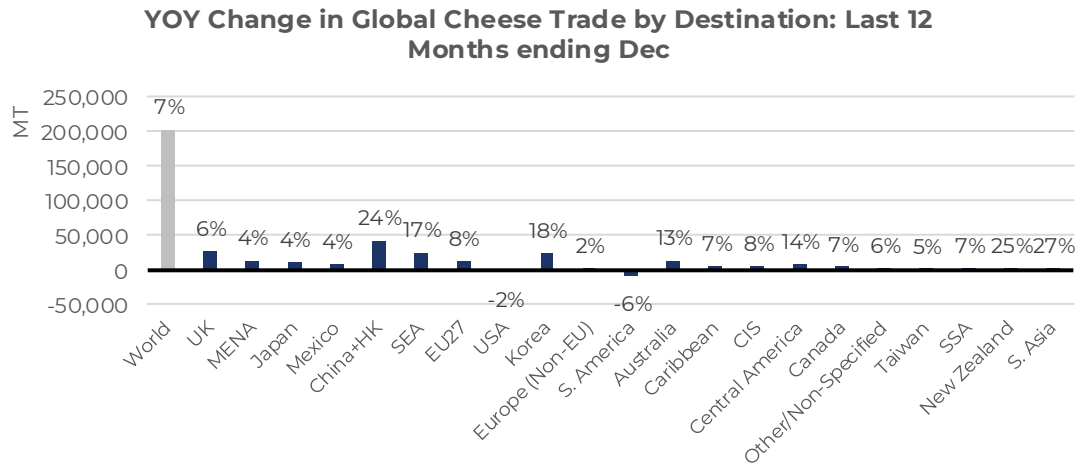


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: Cheese – Last 12 Months

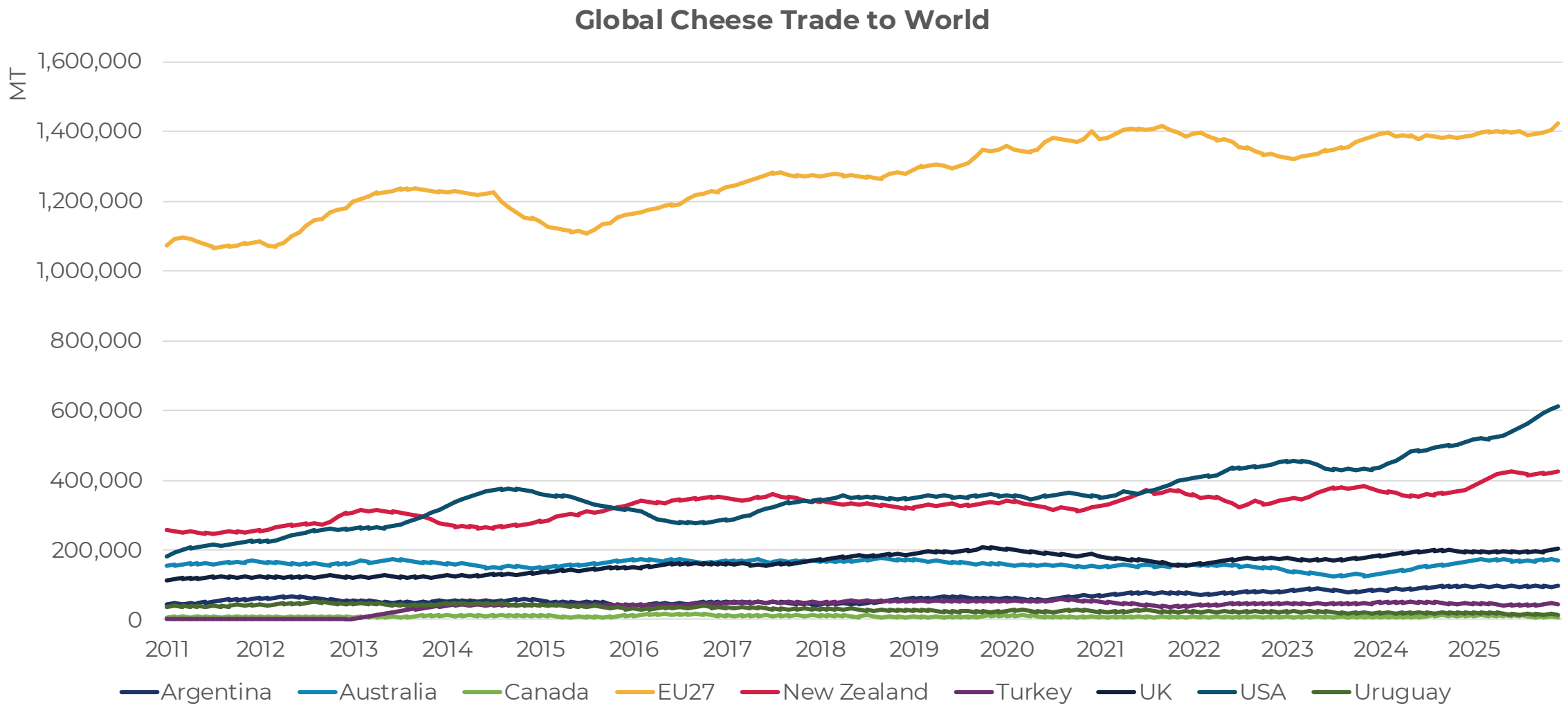






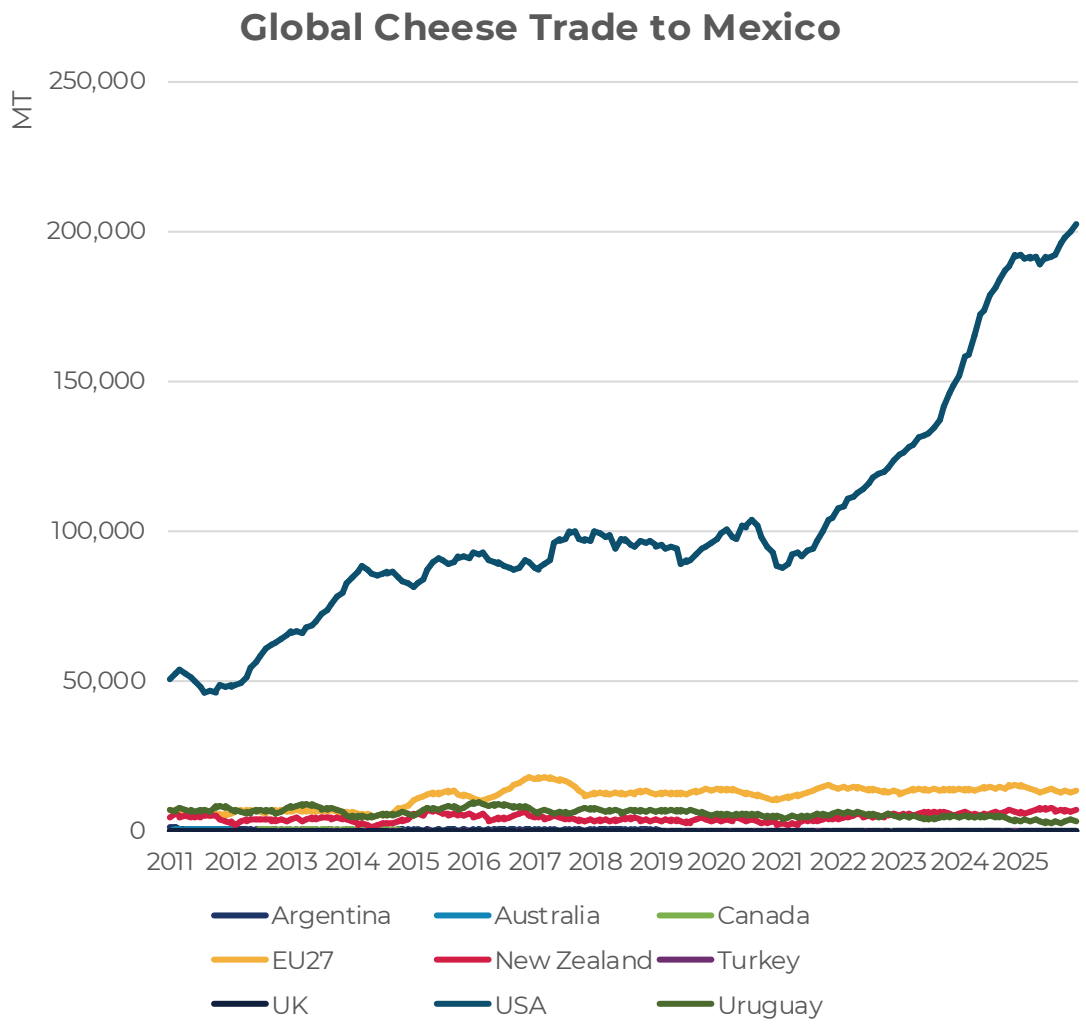
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

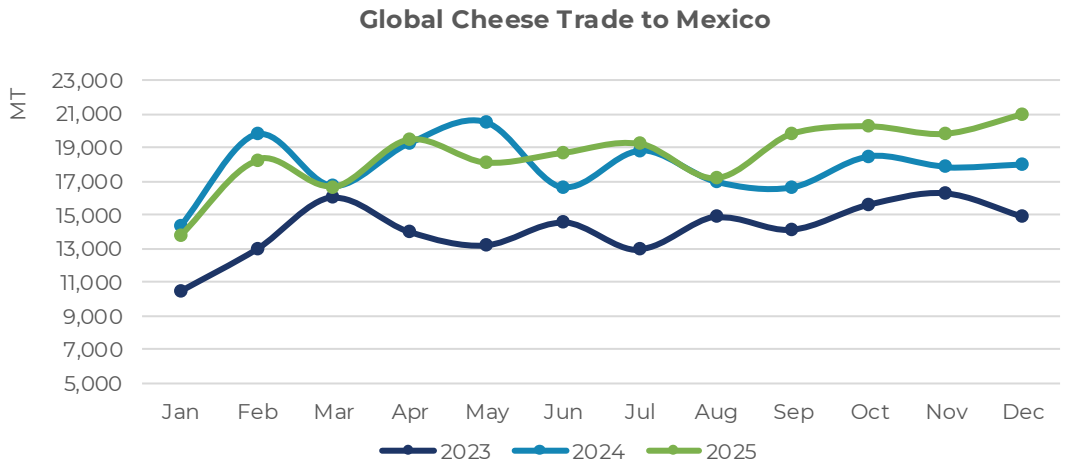
Trade Flows: Cheese



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

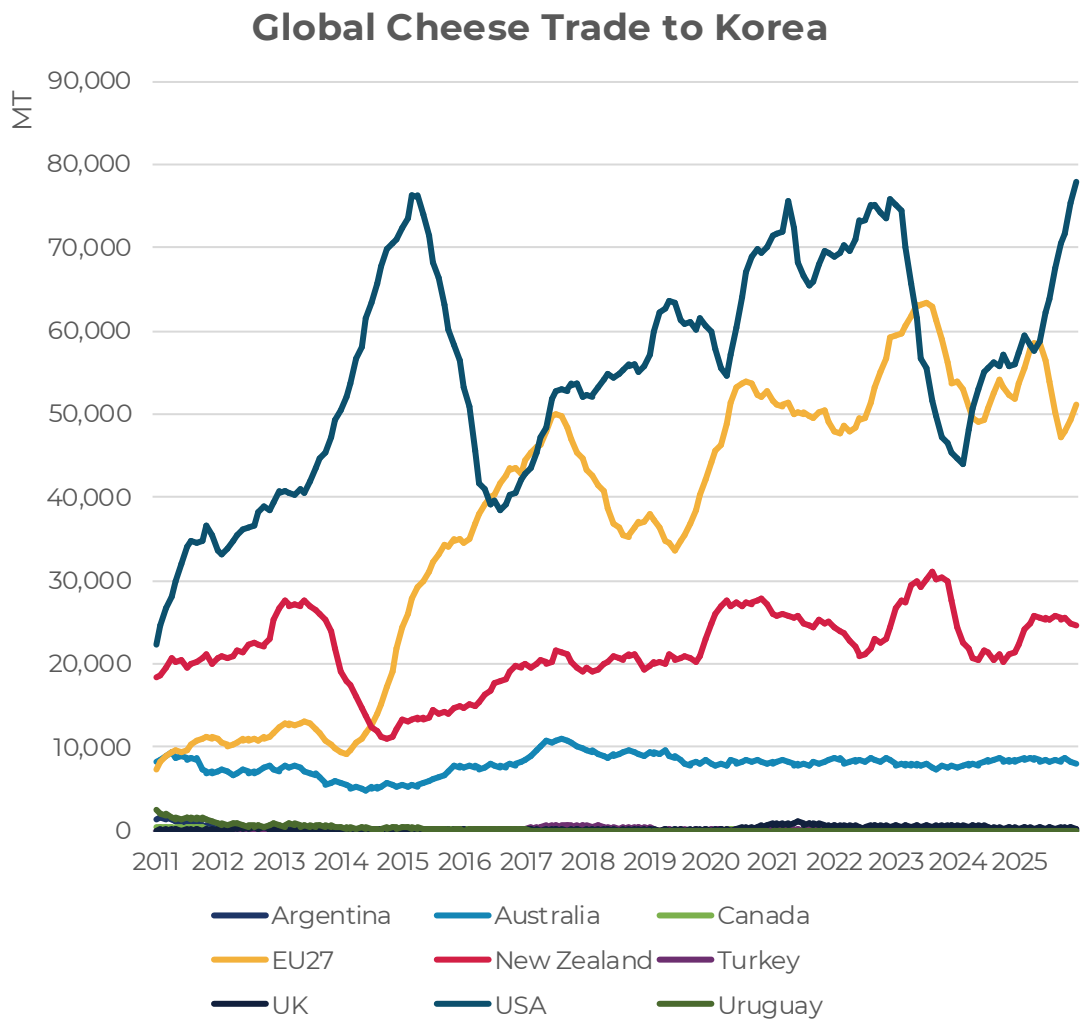
Mexico

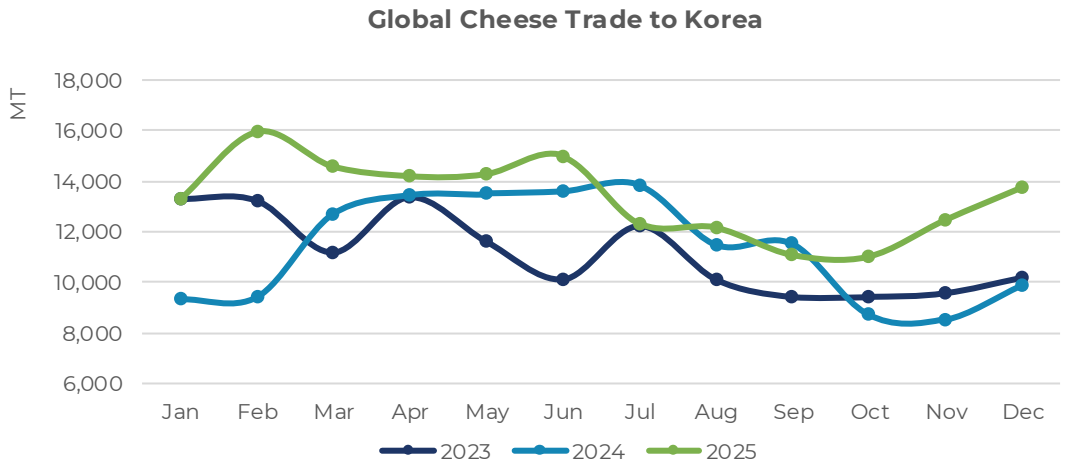




Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

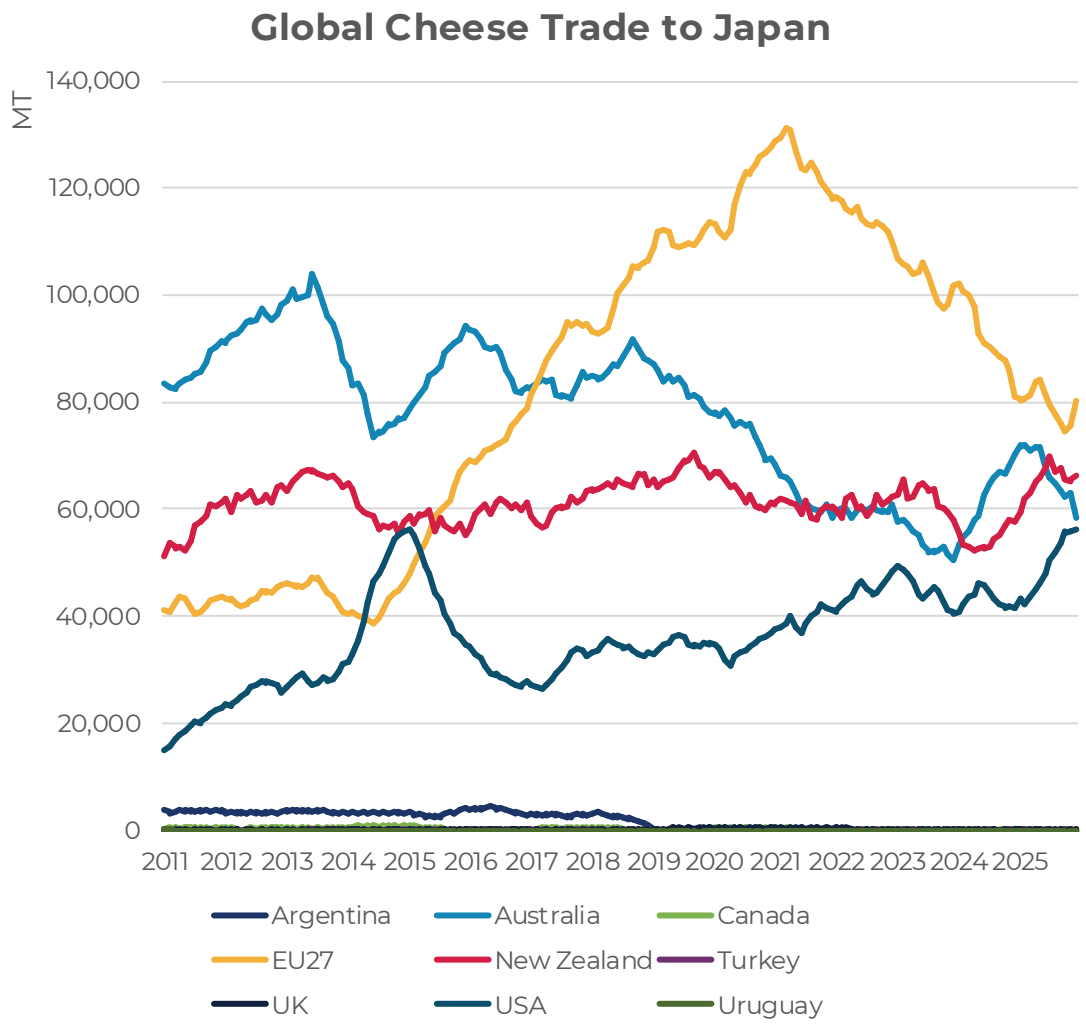
Korea

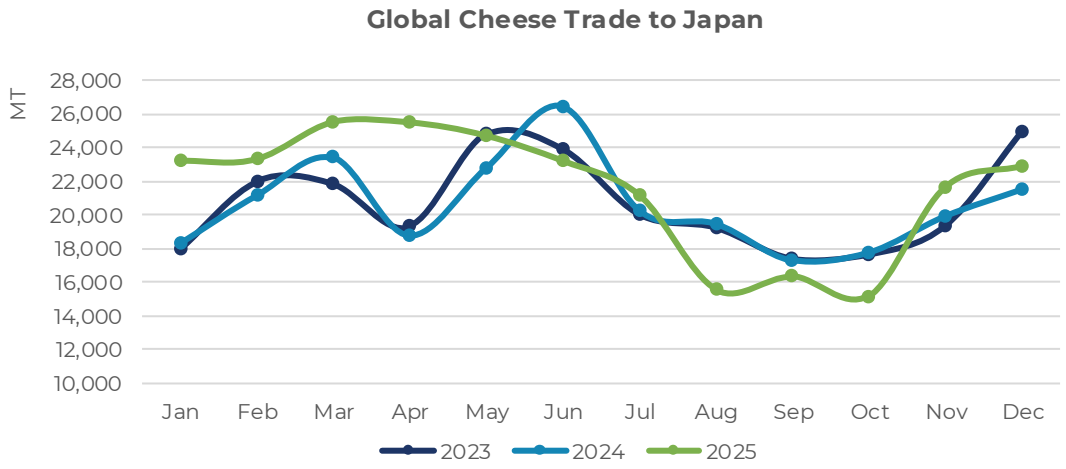


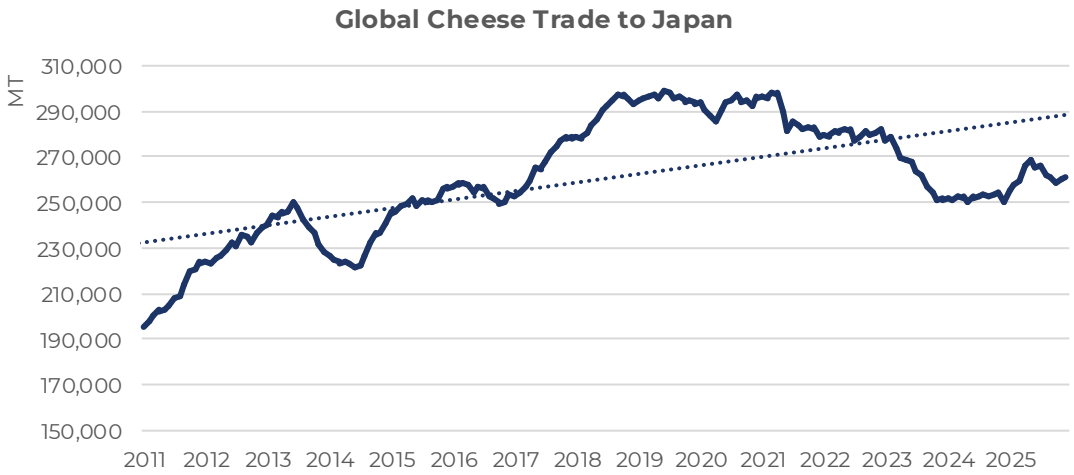


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Japan

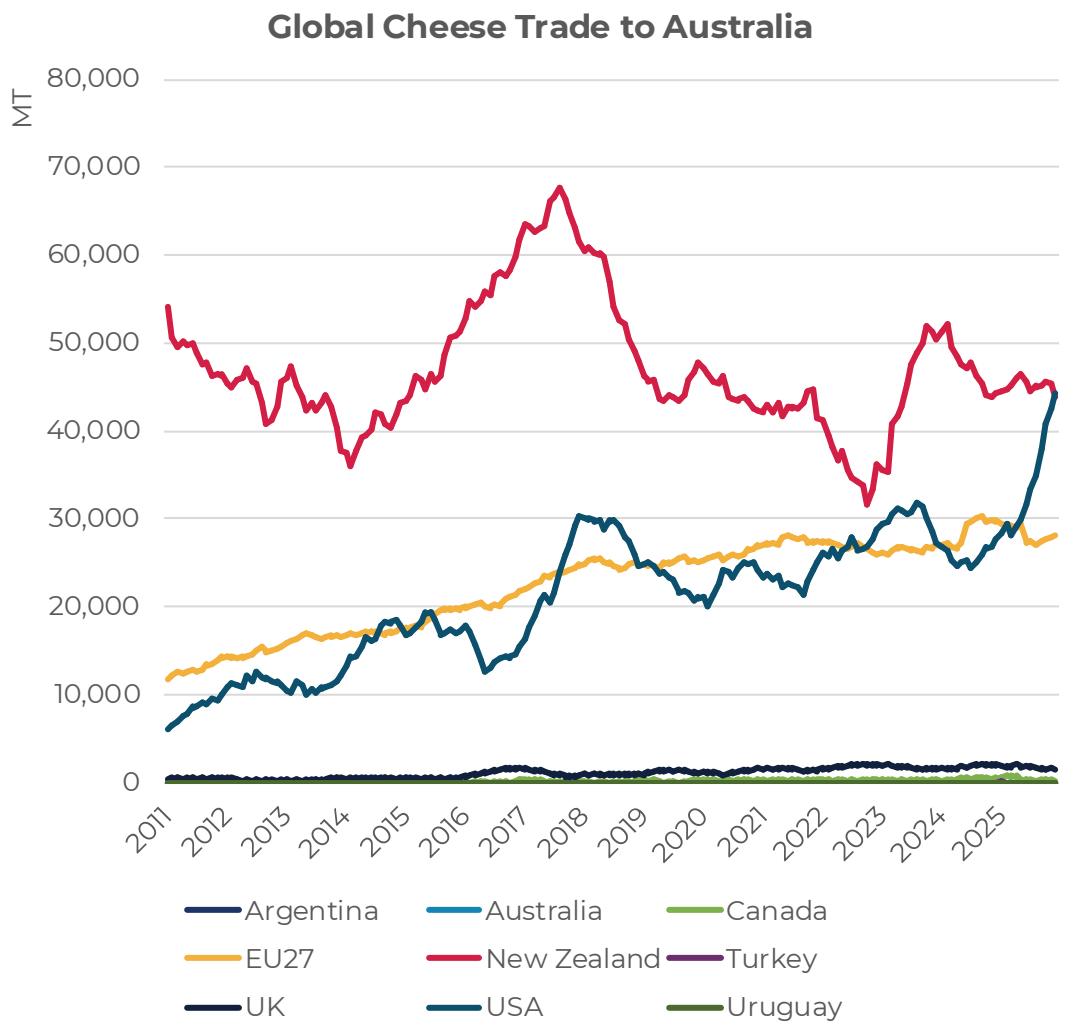


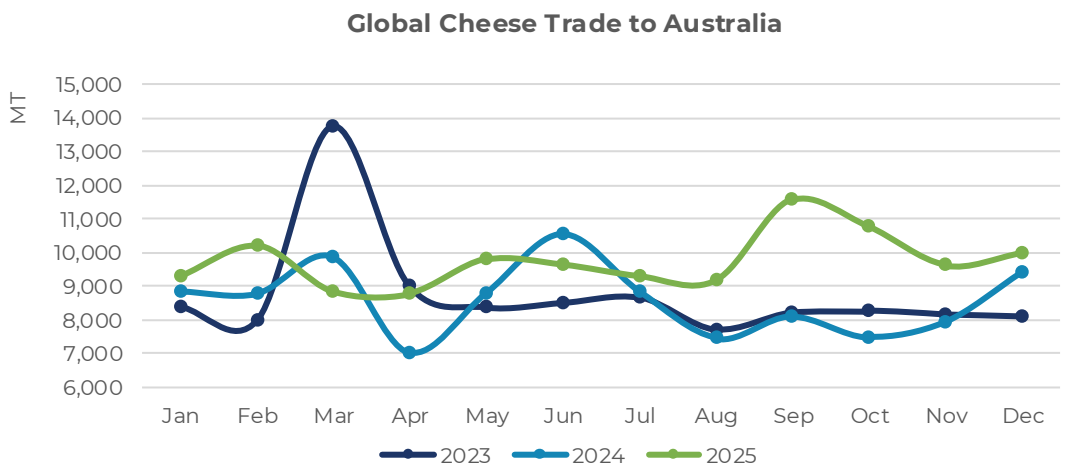


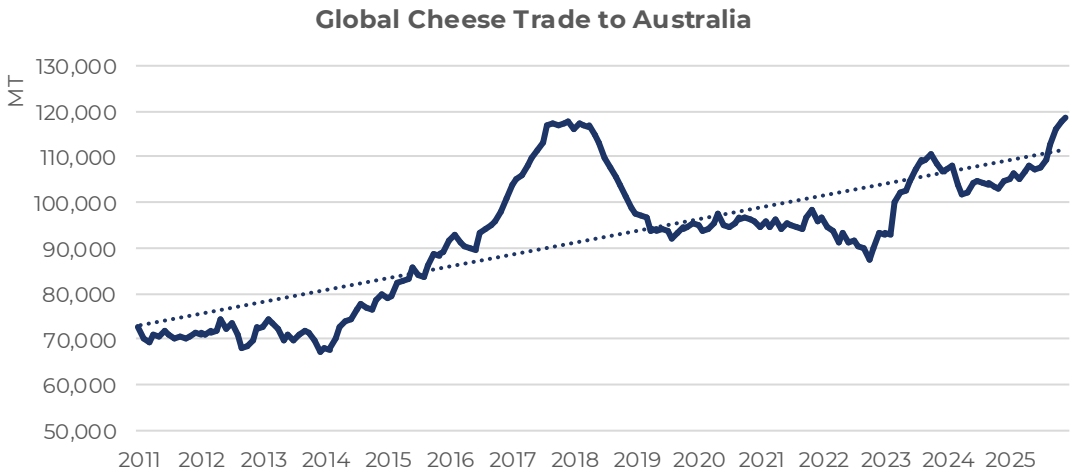


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Australia

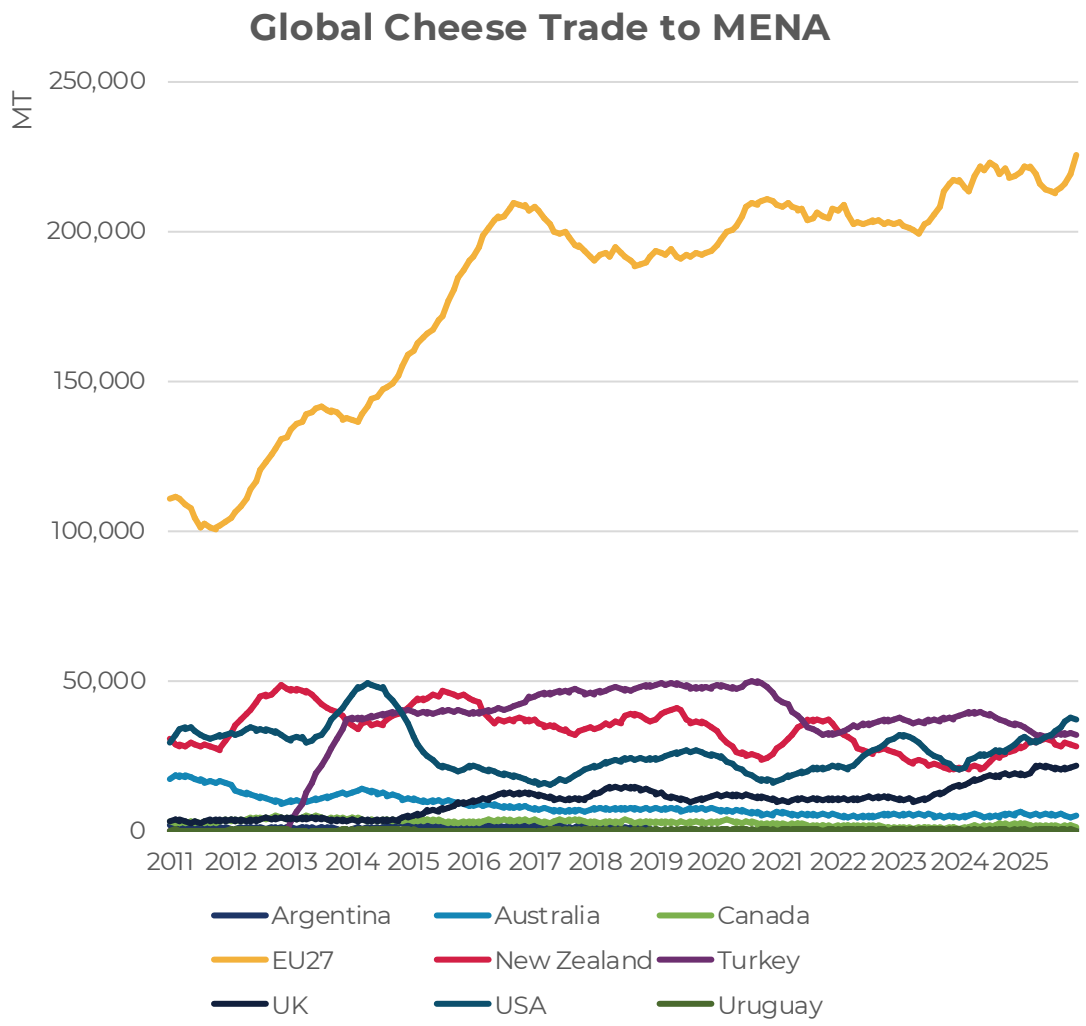


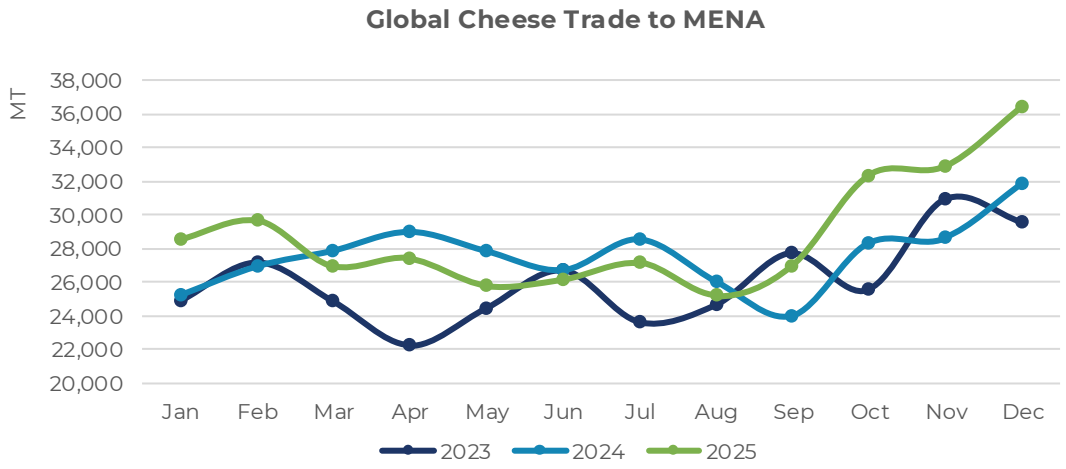


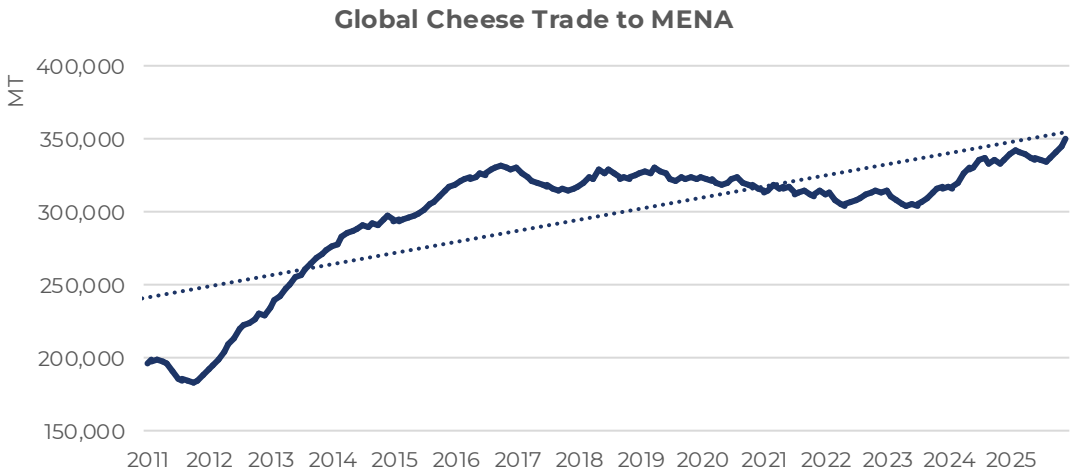


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

MENA

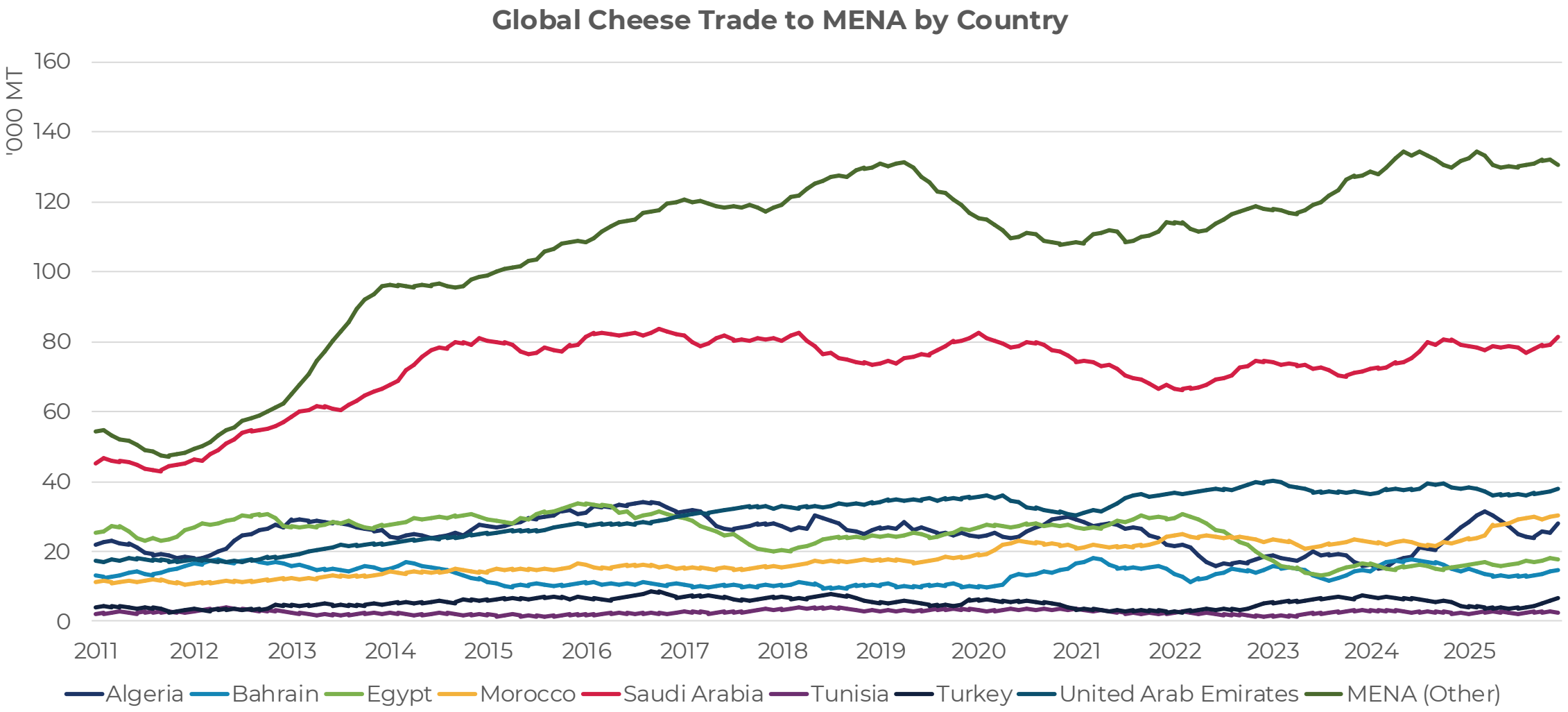






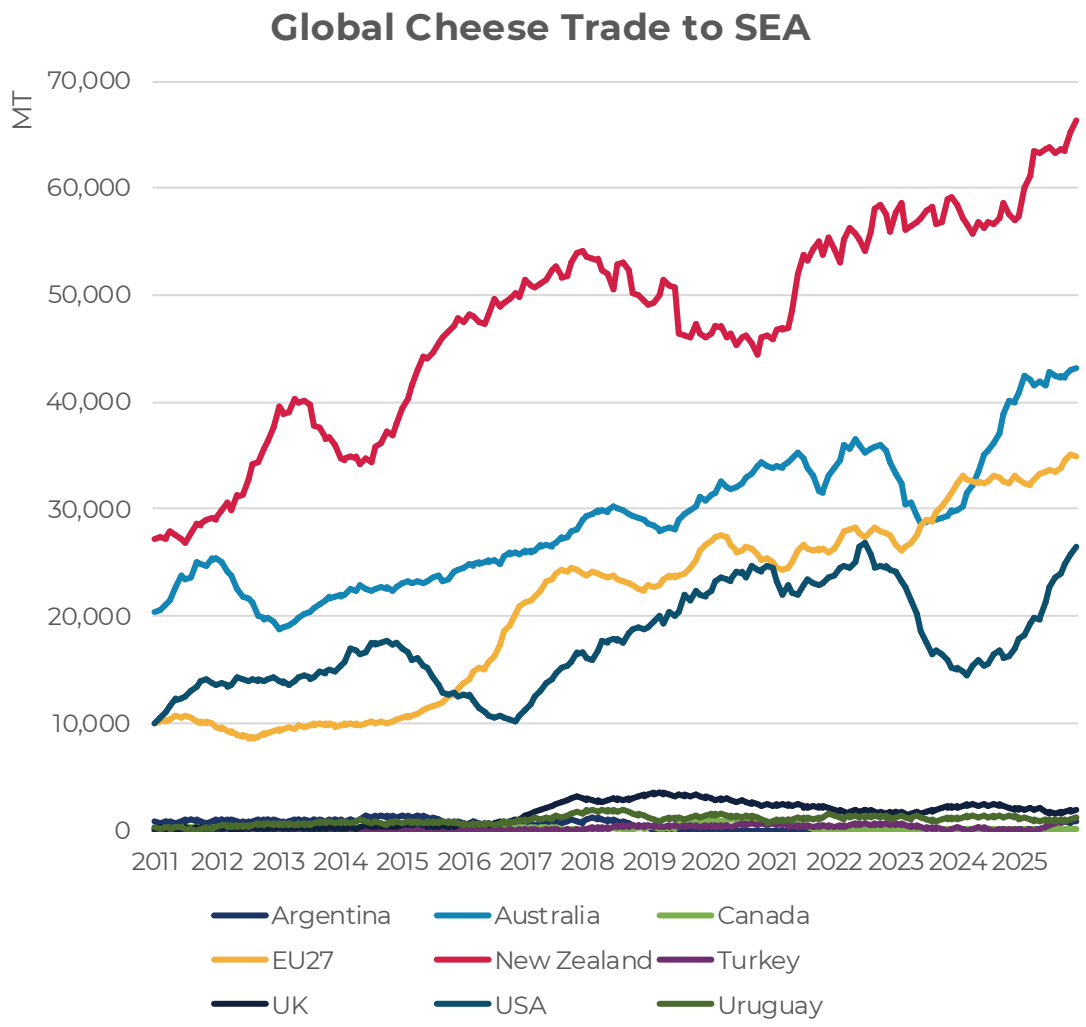
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

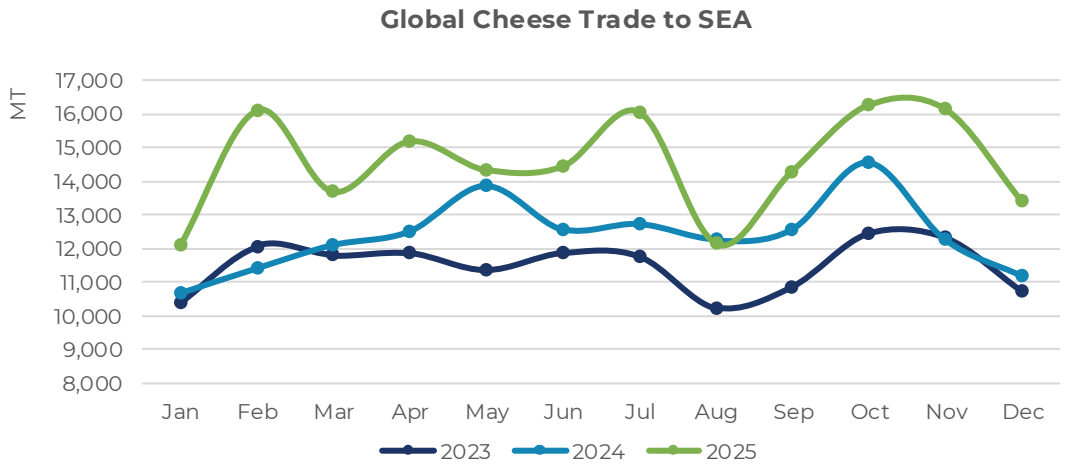
Middle East-North Africa Country Breakdown

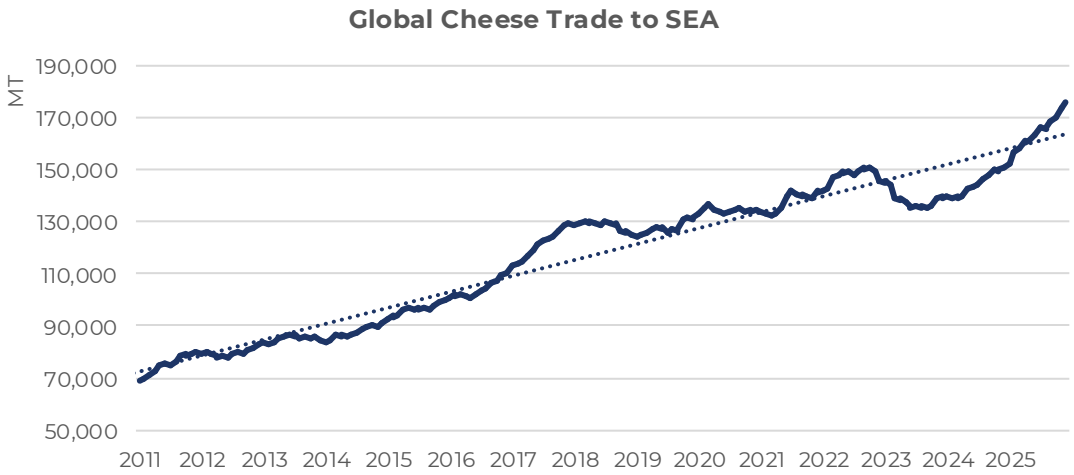


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Southeast Asia

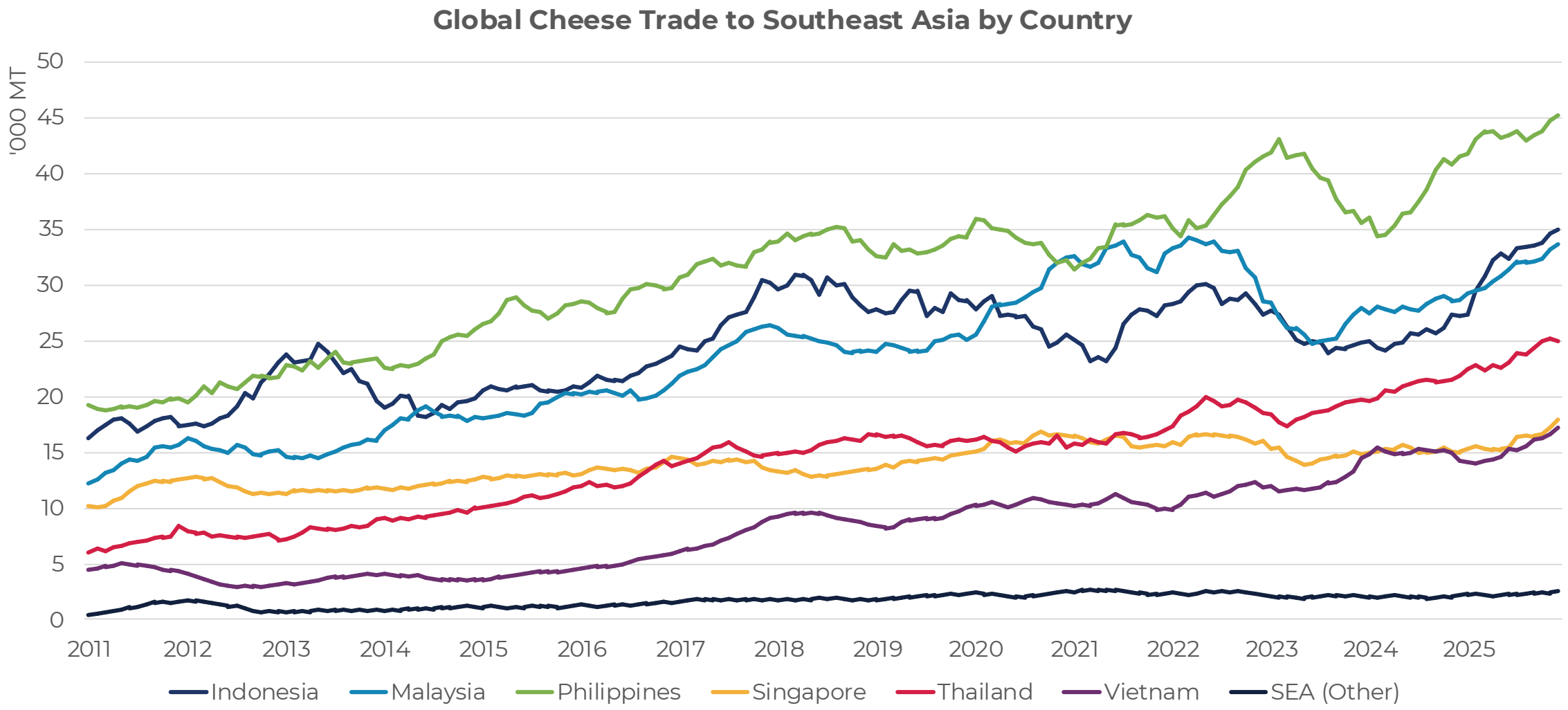






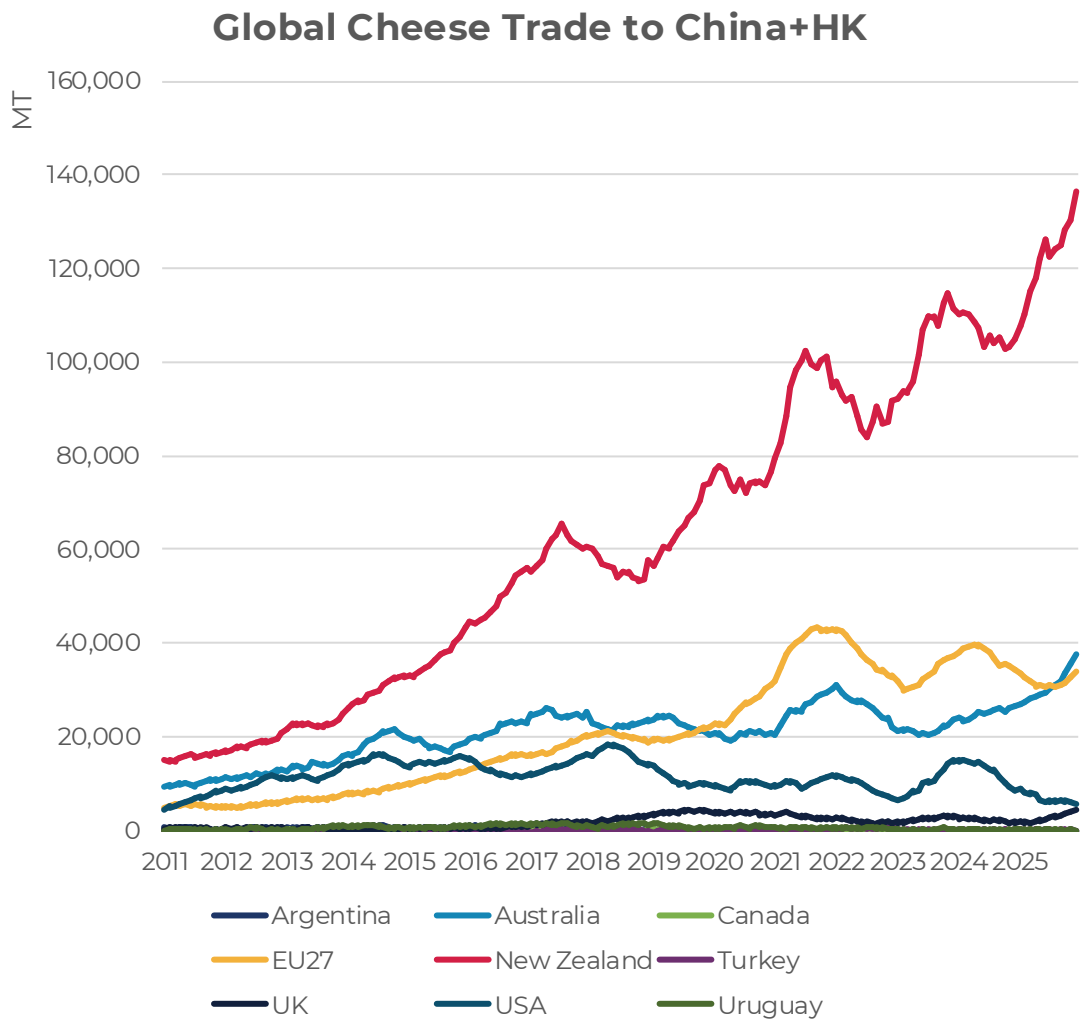
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Southeast Asia Country Breakdown



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

China



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

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NFDM/SMP

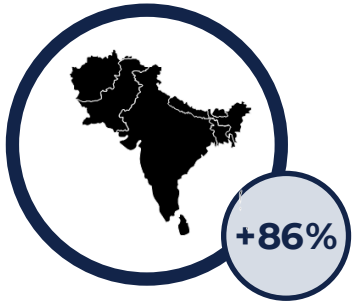
NFDM/SMP Market Commentary

KEY TAKEAWAYS

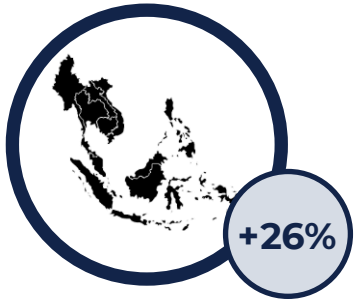
- A bump in milk powder demand at the eleventh hour delivered a (barely) positive result for NFDM/SMP trade during 2025. Trade of NFDM/SMP wobbled over most of the year. Between January and September, cumulative trade was running 2% (-35,969 MT) behind prior year levels. But a cumulative 12% (+66,894 MT) increase during the fourth quarter represented an abrupt reversal of fortunes.
- **The 2.227 million MT of NFDM/SMP that circulated the globe in 2025 indeed represented a 1% (+30,925 MT) increase over 2024's depressed levels, but volumes remain well shy of the peaks notched several years prior. In fact, 2025's volume was only the fifth largest ever recorded.**
- A dramatic uptick in buying from MENA in December (+47%, +16,902 MT – See Additional Notes) underpinned the monthly increase though SEA's strength (+26%, +13,733 MT) also contributed greatly to the increase. China's purchases of milk powder remain underwhelming (-35%, -11,519 MT) as the country seemingly relies on domestic production for its basic commodity needs.

Global NFDM/SMP Trade	+13.1%	+1.4%	+1.4%	+0.1%
	Dec YoY	YTD, Ending Dec	Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	3-Year CAGR

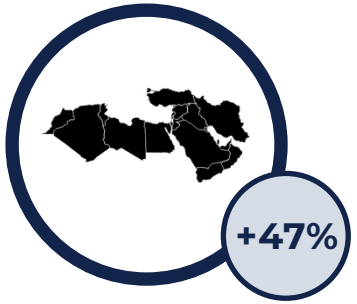
December Standout Markets



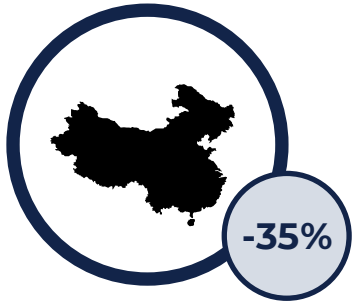
SOUTH ASIA
+2,739 MT



SOUTHEAST ASIA
+13,733 MT



MENA
+16,902 MT



CHINA+HK
-11,519 MT

ADDITIONAL NOTES

MENA is a crucial buyer of NFDM/SMP, accounting for 22% of global trade of the commodity in 2025. The region has a reputation for being highly price sensitive and when it does step in to buy, it does so in great volume. During the final quarter of 2025 regional demand for NFDM/SMP surged 33% (+37,744 MT) though this was insufficient to compensate for losses earlier in the year as annual trade to the region ended 7% (-38,002 MT) below prior year. But while MENA provided an important boost to the market in late 2025, the situation has become increasingly fraught as intensifying geopolitical tensions in the region threaten to weigh heavily on dairy demand. Stakeholders in MENA share that food manufacturers are keen to build stocks to insulate against future disturbances. But with crucial trade routes being disrupted and freight rates soaring, the possibility to do so is limited. Demand is also likely to take a hit as consumers cautiously rein in spending and oil revenues to the region tumble.

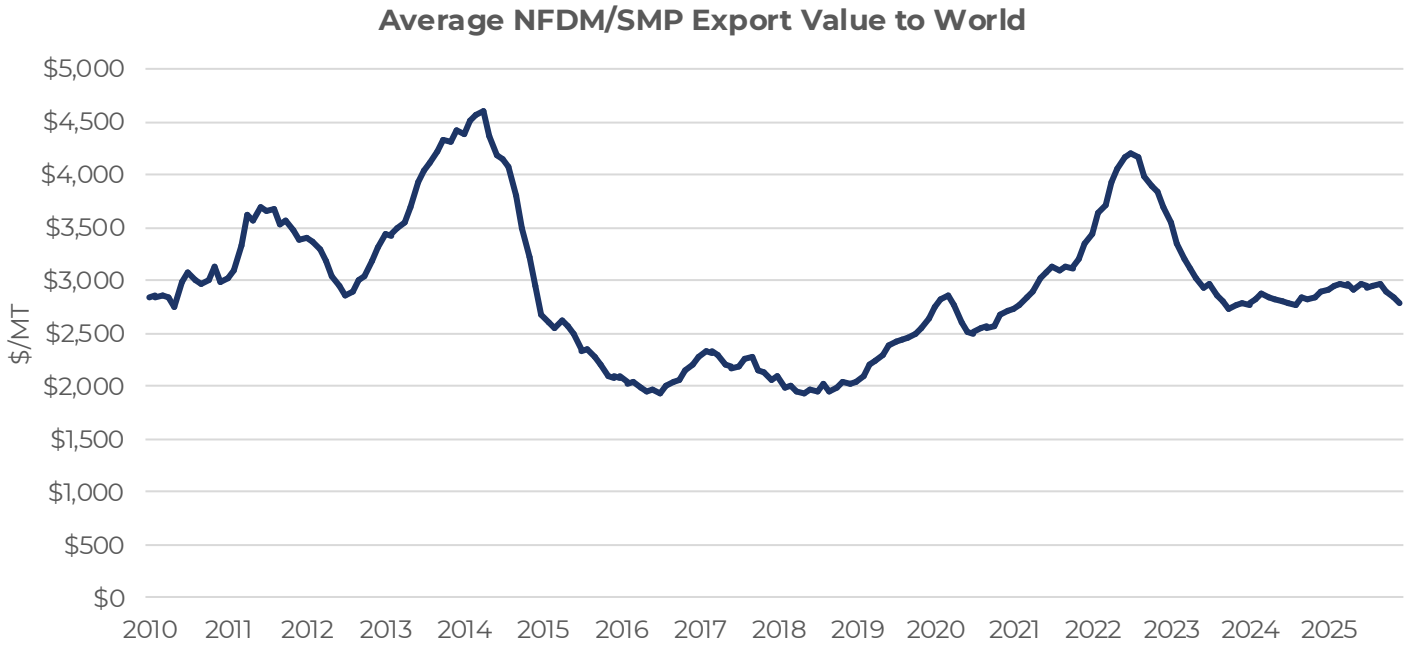
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

NFDM/SMP Market Commentary

LOOKING AHEAD

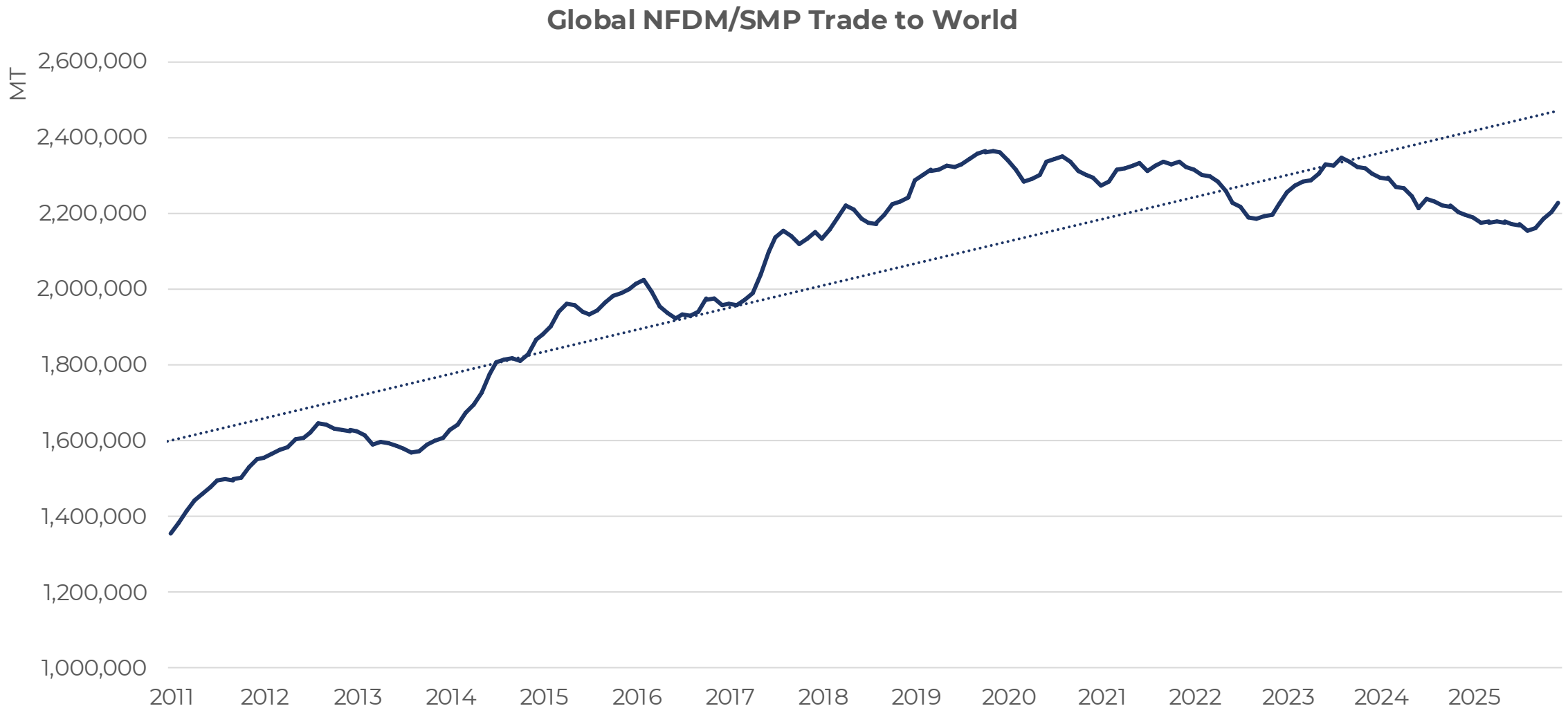
- Though the final quarter of 2025 was an encouraging one for NFDM/SMP trade, it doesn't feel like it has been sufficient for the market to shake off its funk. Furthermore, the bump in buying occurred when powder prices were at their lows. With prices having appreciated significantly in recent weeks, it seems unlikely that the enthusiasm exhibited late in 2025 will stretch into the new year.
- The risks facing the outlook tied to the conflict in the Middle East are also very real and have the potential to dampen demand. Most obviously this may occur in MENA, but economic malaise and the effects of rising inflation will almost certainly bleed into other markets, as well. As a product that is particularly susceptible to economic shifts, the fallout from the conflict is likely to affect NFDM/SMP trade more than other products.
- NFDM/SMP trade is going through transition. Both from suppliers, that are redeploying skim solids to other uses, as well as users, who are facing economic pressures and are also seeking alternative products to meet their needs. These long-term questions are likely to continue to roil the market over 2026.

U.S. NFDM/SMP Exports	**+18%** Dec YoY	**-9.0%** YTD, Ending Dec	**-9.0%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**-3.1%** 3-Year CAGR
EU NFDM/SMP Exports	**+28.3%** Dec YoY	**+11.7%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+11.7%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+3.8%** 3-Year CAGR
NZ NFDM/SMP Exports	**+0.04%** Dec YoY	**-4.9%** YTD, Ending Dec	**-4.9%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**-1.7%** 3-Year CAGR



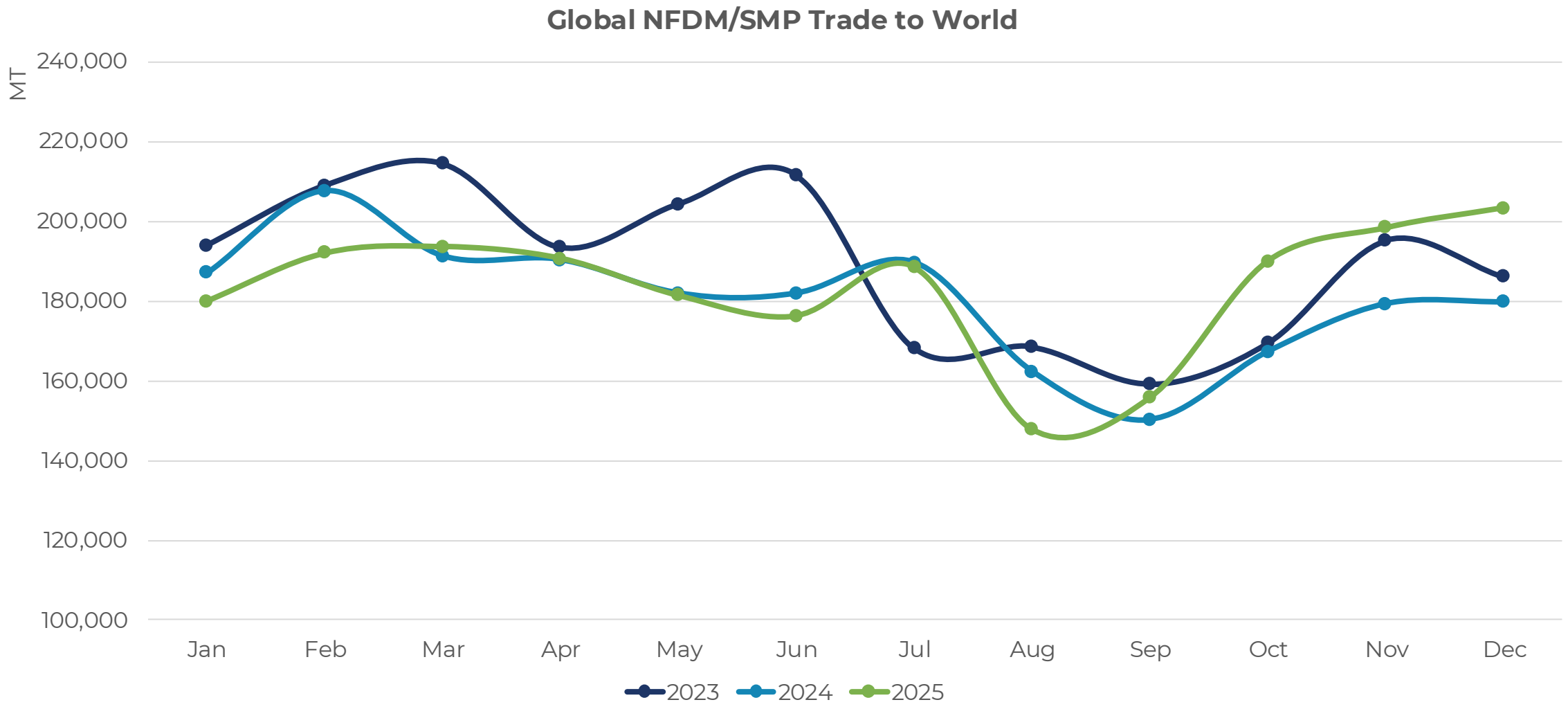
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: NFDM/SMP



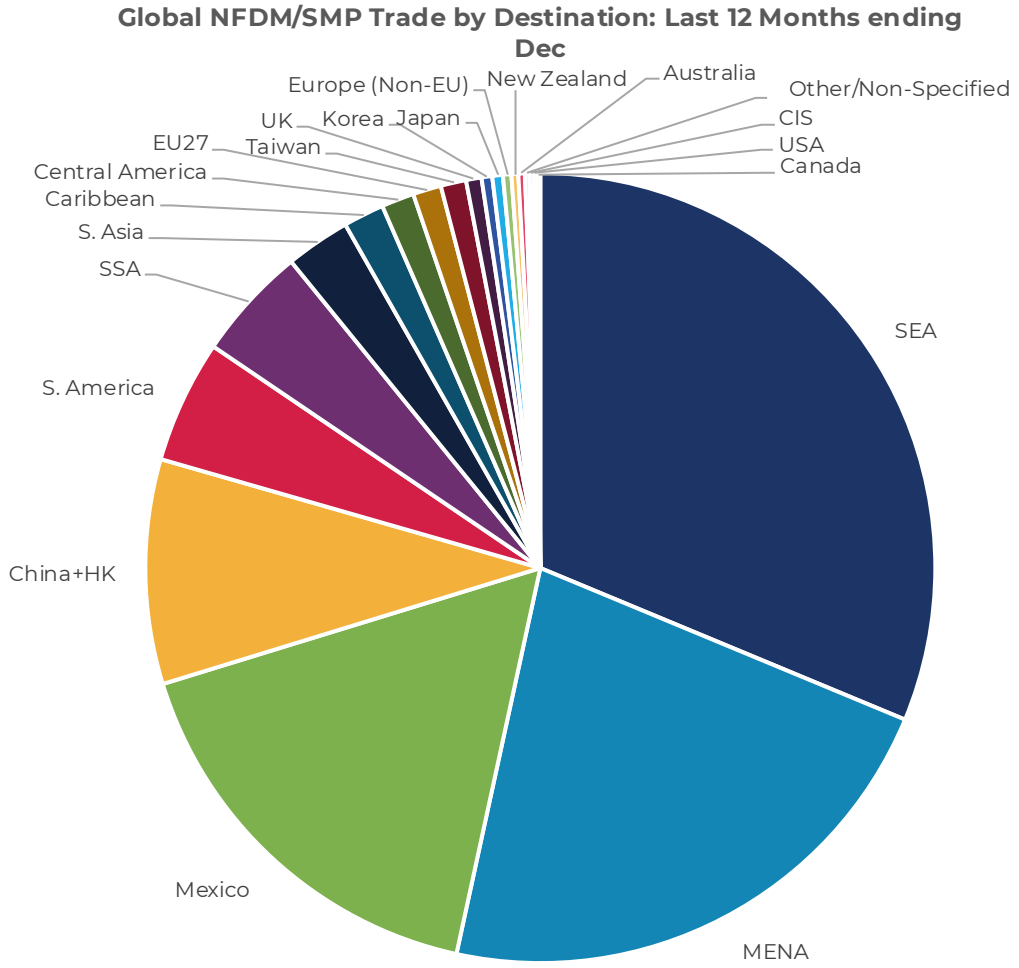
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

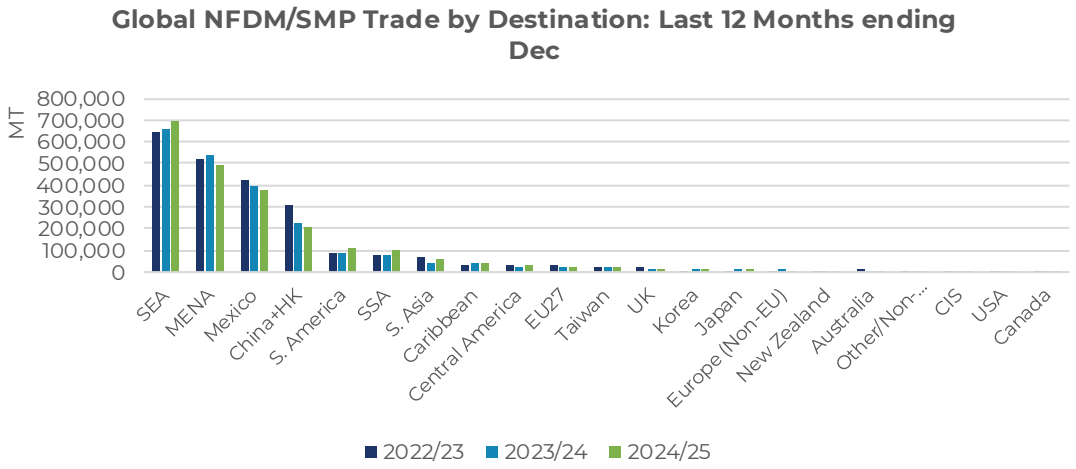
Global Overview: NFDM/SMP

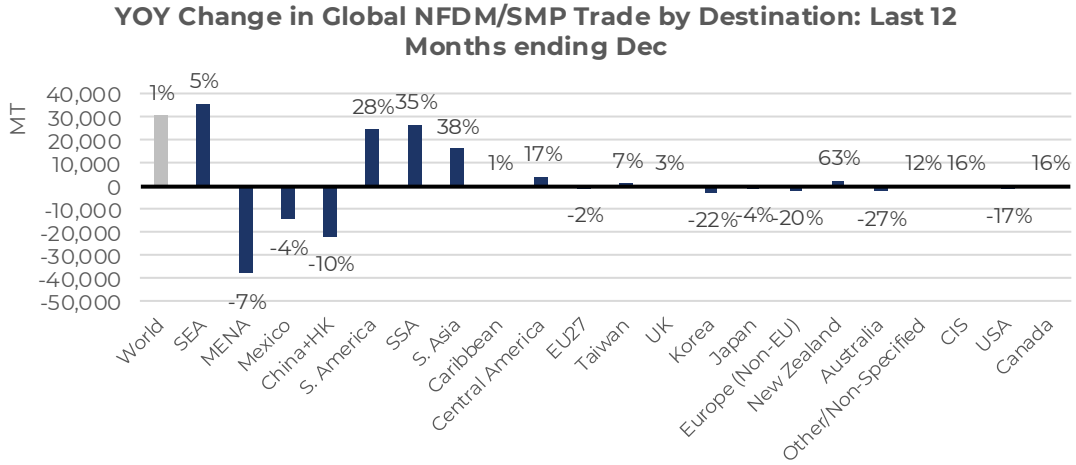


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: NFDM/SMP – Last 12 Months

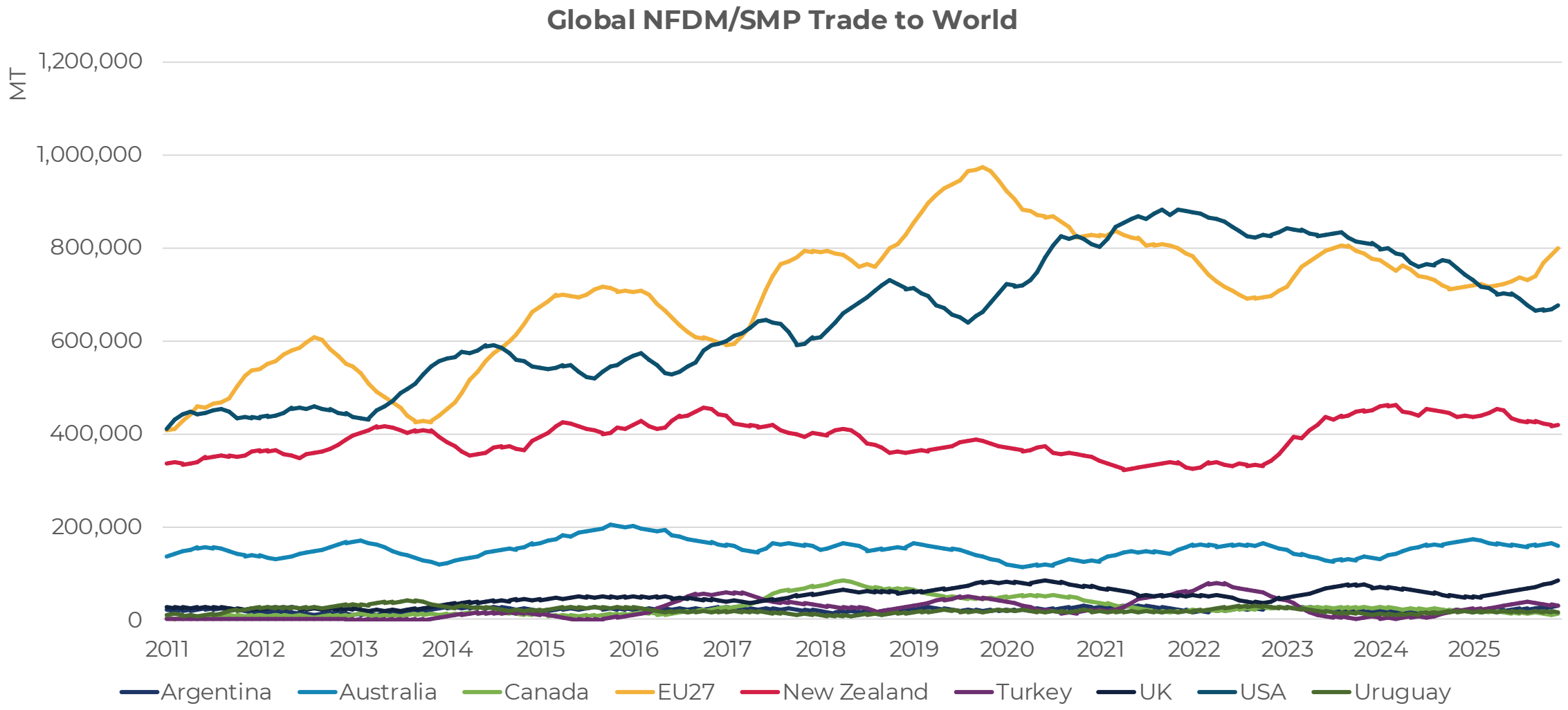






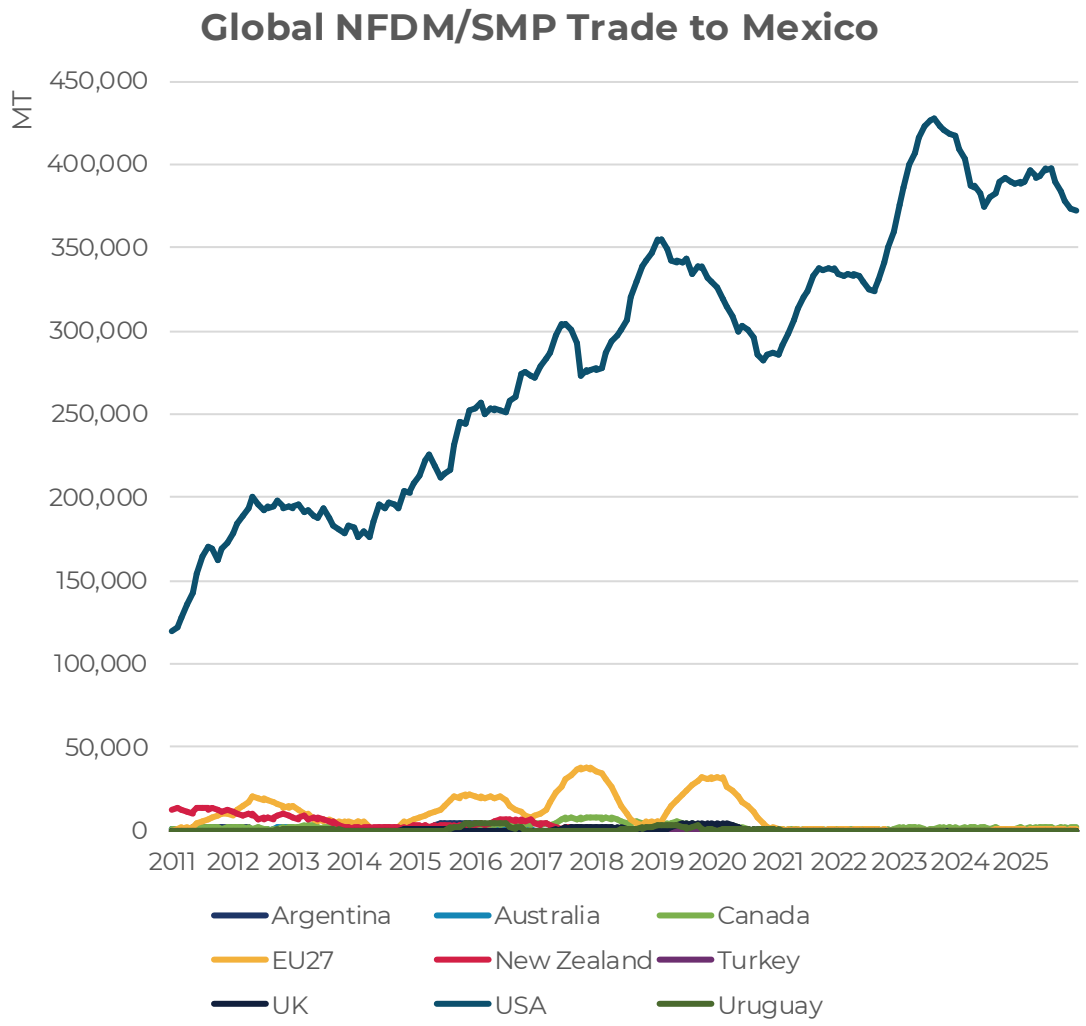
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

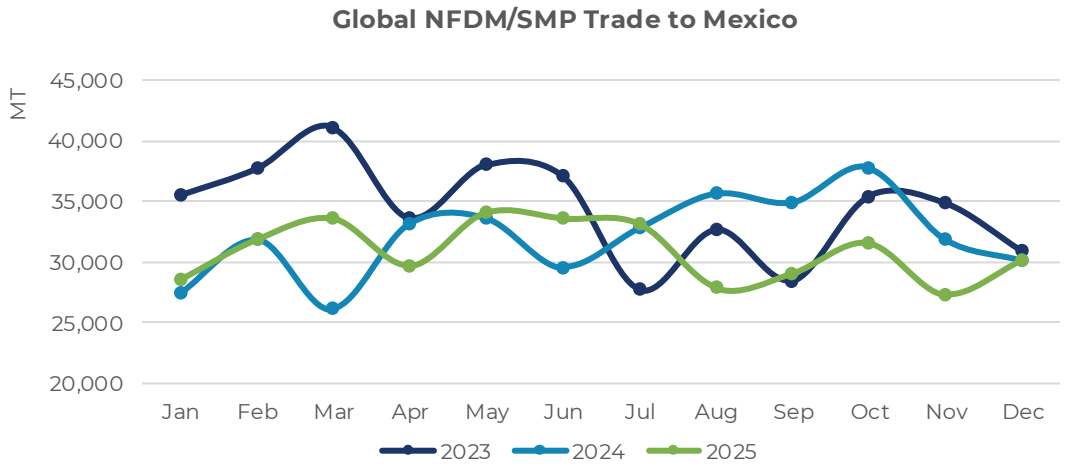
Trade Flows: NFDM/SMP

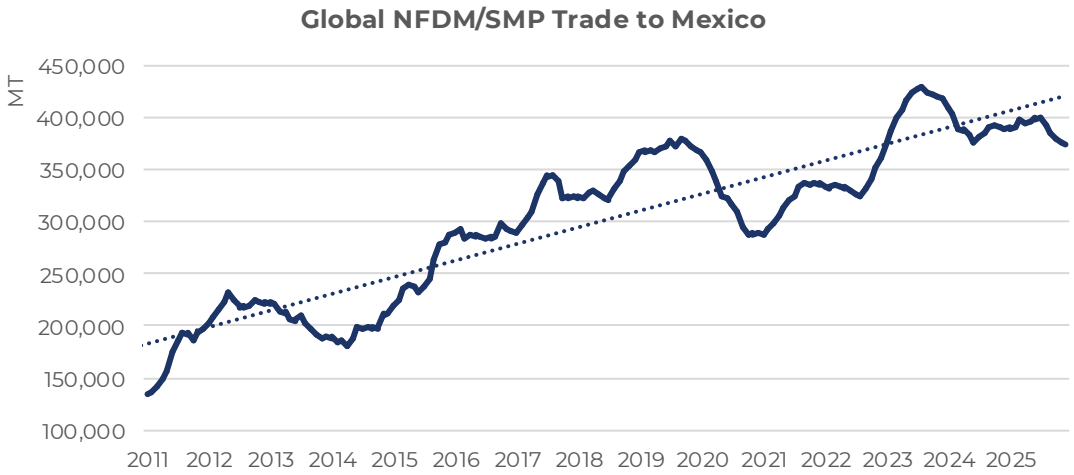


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Mexico

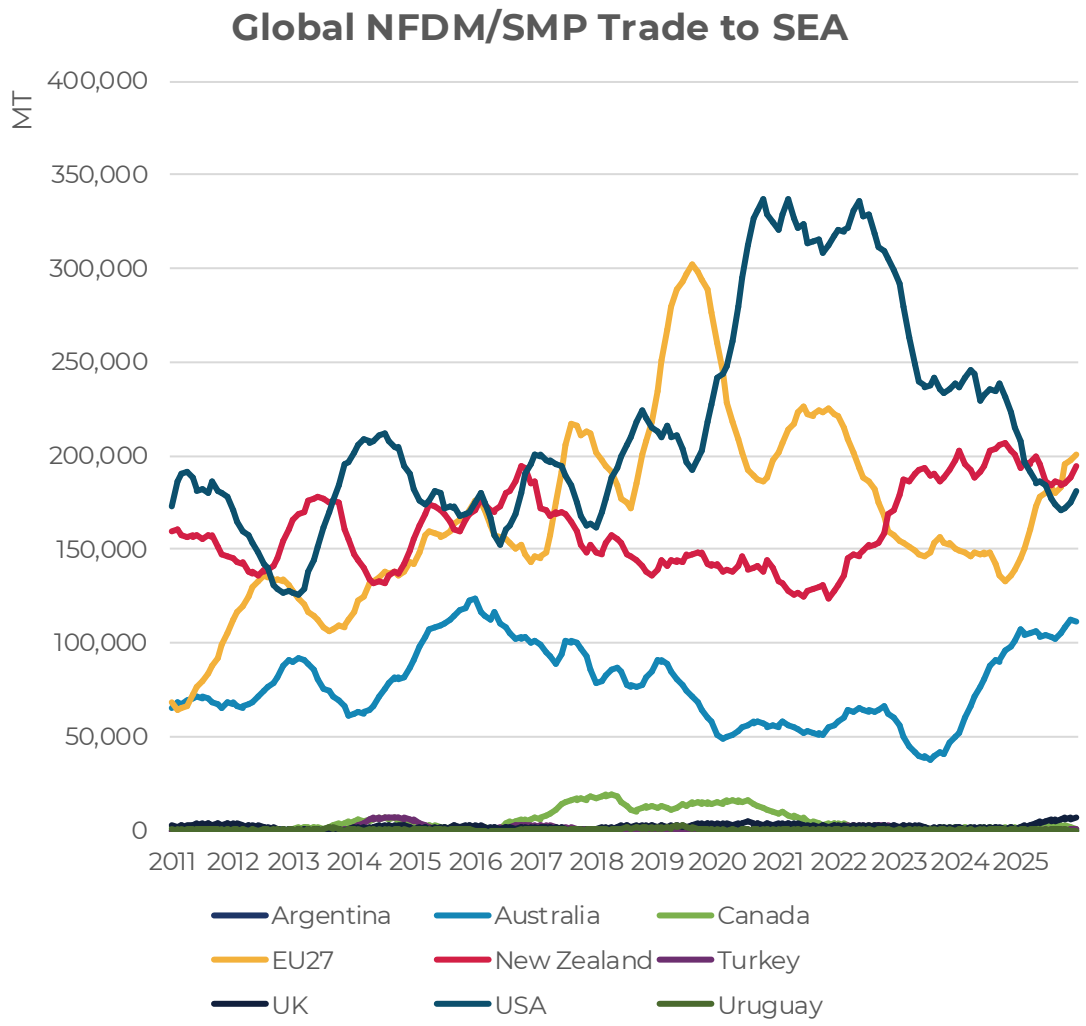


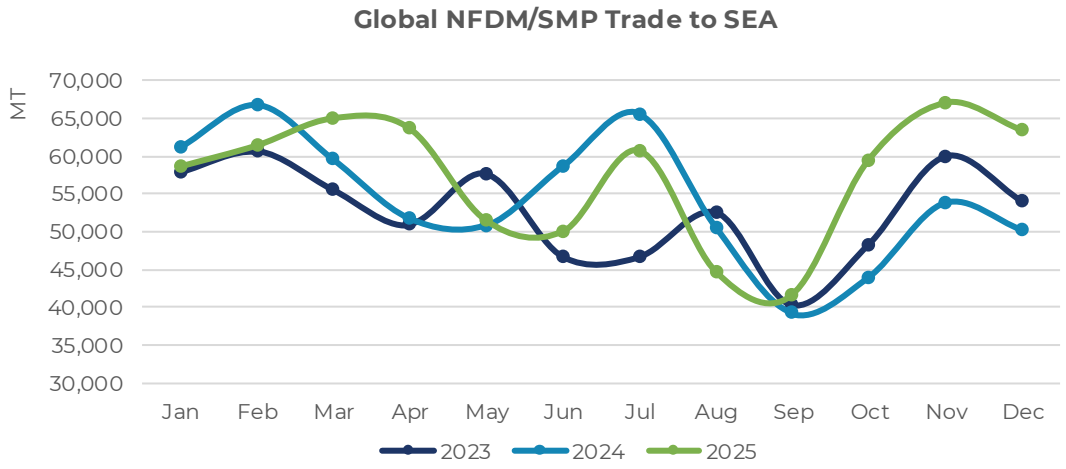


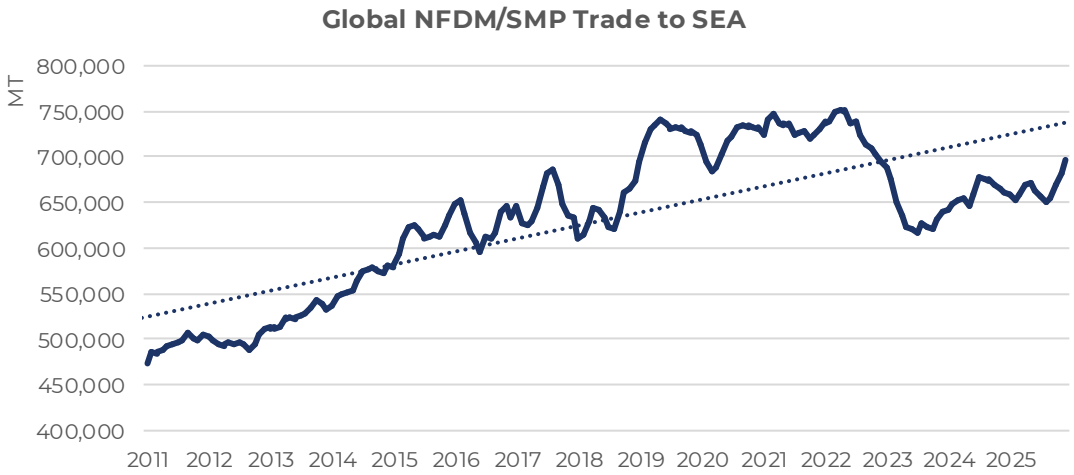


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Southeast Asia

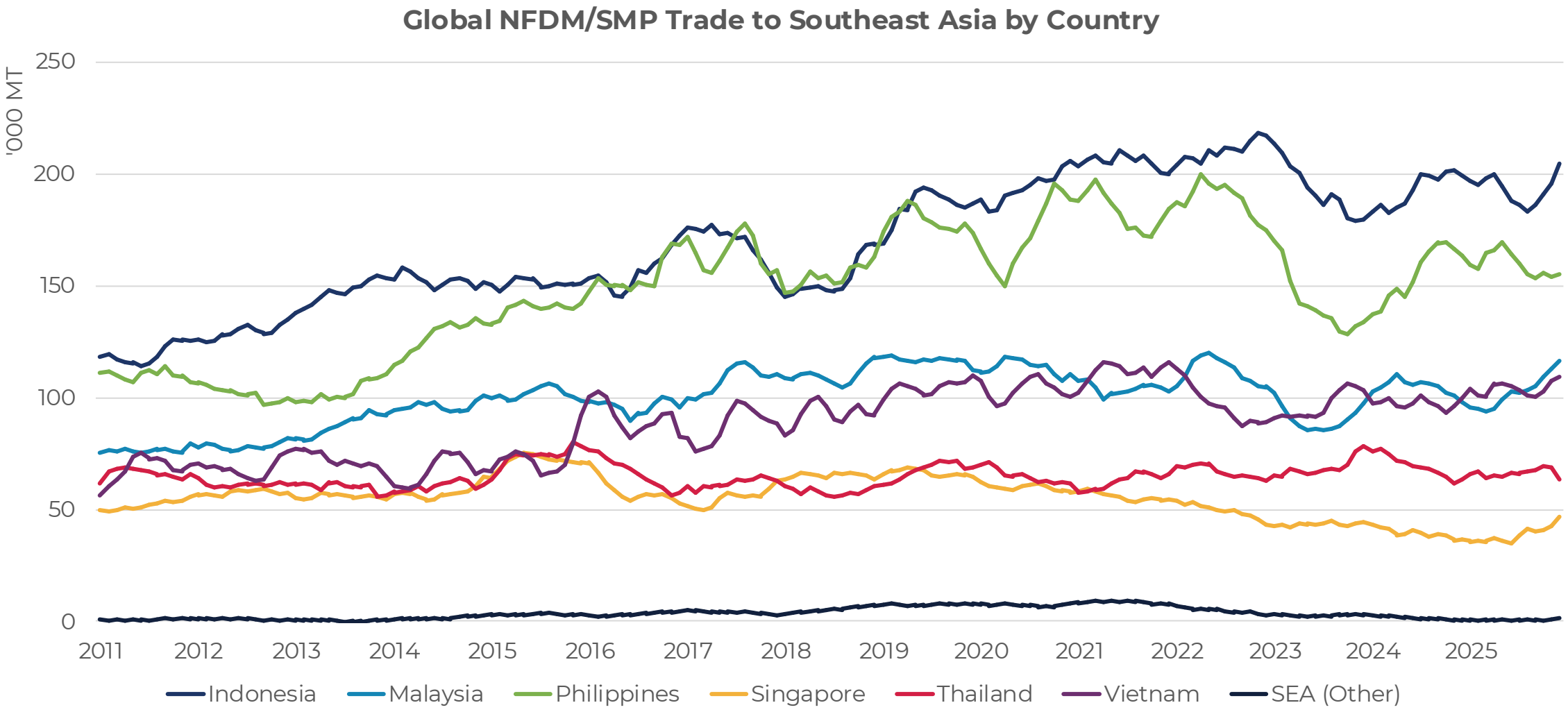






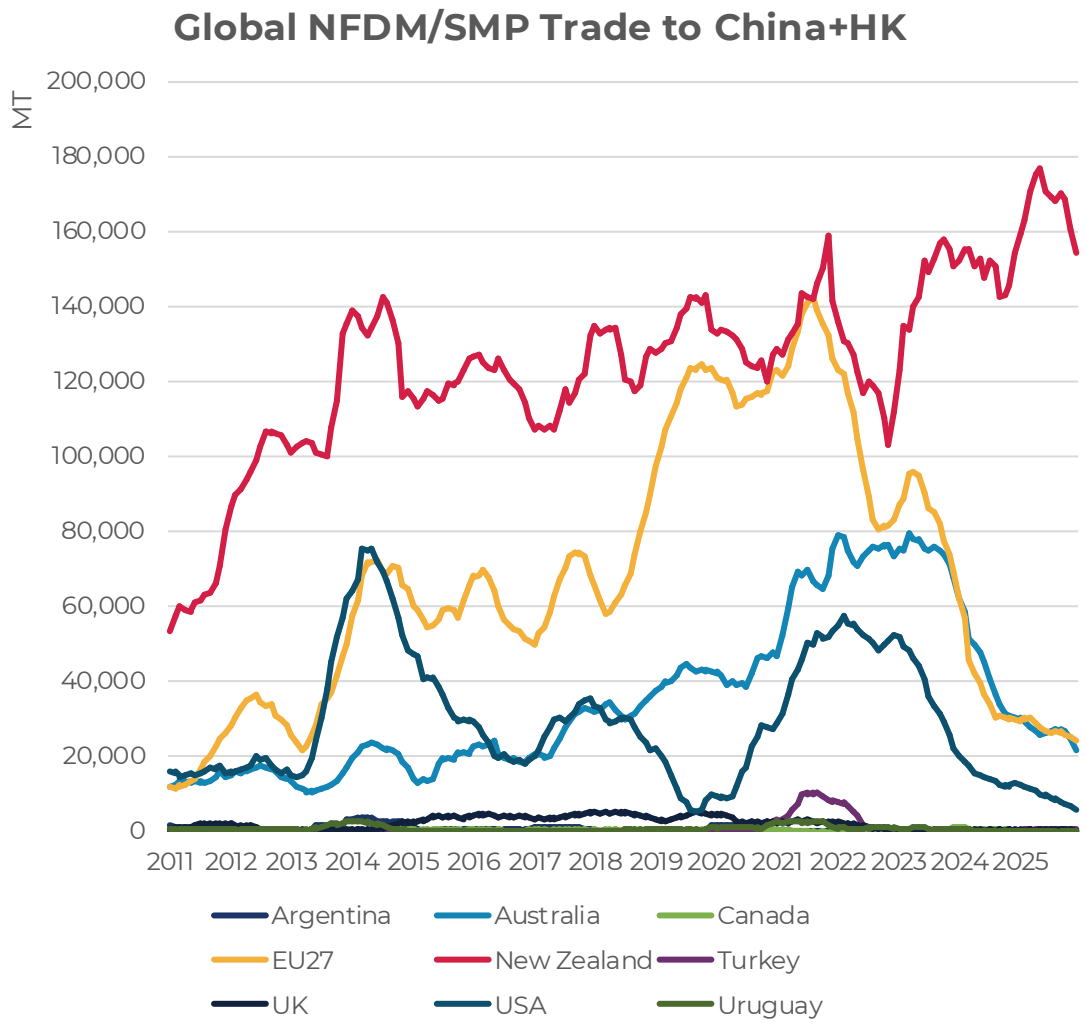
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

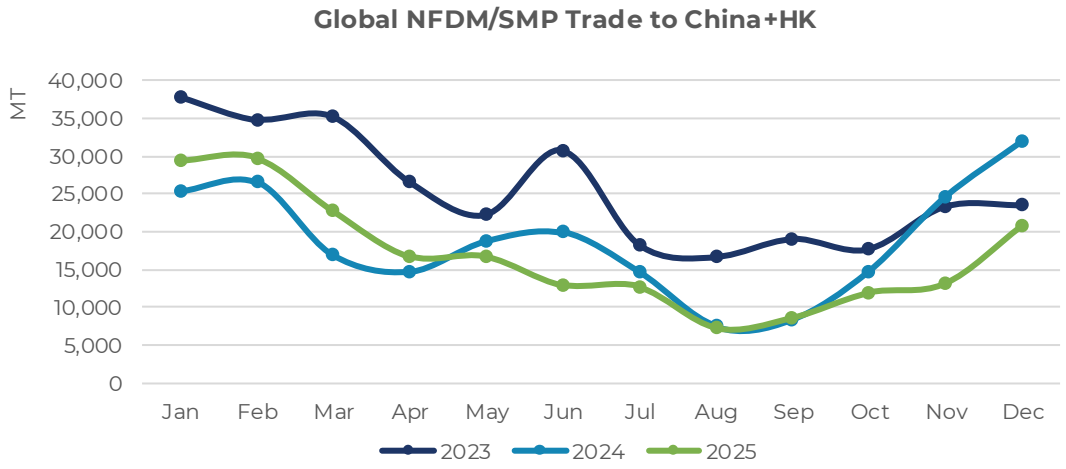
Southeast Asia Country Breakdown



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

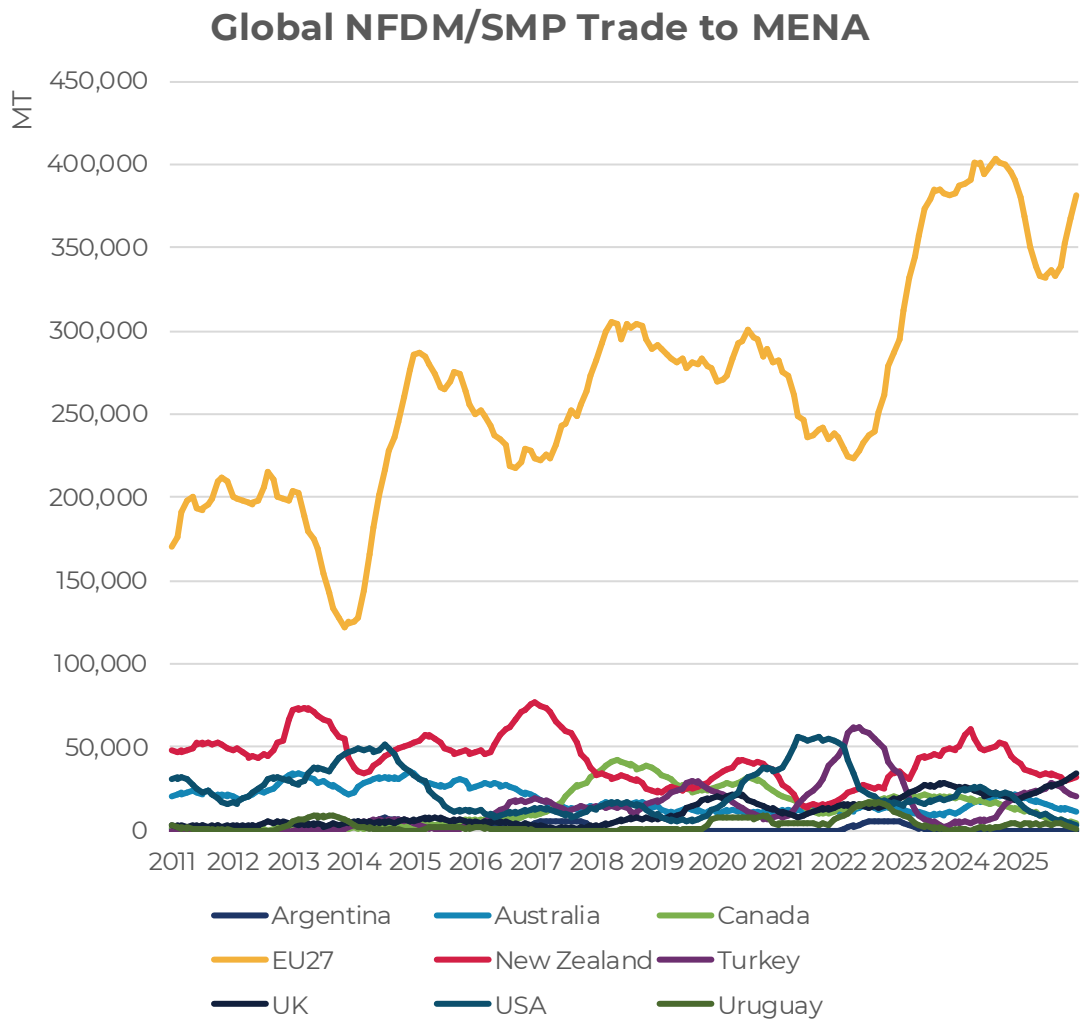
China

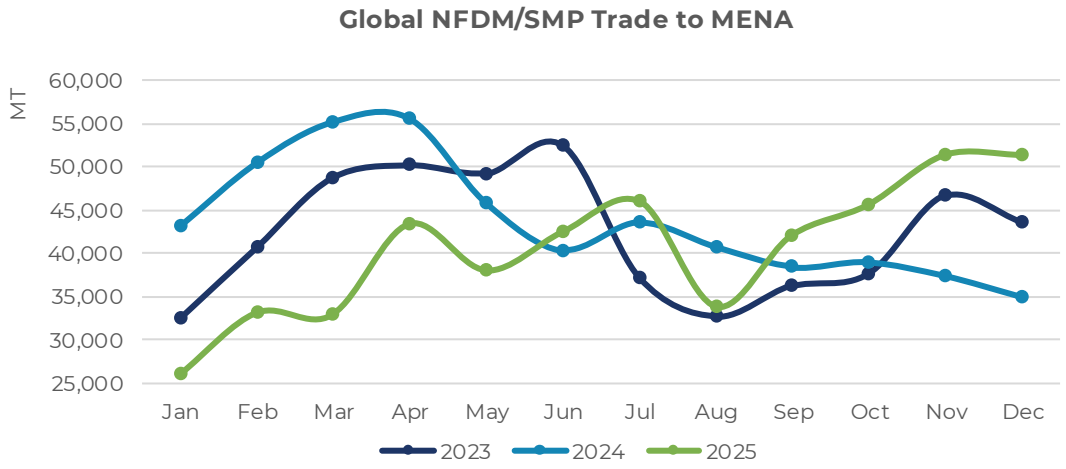


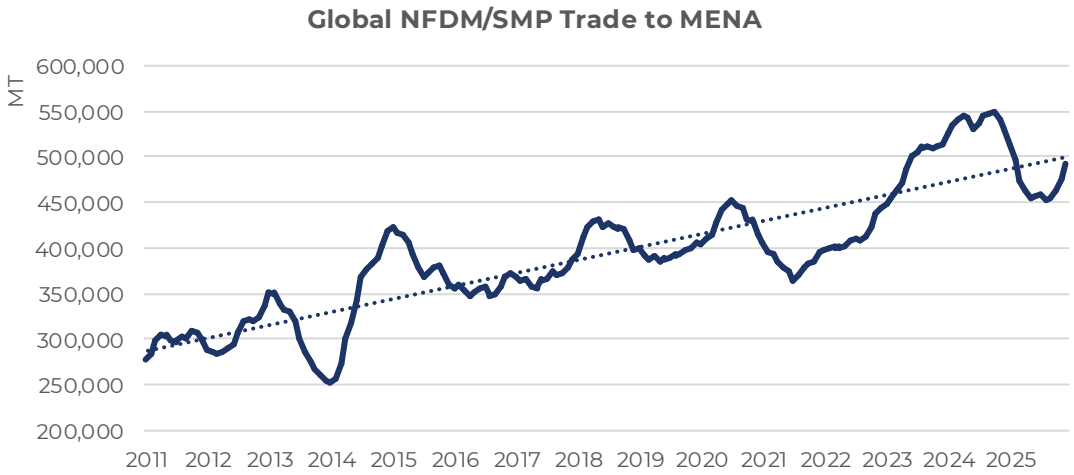


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

MENA

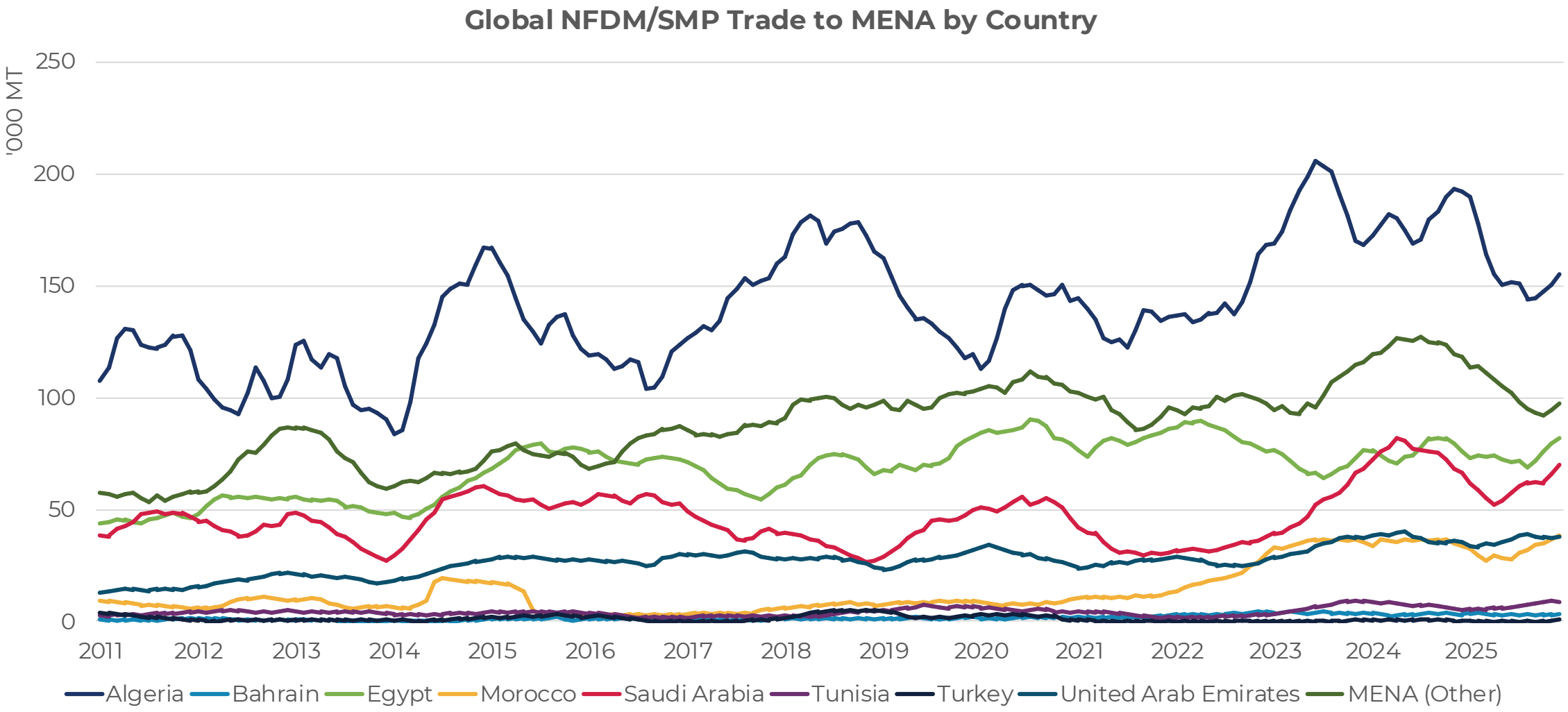






Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Middle East-North Africa Country Breakdown



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

NMPF | USDEC
DAIRY
ECONOMICS

Whey Products (0404.10)

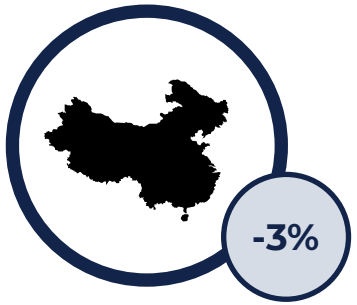
Whey Products (0404.10) Market Commentary

KEY TAKEAWAYS

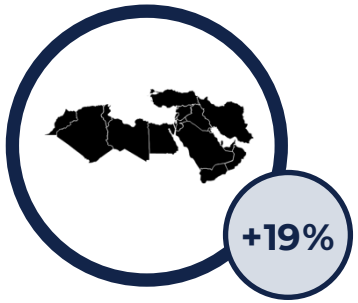
- Perhaps no product experienced as much whiplash during 2025 as low protein whey, which was subject to drastic impacts from volatile trade policy as well as underlying strength in protein demand. But when the dust finally settled, trade eked out a 0.3% (+4,313 MT) increase over prior year which was sufficient to lift volumes to a record large 1.6 million MT.
- Dramatically weaker demand from SEA took a bite out of volumes, both during December (-4%, -1,576 MT) and on an annual basis (-8%, -35,967 MT). At the same time that low protein whey demand to the region has fallen, milk powder demand has risen, suggesting that buyers are likely trading off between the two products as they prioritize protein content.
- Demand from MENA rose 19% (+1,477 MT) in December but nevertheless ended the year down 2% (-2,328 MT). Most other regions saw demand lean positive, both on a monthly and annual basis. New Zealand was a standout in December as trade soared to 2,164 MT (+201%, +1,445 MT), albeit compared to particularly anemic performance in the same month last year.

Global Whey (0404.10) Trade	+1.4%	+0.3%	+0.3%	+1.2%
	Dec YoY	YTD, Ending Dec	Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	3-Year CAGR

December Standout Markets

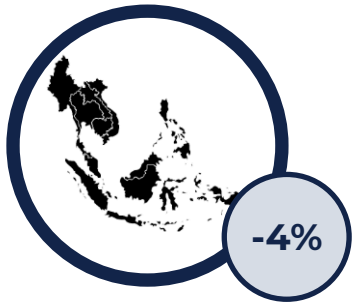


CHINA+HK
-1,493 MT



MENA
+1,477 MT

NEW ZEALAND
+,1445 MT



SOUTHEAST ASIA
-1,576 MT

ADDITIONAL NOTES

China remains the world's largest buyer of low protein whey, accounting for a third of the category's trade in 2025. After starting on a strong note, and facing volatility mid-year, volumes slipped modestly in the homestretch. All told, just over 525,000 MT of low protein whey was sent to China in 2025. This volume represents a 3% (+17,650 MT) increase versus 2024 though it falls 7% short of the record volume reached in 2021. Because the Chinese pork sector is a key user of whey, its evolution has an important impact on demand. Most industry analysts expect pork production to remain stable in 2026 though there is a noted shift away from expansion (fewer sows) and towards efficiencies (more piglets per sow and improving piglet mortality rates). To battle low prices, imports are expected to fall, and the Chinese government is expected to cull about 1 million sows early in the year, which may place light downward pressure on demand.

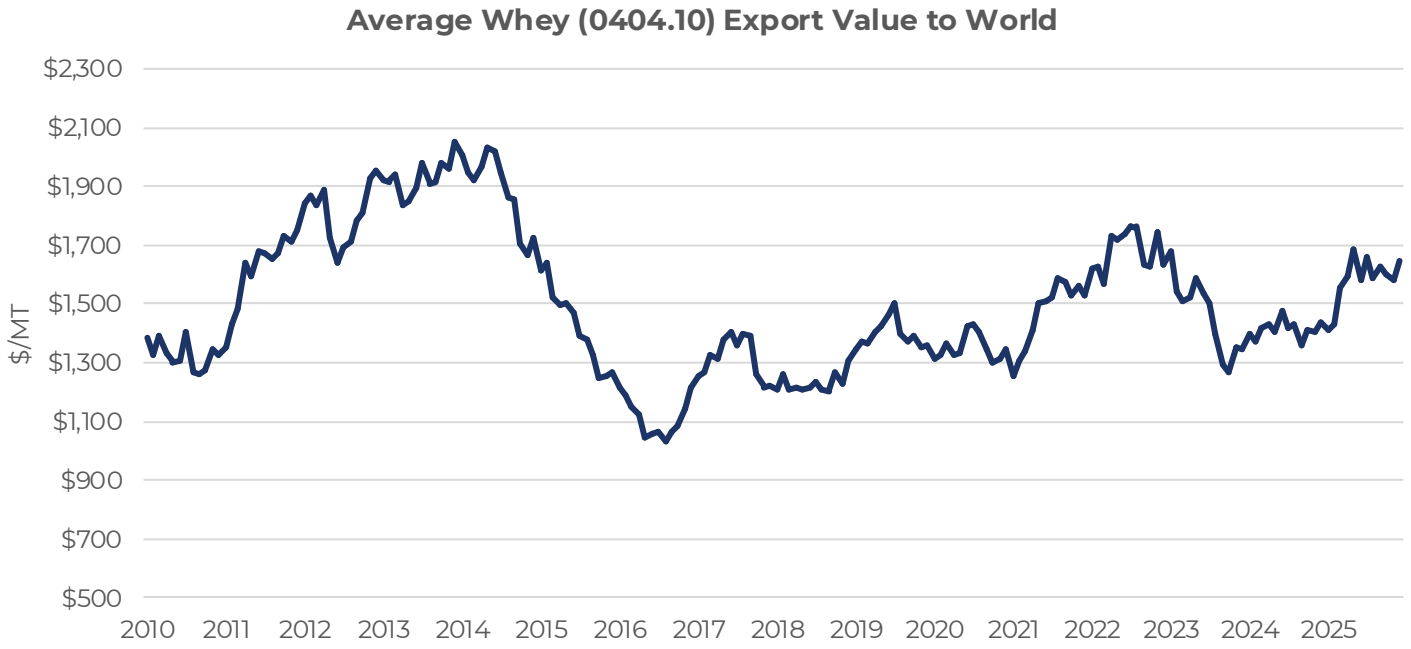
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Whey Products (0404.10) Market Commentary

LOOKING AHEAD

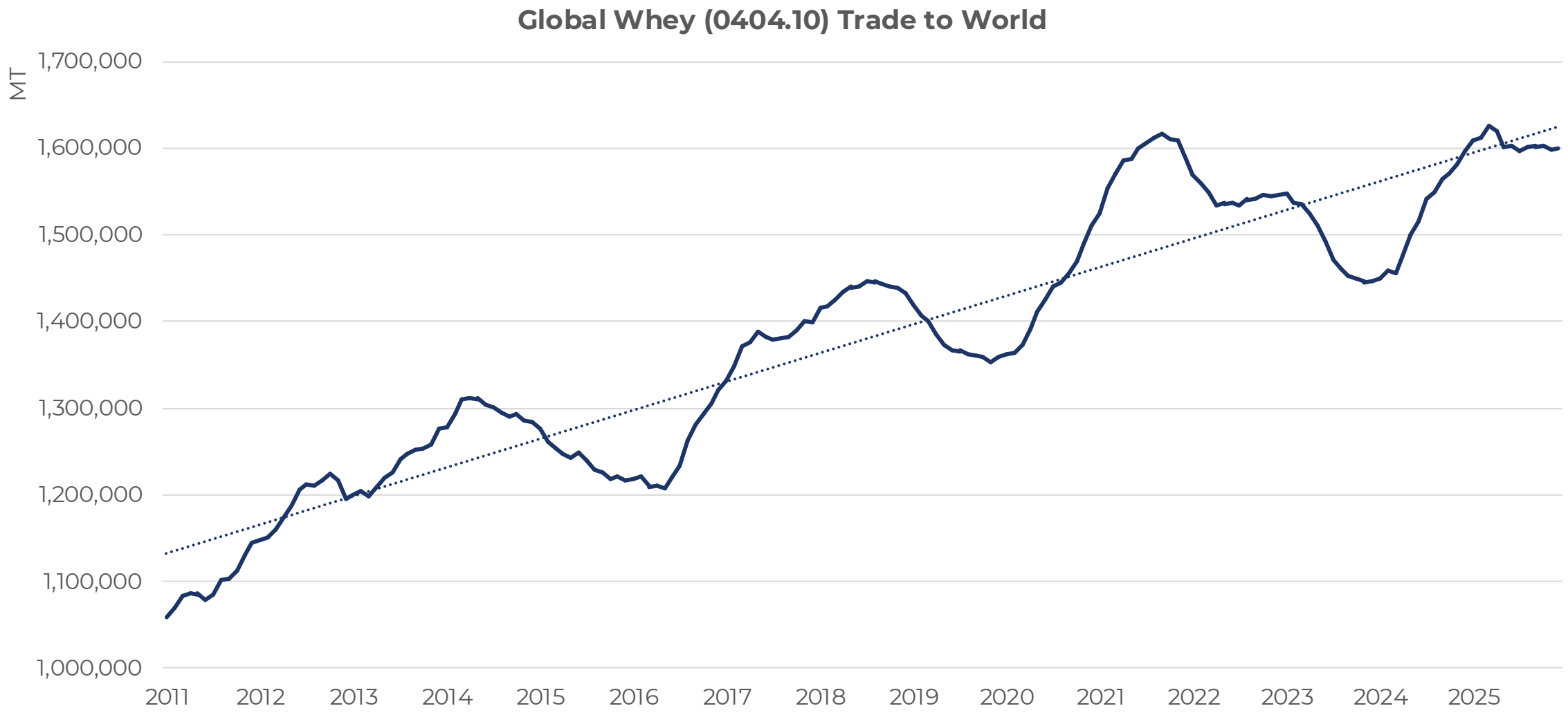
- **No massive shifts are expected for the low protein whey market as we move into 2026. Save an unexpected economic shock or shift in trade policy, volumes are expected to progress in line with recent history.** However, there are a few items that we are closely watching, which could exert influence over the market.
- First, buyers are likely to continue examining the value of protein in low protein whey products compared with milk powders. While substitution capabilities depend on the precise application, manufacturers are likely to closely watch relative pricing behaviors and execute their purchases accordingly.
- Furthermore, low protein whey markets will likely continue to gain support in concert with their high protein counterparts. With protein demand expected to keep surging the world over, manufacturers are reorienting the whey stream toward the manufacture of high value products, where possible. This leaves less raw whey available to be dried into sweet whey powder or lower protein whey protein concentrates which could lead to supply constrictions.

U.S. Whey (0404.10) Exports	**+3.5%** Dec YoY	**-0.7%** YTD, Ending Dec	**-0.7%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**-0.2%** 3-Year CAGR
EU Whey (0404.10) Exports	**+9.2%** Dec YoY	**+1.7%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+1.7%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+0.6%** 3-Year CAGR
NZ Whey (0404.10) Exports	**-7.4%** Dec YoY	**-26%** YTD, Ending Dec	**-26%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**-9.6%** 3-Year CAGR



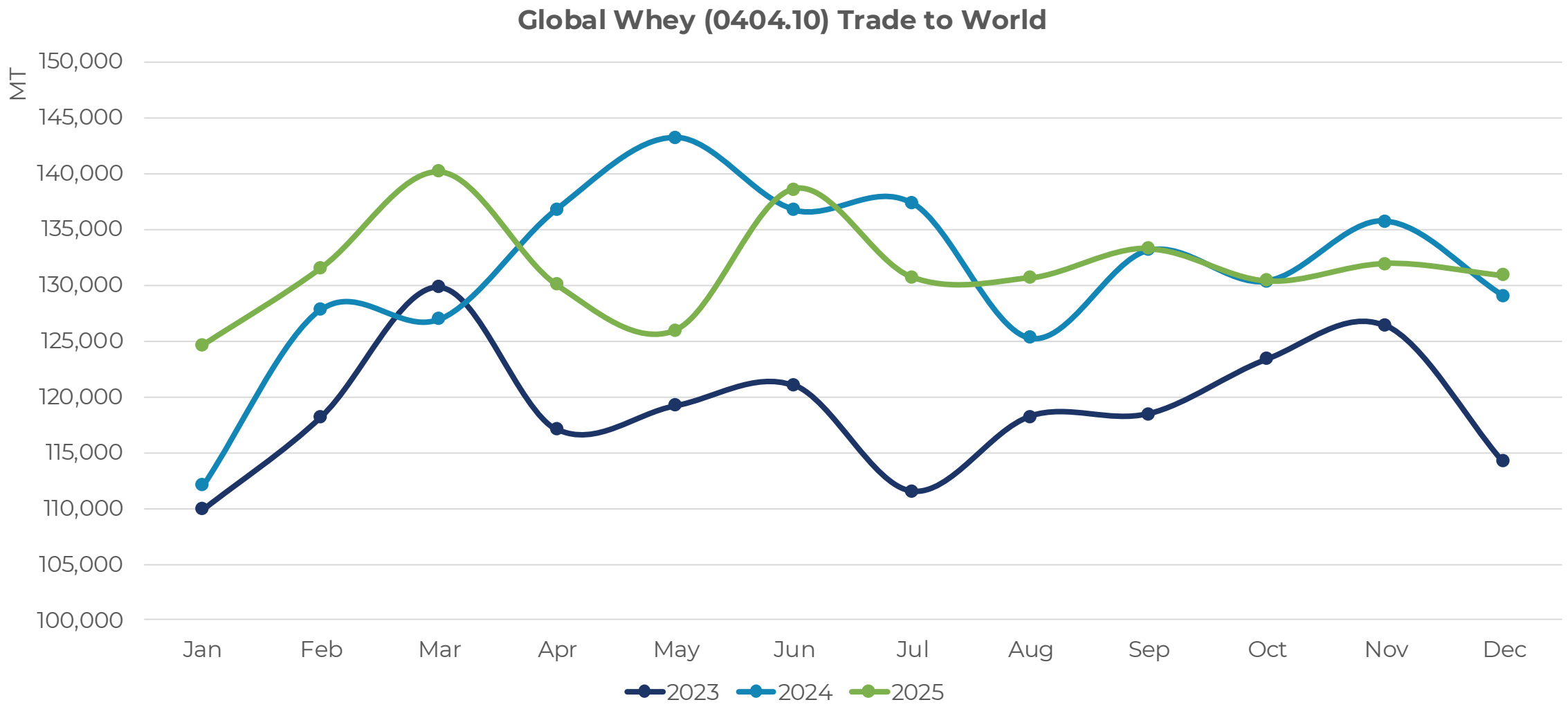
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: Whey (0404.10)



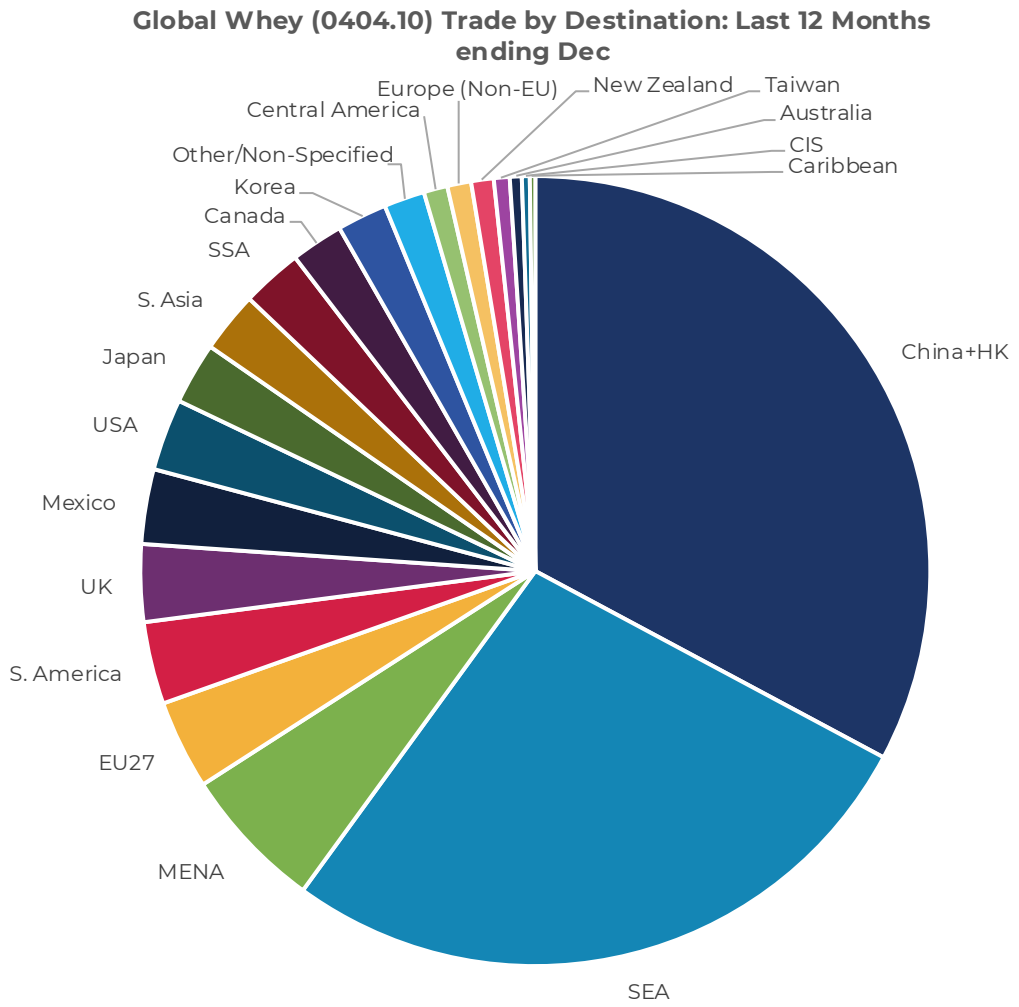
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

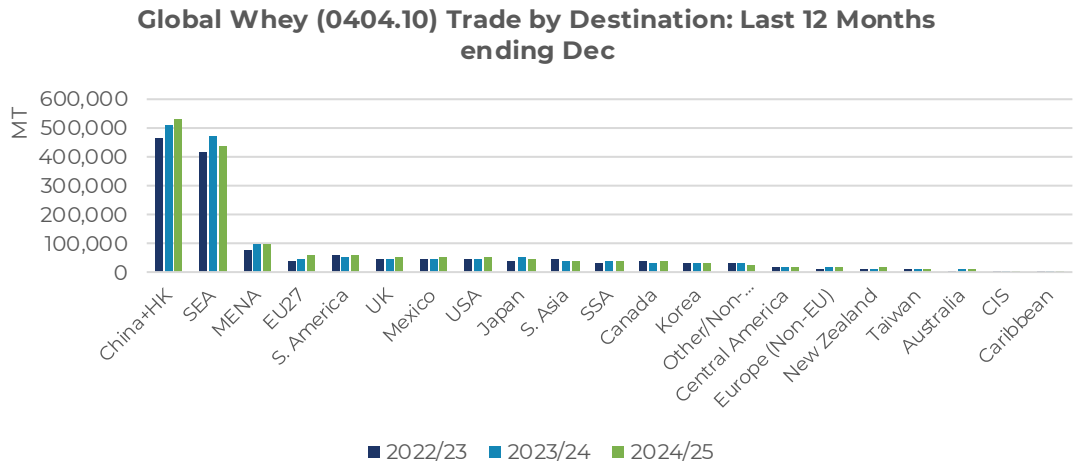
Global Overview: Whey (0404.10)

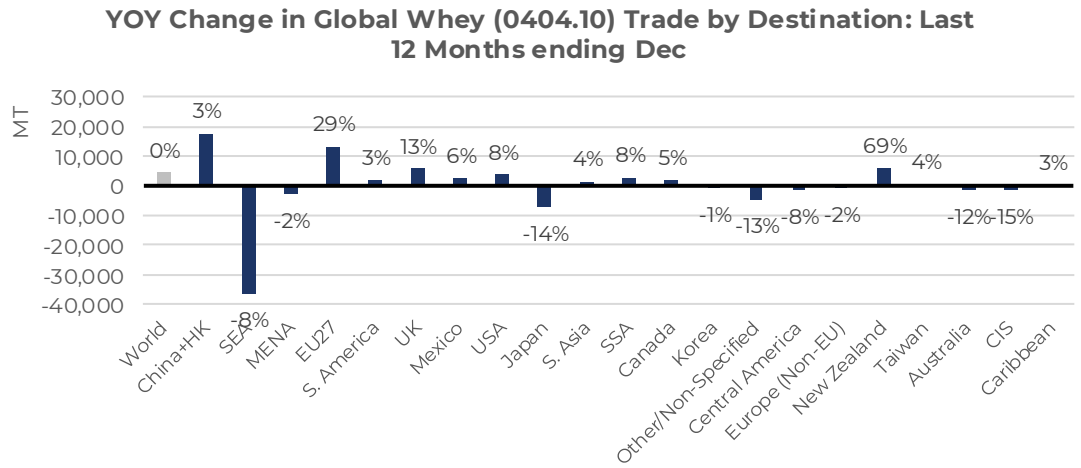


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: Whey (0404.10) – Last 12 Months

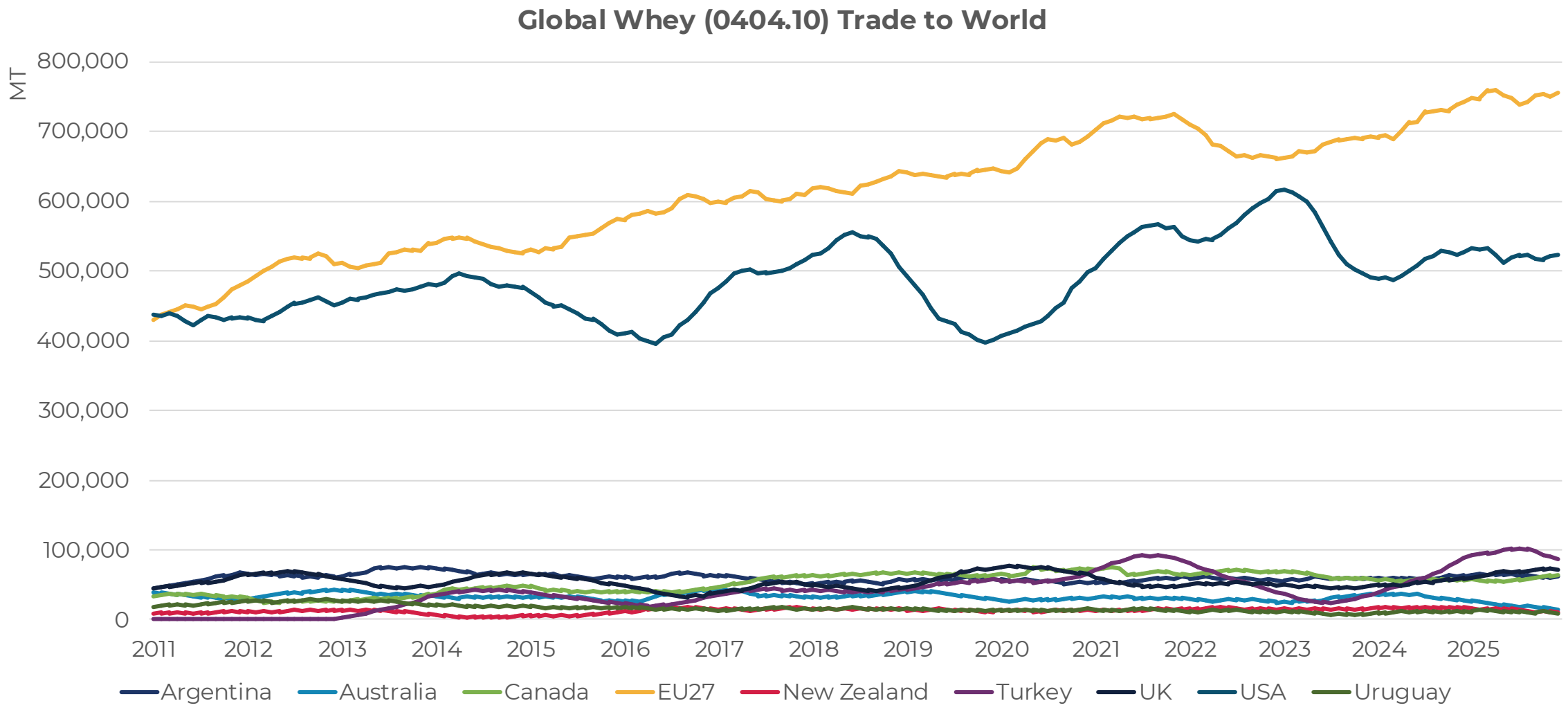






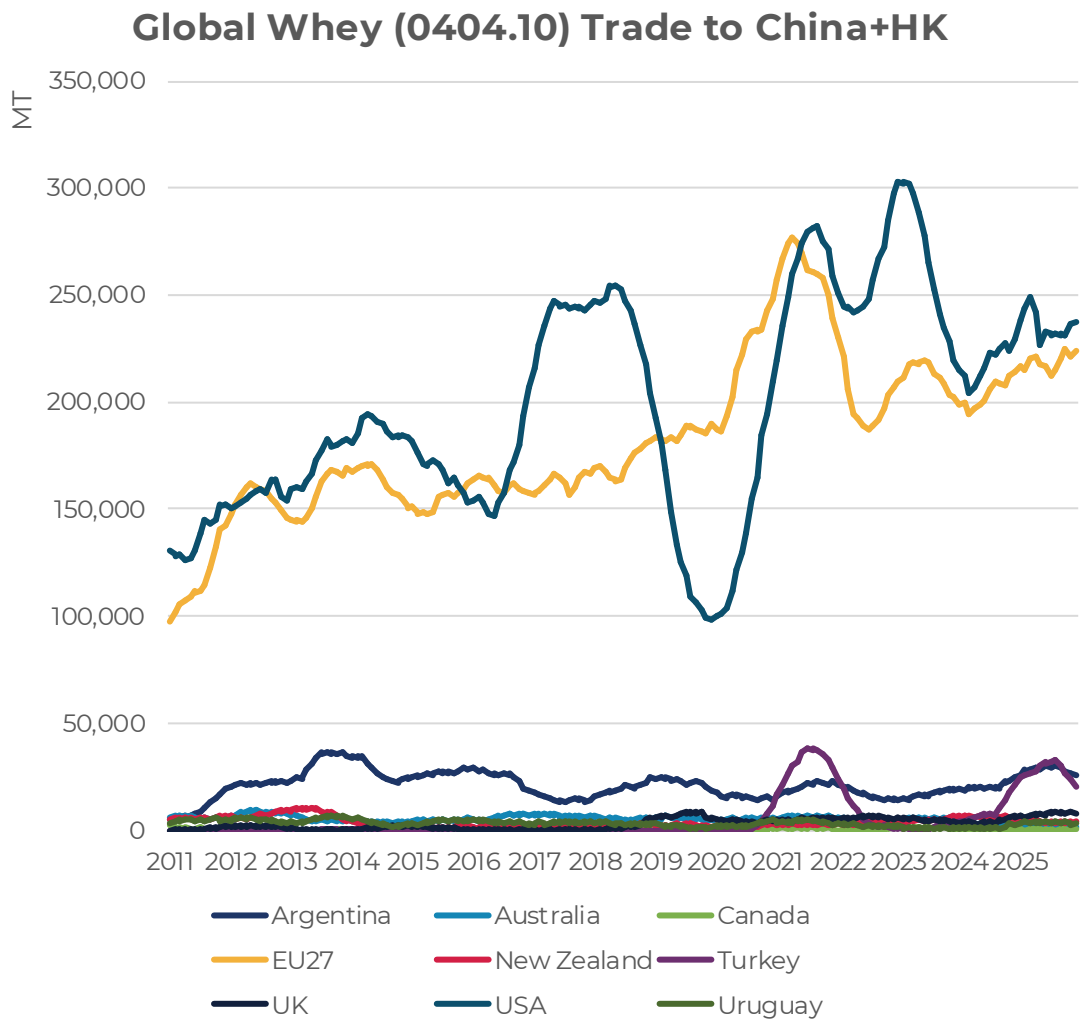
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

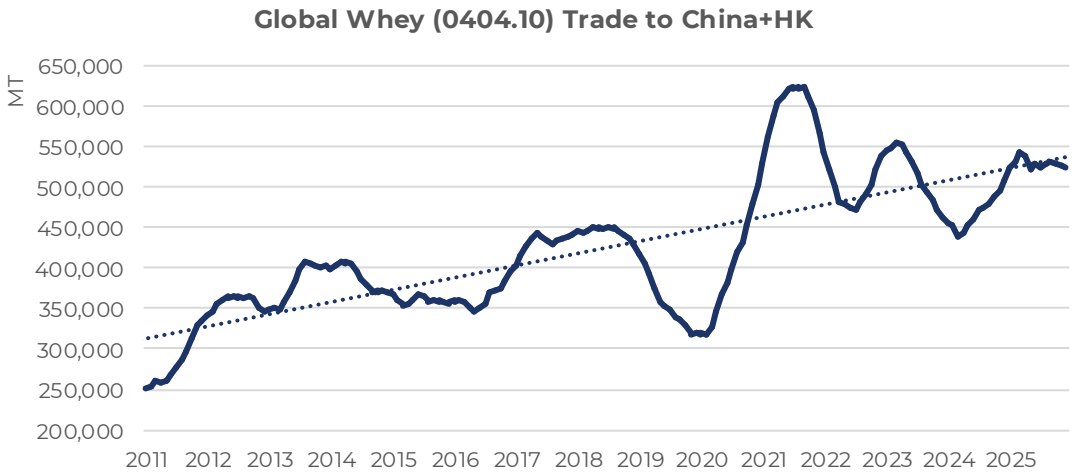
Trade Flows: Whey Products



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

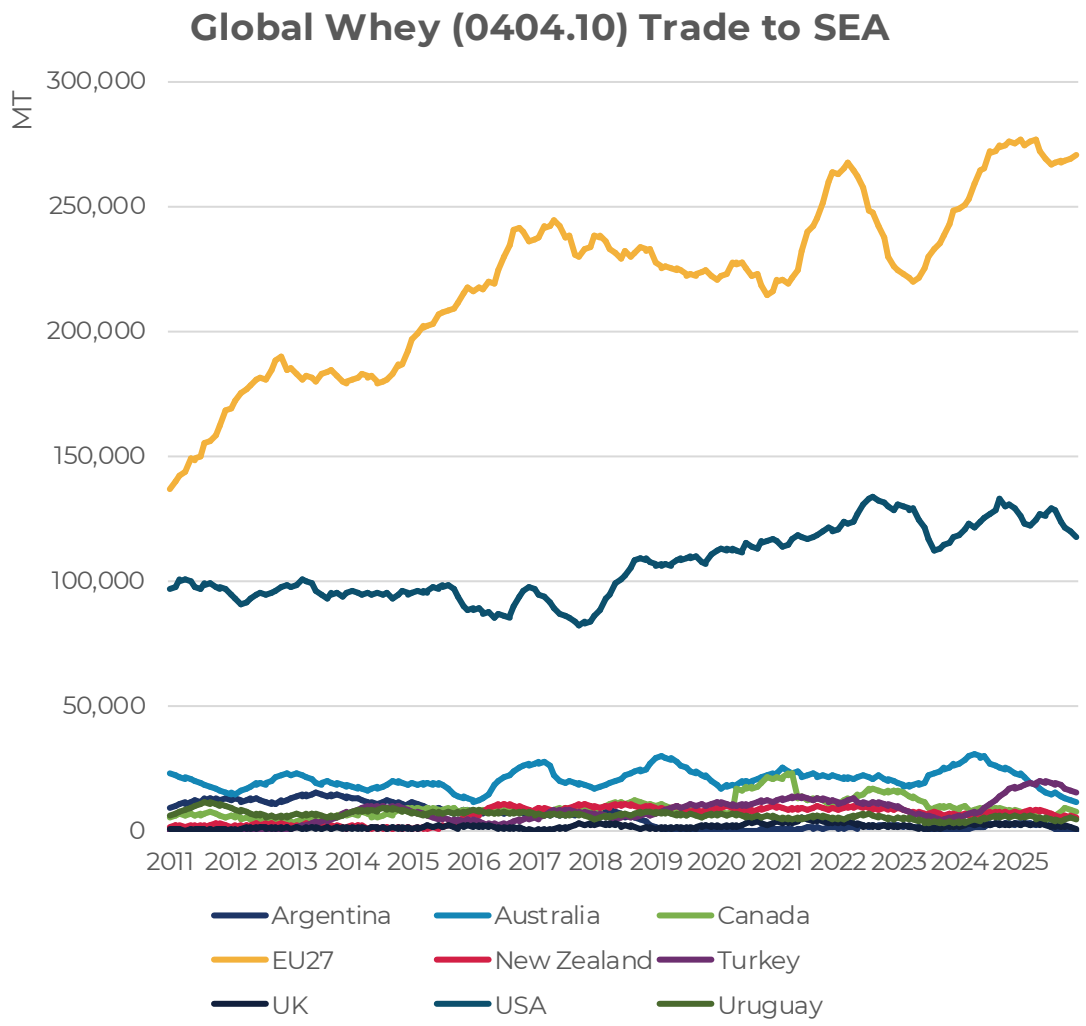
China

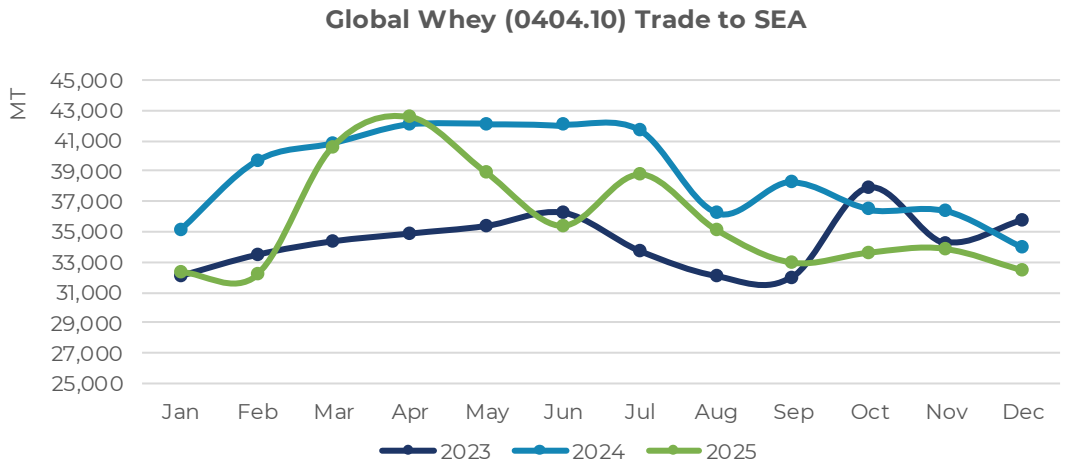


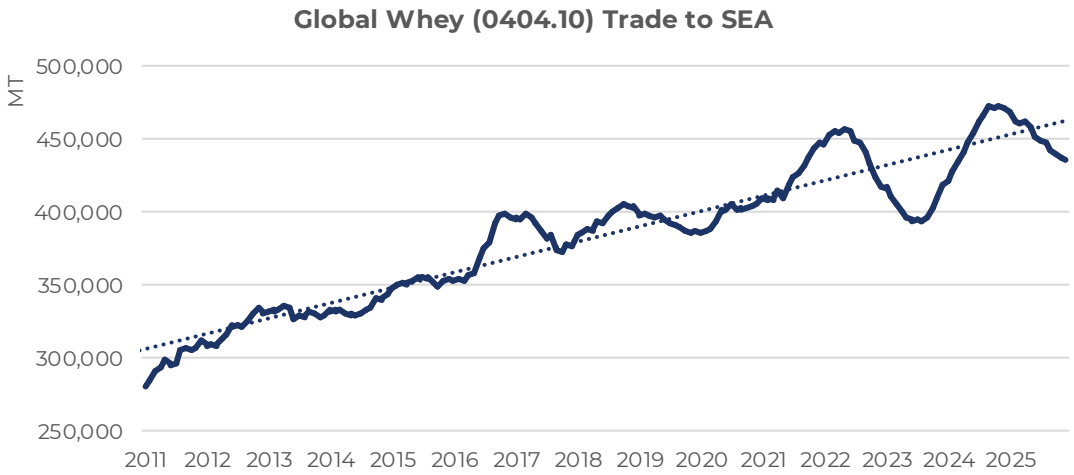


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Southeast Asia

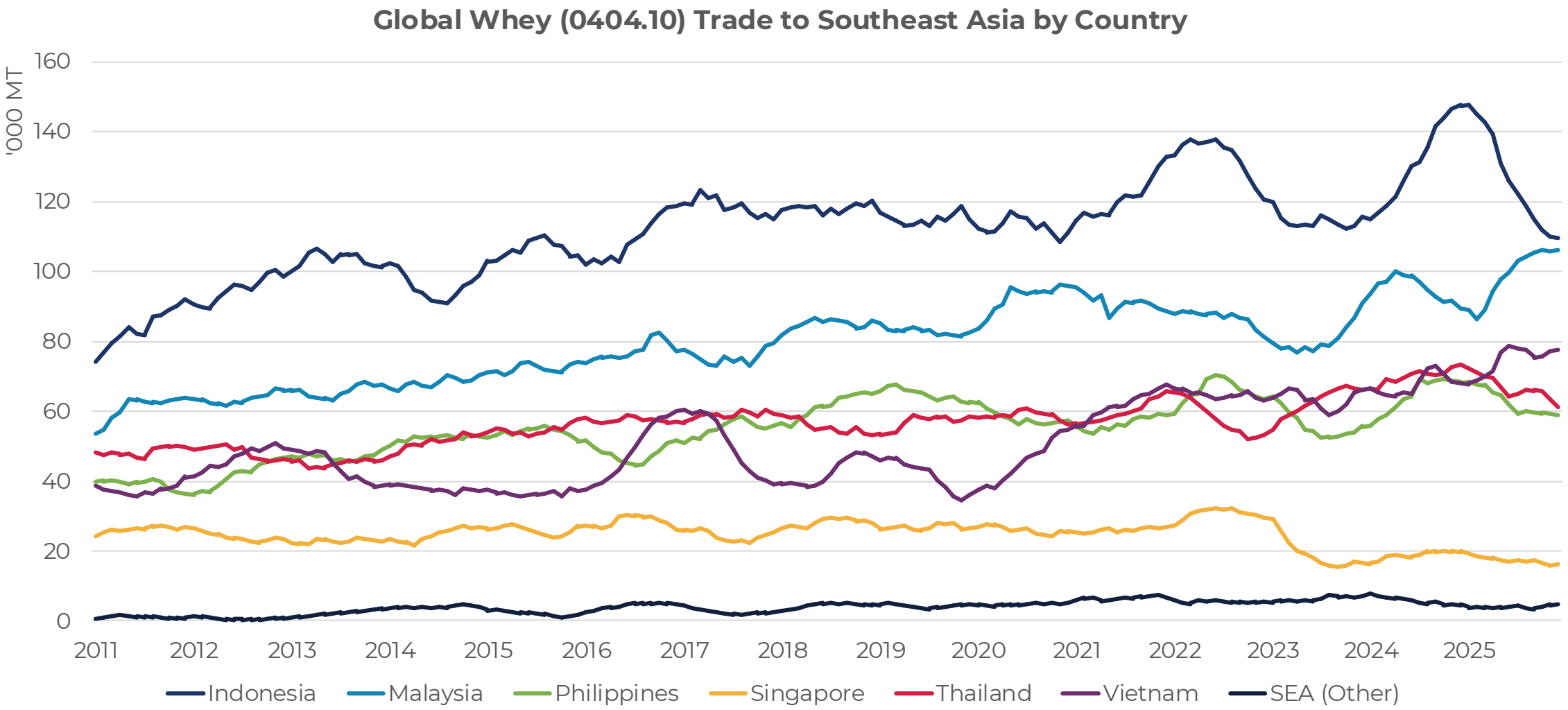






Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Southeast Asia Country Breakdown



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

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DAIRY
ECONOMICS

WPC80+ (3502.20)

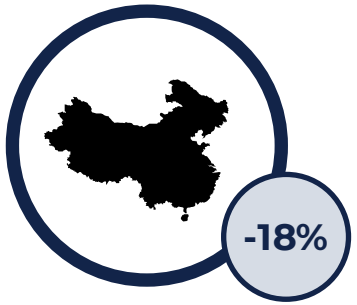
WPC80+ (3502.20) Market Commentary

KEY TAKEAWAYS

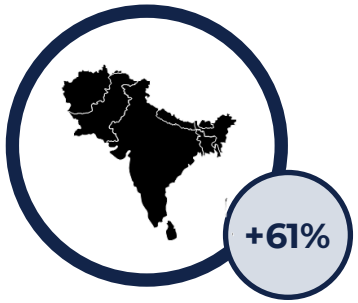
- Global high protein trade finished the year on a positive note, rising 2% (+333 MT) in December. This result was sufficient to push global WPC80+ trade for the year to a record high 184,150 MT, a sound 4% (+6,315 MT) above prior year's volumes.
- Most destinations saw WPC80+ demand rise during 2025, especially the EU (+42%, +7,657 MT), South Asia (+25%, +4,223 MT) and Japan (+19%, +4,187 MT). One notable exception, however, is China where demand slumped by 23% (-9,195 MT) during 2025, marking the weakest year for category trade since 2019. Overall economic malaise, price sensitivity, and volatile trade policy likely contributed to the weak performance.
- Protein demand remains robust the world over driven by several factors including rising incomes, increased focus on health and wellness, and expanded use of GLP-1 drugs that encourage increased protein consumption. Even as prices continue to climb to eye watering levels – prices hit $14,642/MT in December – this has done little to diminish buyers' appetites.

Global WPC80+ Trade	+2.3%	+3.6%	+3.6%	+5.7%
	Dec YoY	YTD, Ending Dec	Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	3-Year CAGR

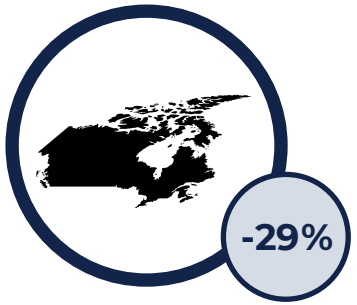
December Standout Markets



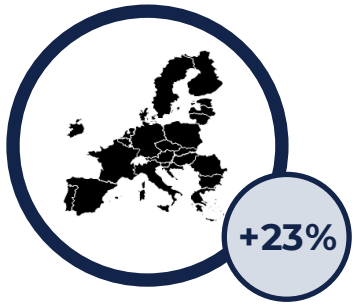
CHINA+HK
-614 MT



SOUTH ASIA
+810 MT



CANADA
-280 MT



EU27
+350 MT

ADDITIONAL NOTES

High protein whey ingredients play a crucial role in meeting burgeoning consumer demand for protein. However, a tension has begun to emerge regarding how the world's largest producers and exporters of WPC80+ allocate product. For example, U.S. domestic production of WPI was up 11% in 2025. However, exports of WPC80+ only rose by 6% the same year. While high pricing may have discouraged exports to some extent, this incongruence suggests that an increasing portion of incremental high protein whey production is being dedicated to the domestic market, rather than to international clients. A similar dynamic has emerged in the EU which, despite being the second largest exporter of WPC80+ in 2024 with a 31% share, saw exports rise just 0.7% in 2025 as a voracious appetite for protein converted the region into the third largest importer of high protein whey. New capacity may help to ease the pressure and create additional volume availability for the export market, but we expect this dynamic to persist in the near term.

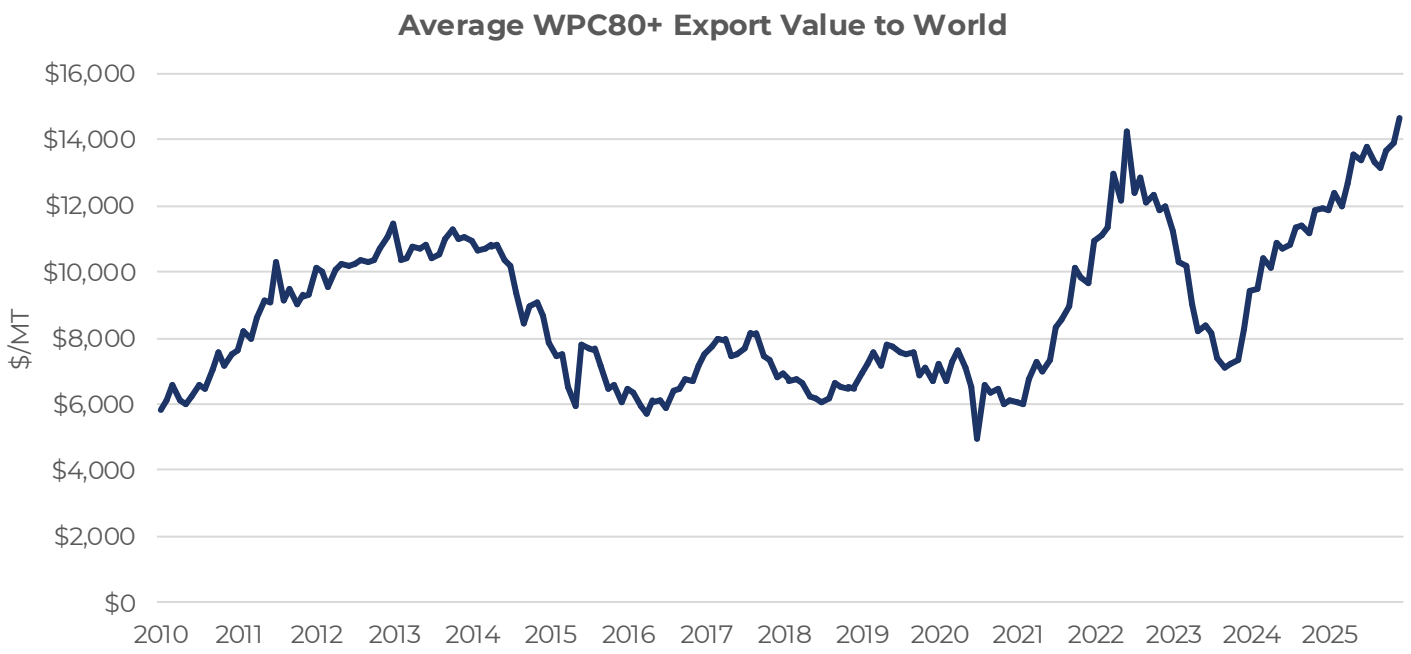
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

WPC80+ (3502.20) Market Commentary

LOOKING AHEAD

- All signs point to strong global protein demand persisting into the future. The fundamentals driving growth do not appear to be abating and, in fact, could accelerate, especially with the addition of new formats and less expensive GLP-1 medications that are just beginning to reach the market. While competition with domestic demand will remain a challenge among the main suppliers, continued growth in production should help to ameliorate the strain.
- There continue to be two main factors that could have a negative impact on WPC80+ demand. Price is the most obvious one. WPC80+ prices have continued to surge in recent months, rising above $14,000/MT in December for only the second time ever. While buyers have not yet balked in the face of these prices, it seems unrealistic that prices could rise in perpetuity without a demand response.
- It is also possible that a deteriorating economic outlook could negatively impact demand for high protein whey ingredients. As geopolitical tensions rise and appear to foreshadow a return of inflation, consumers may elect to rein in their spending, especially of expensive, protein-laden products.

U.S. WPC80+ Exports	**+0.9%** Dec YoY	**+5.9%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+5.9%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+1.9%** 3-Year CAGR
EU WPC80+ Exports	**+1.2%** Dec YoY	**+0.7%** YTD, Ending Dec	**+0.7%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**+0.2%** 3-Year CAGR
NZ WPC80+ Exports	**+5.7%** Dec YoY	**-13%** YTD, Ending Dec	**-13%** Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	**-4.5%** 3-Year CAGR

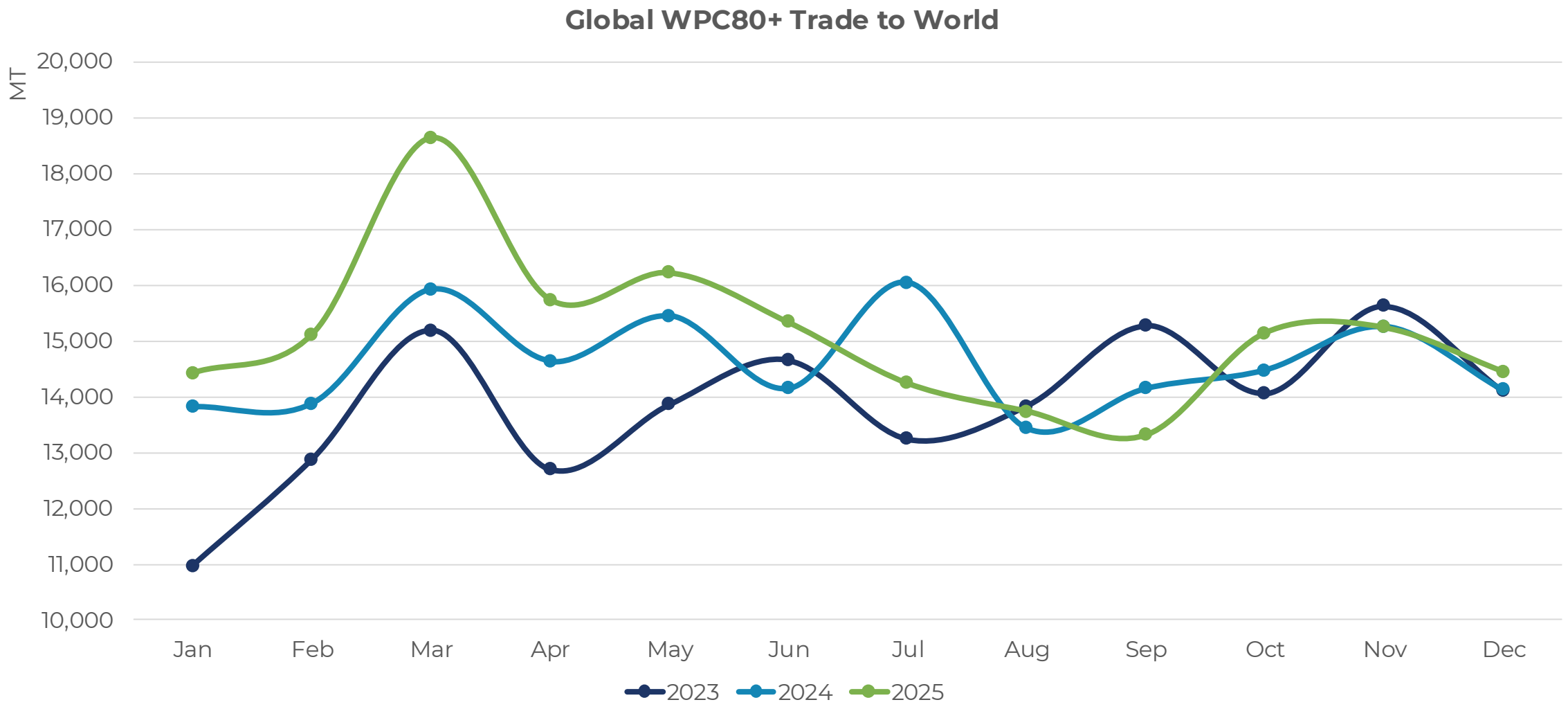


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: WPC80+

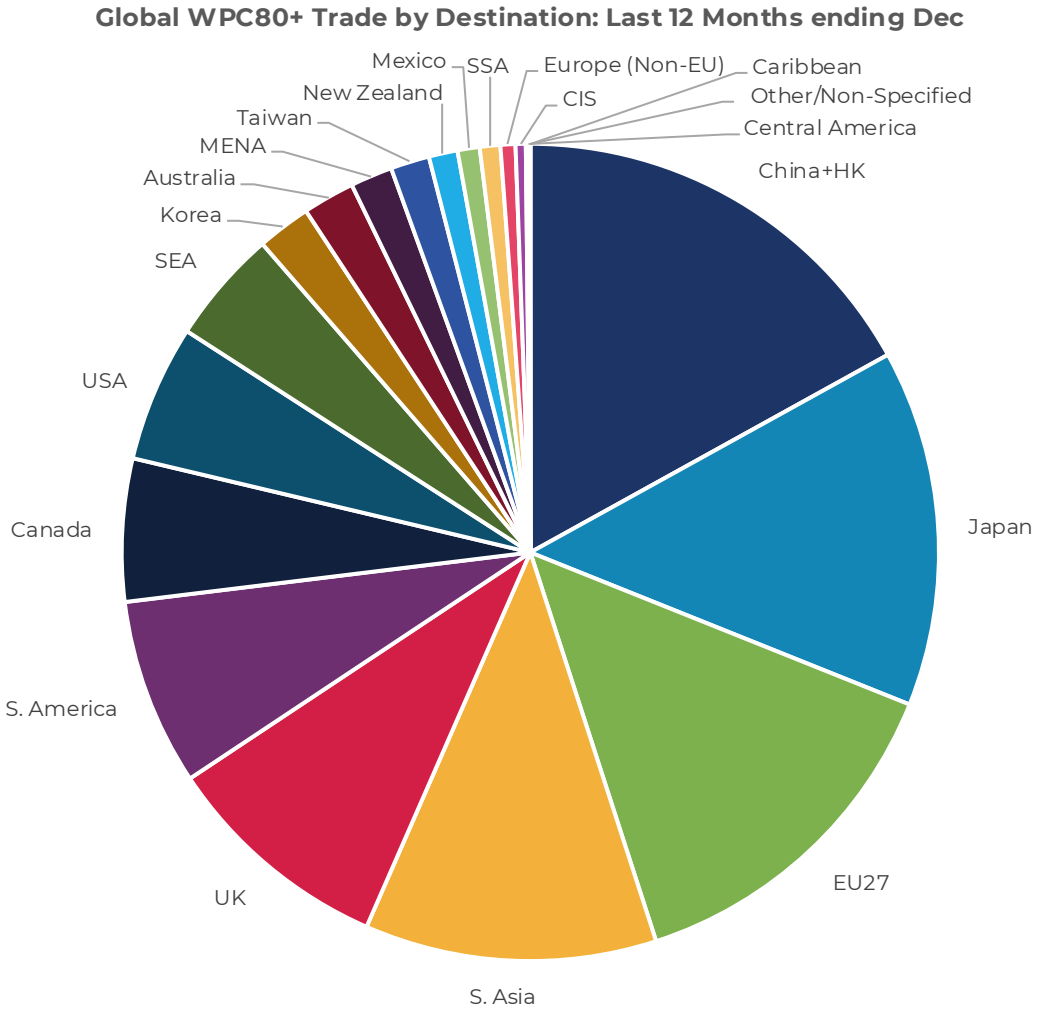
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

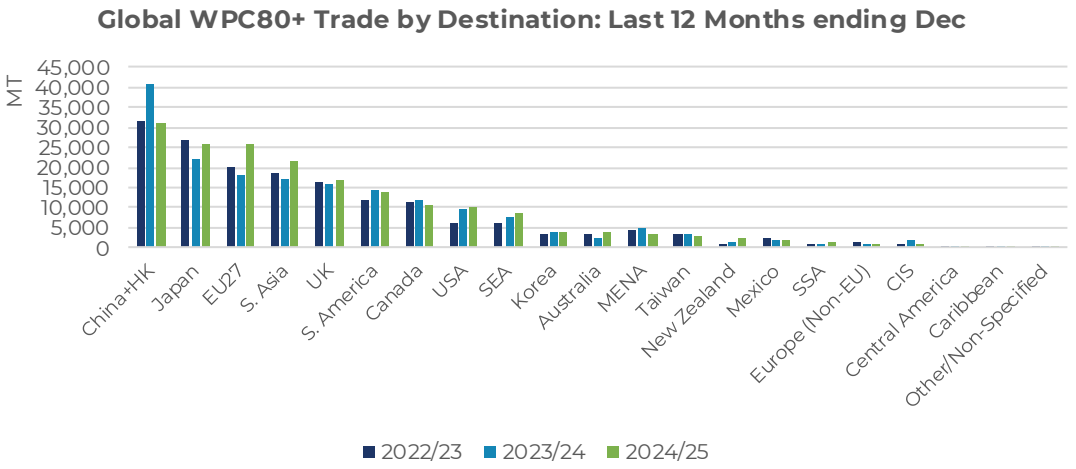
Global Overview: WPC80+

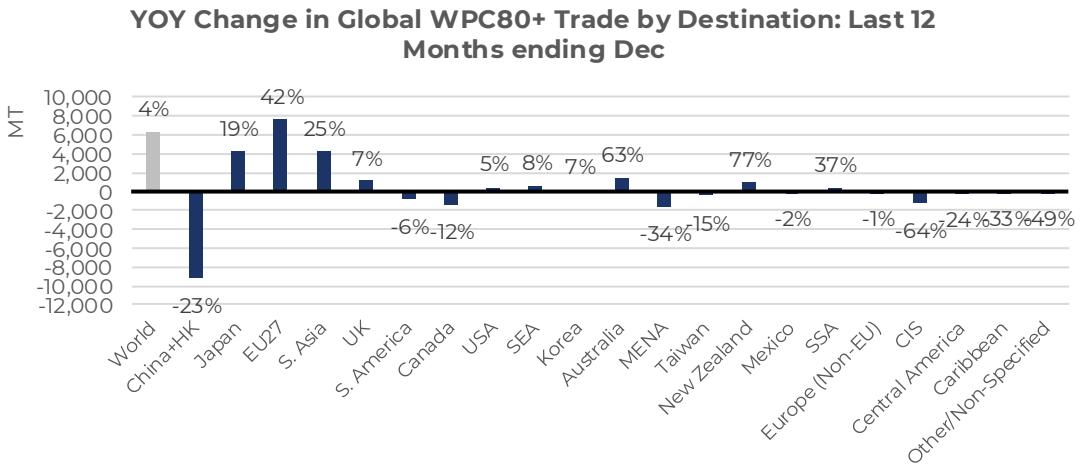


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Global Overview: WPC80+ – Last 12 Months

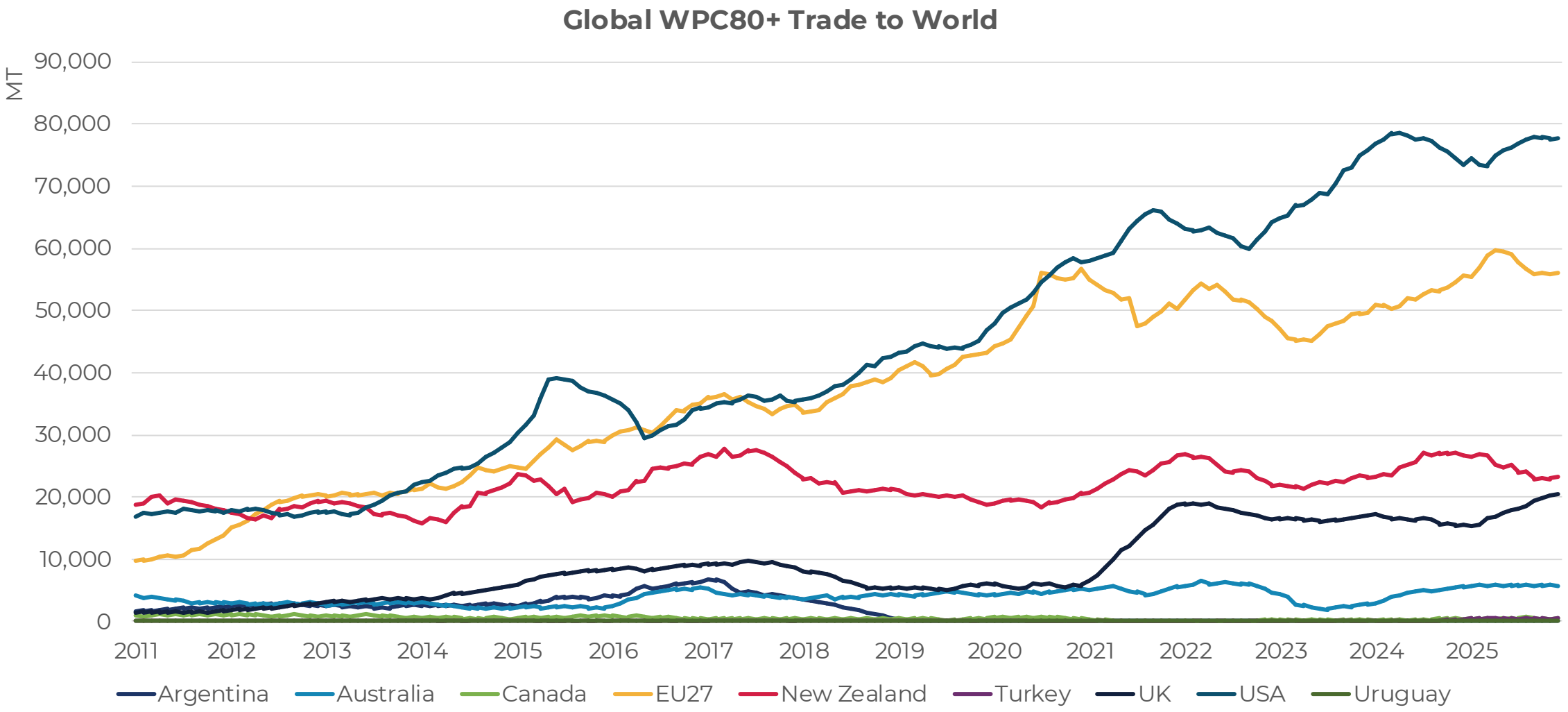






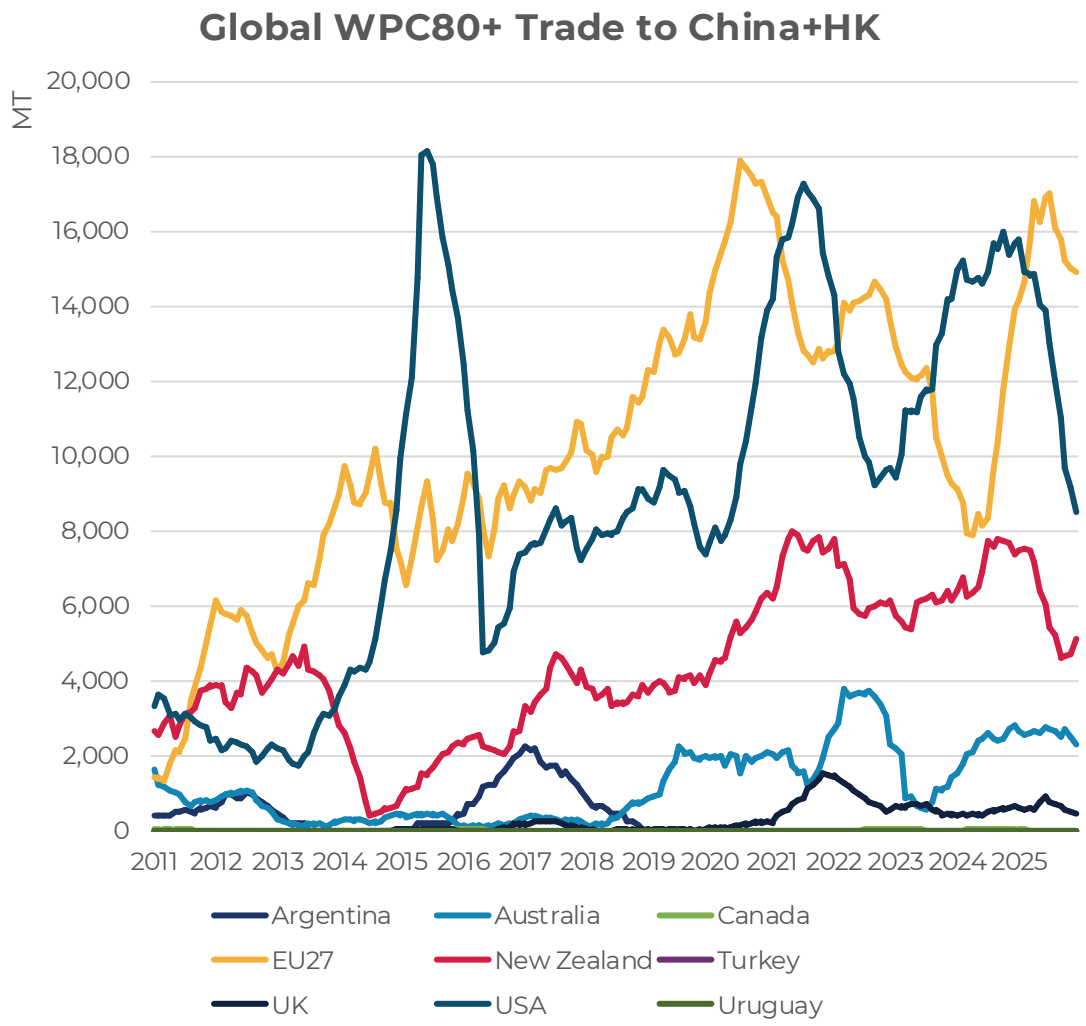
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

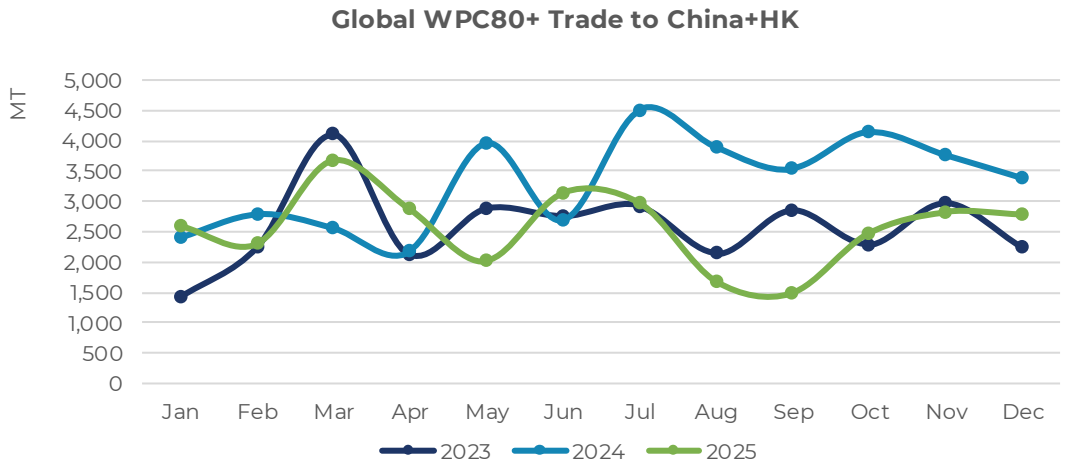
Trade Flows: WPC80+



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

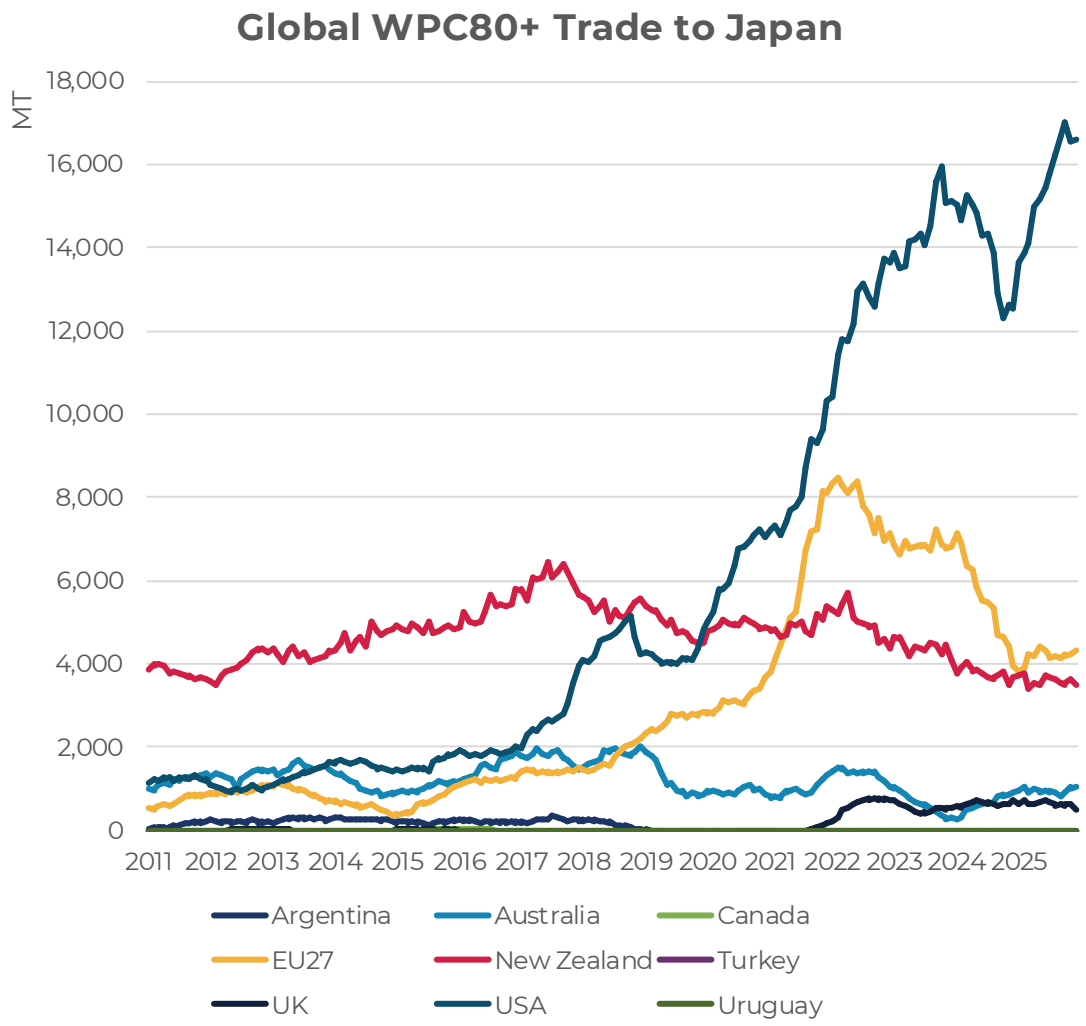
China

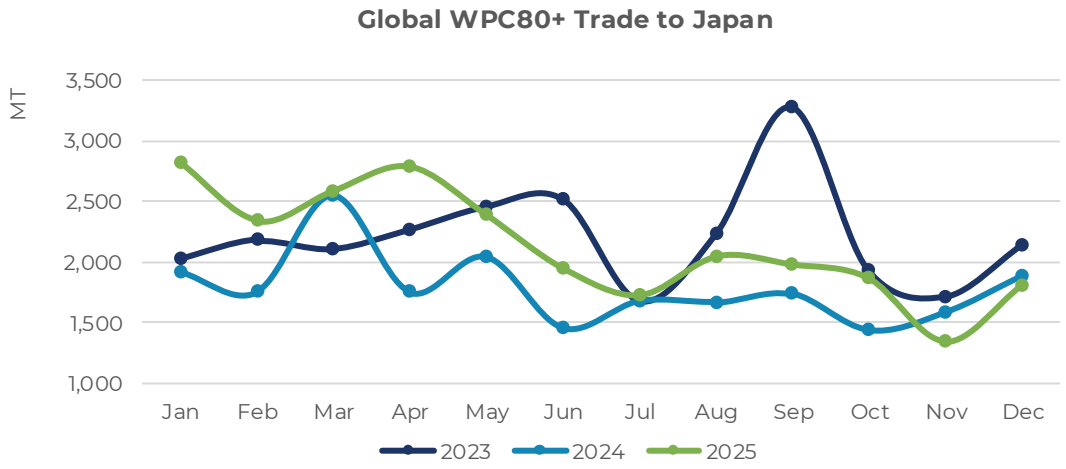


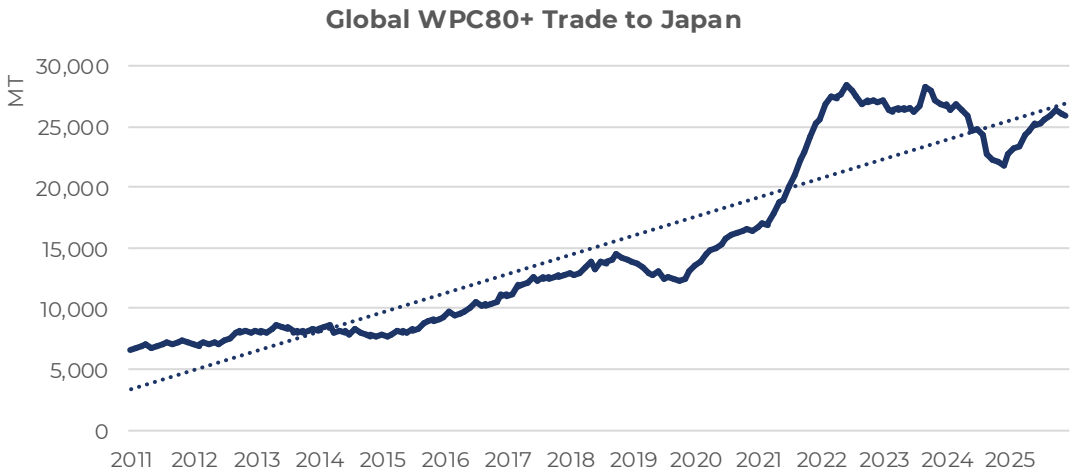


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Japan

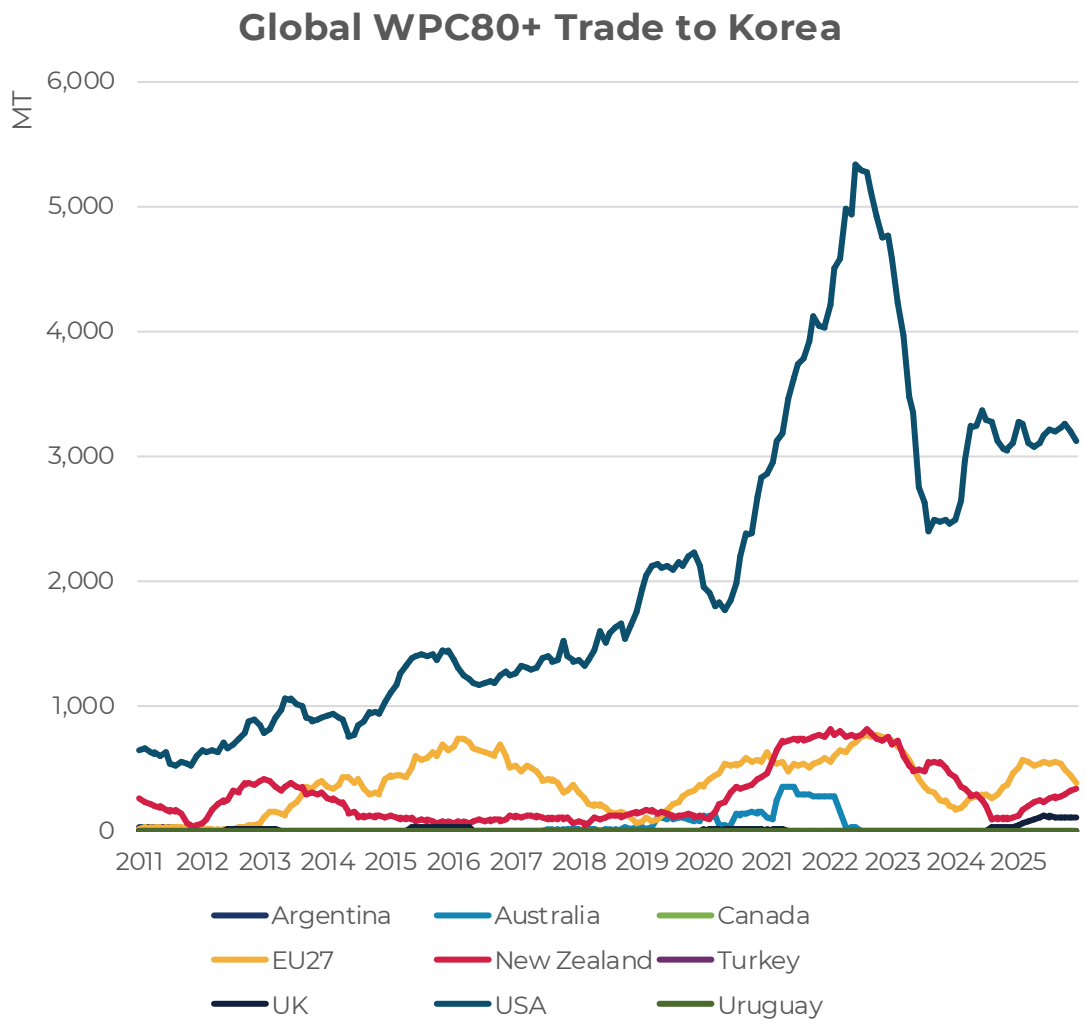


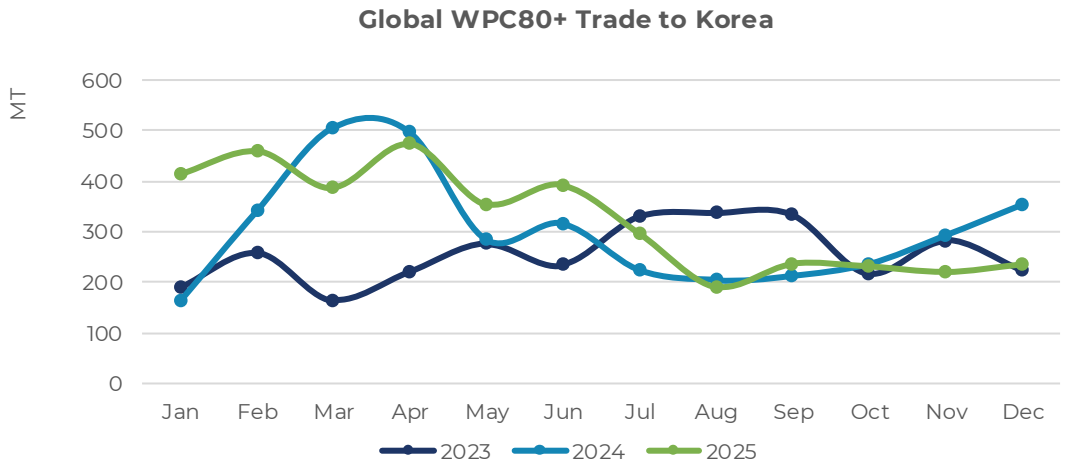




Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

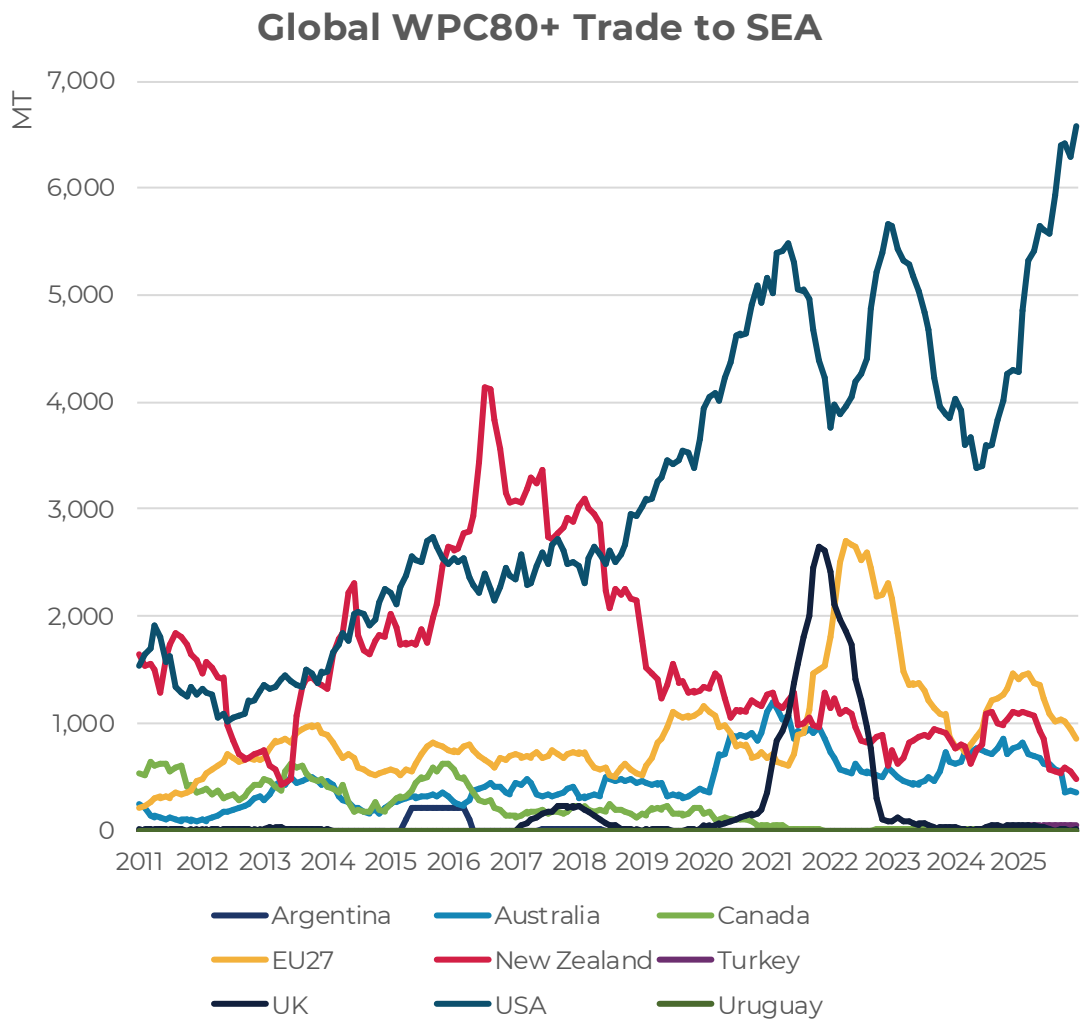
Korea

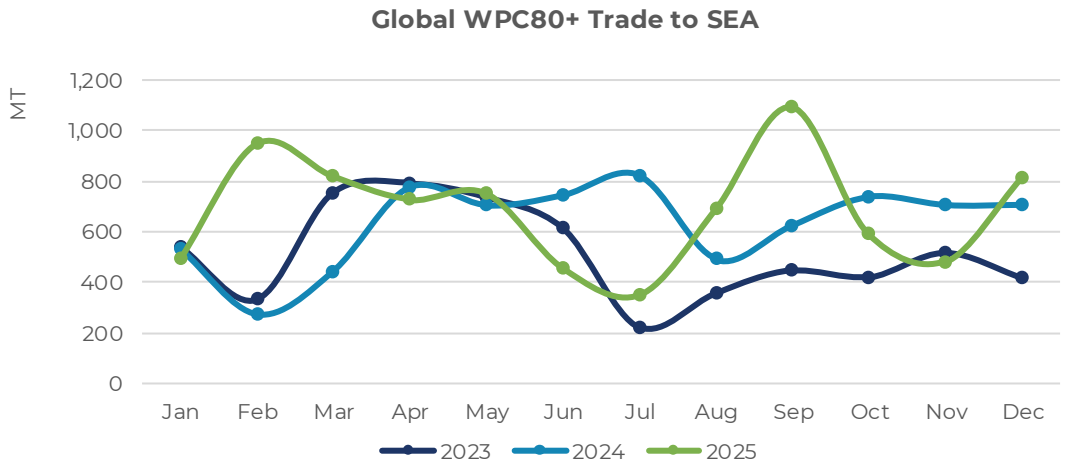


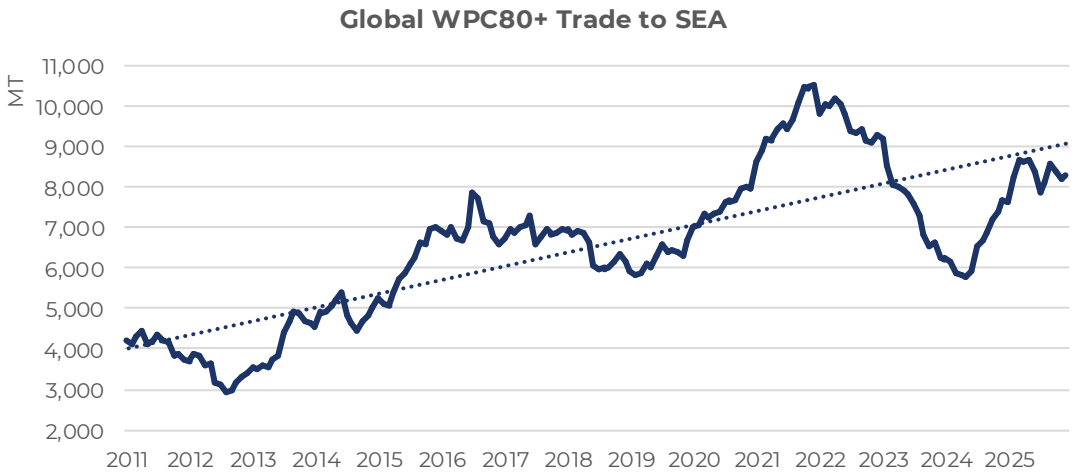


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Southeast Asia

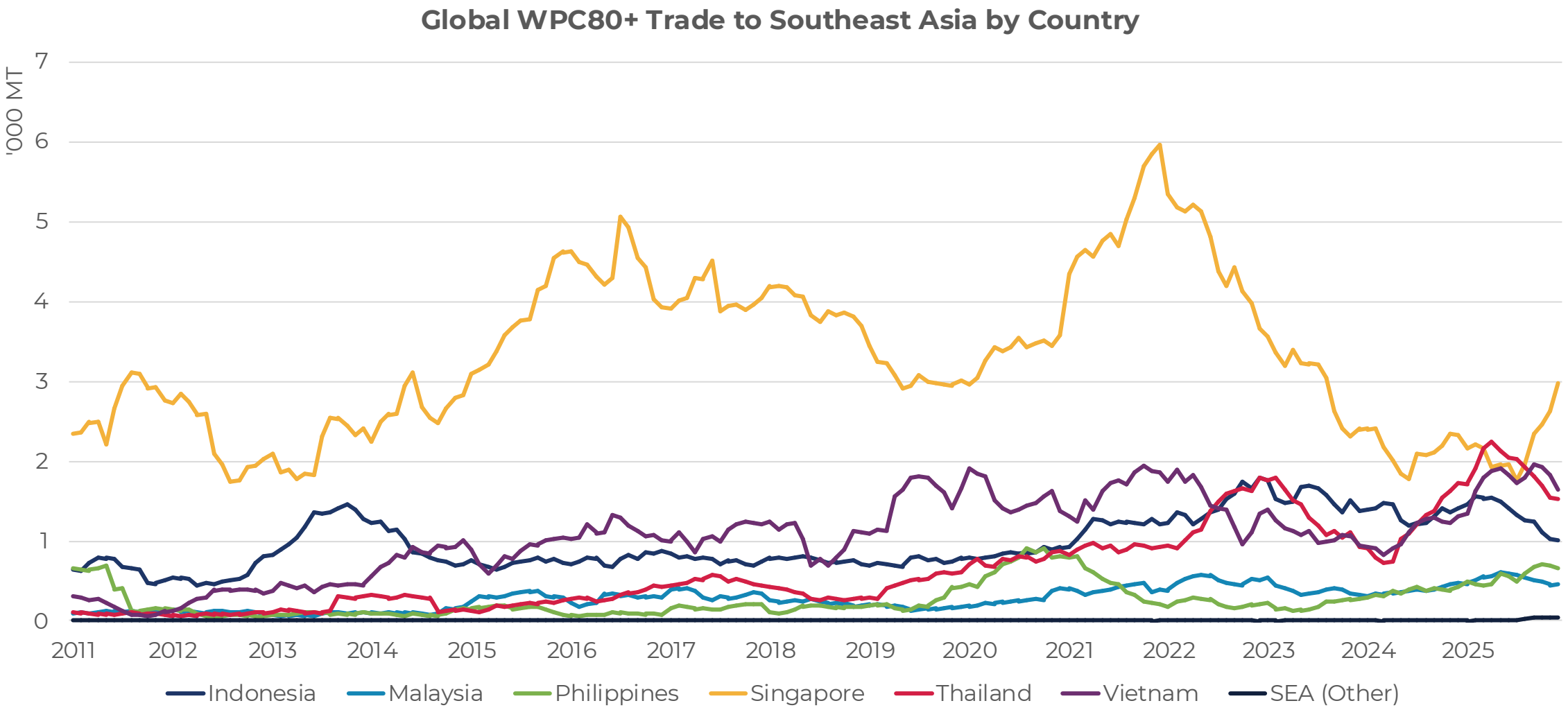






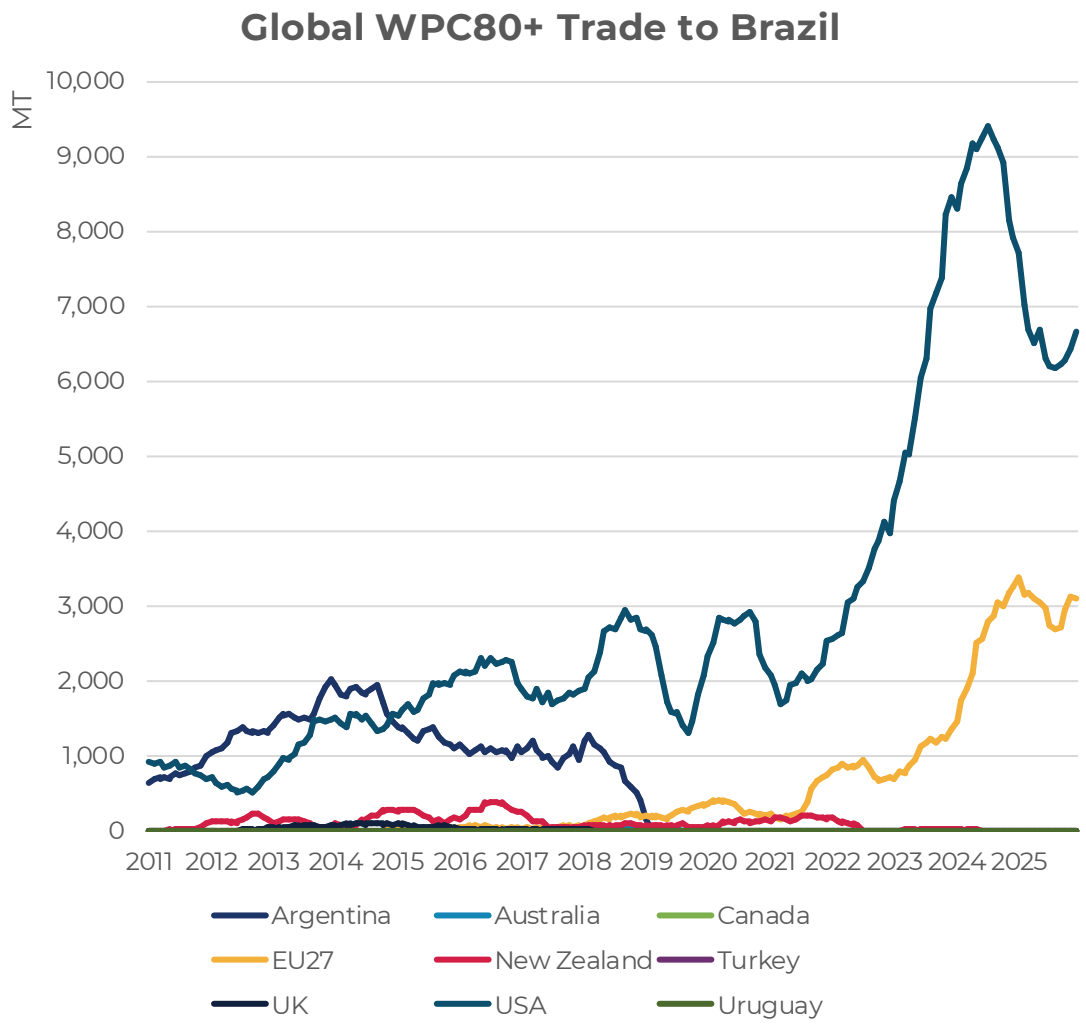
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

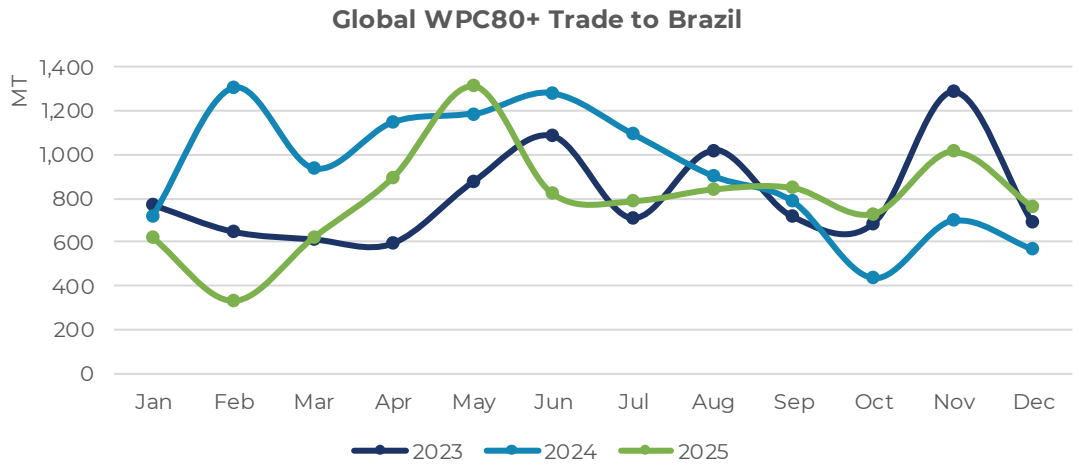
Southeast Asia Country Breakdown

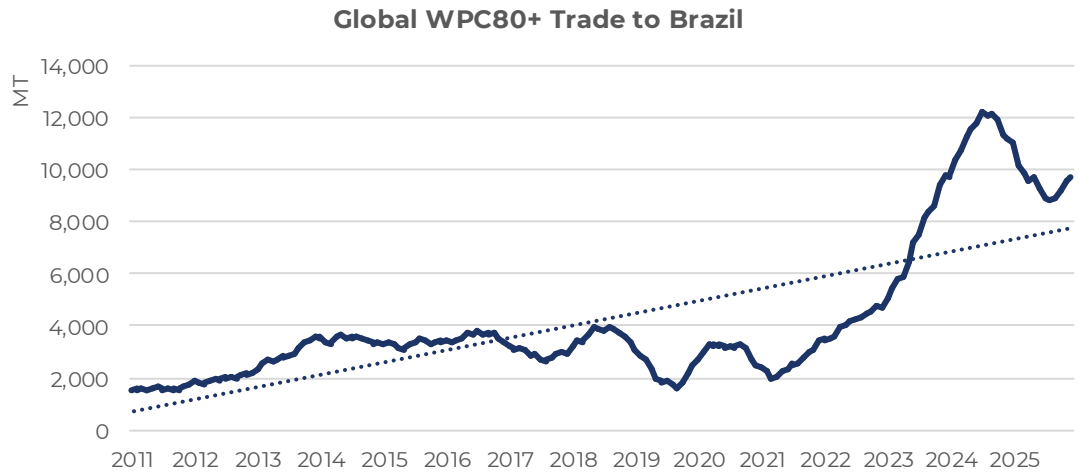


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Brazil

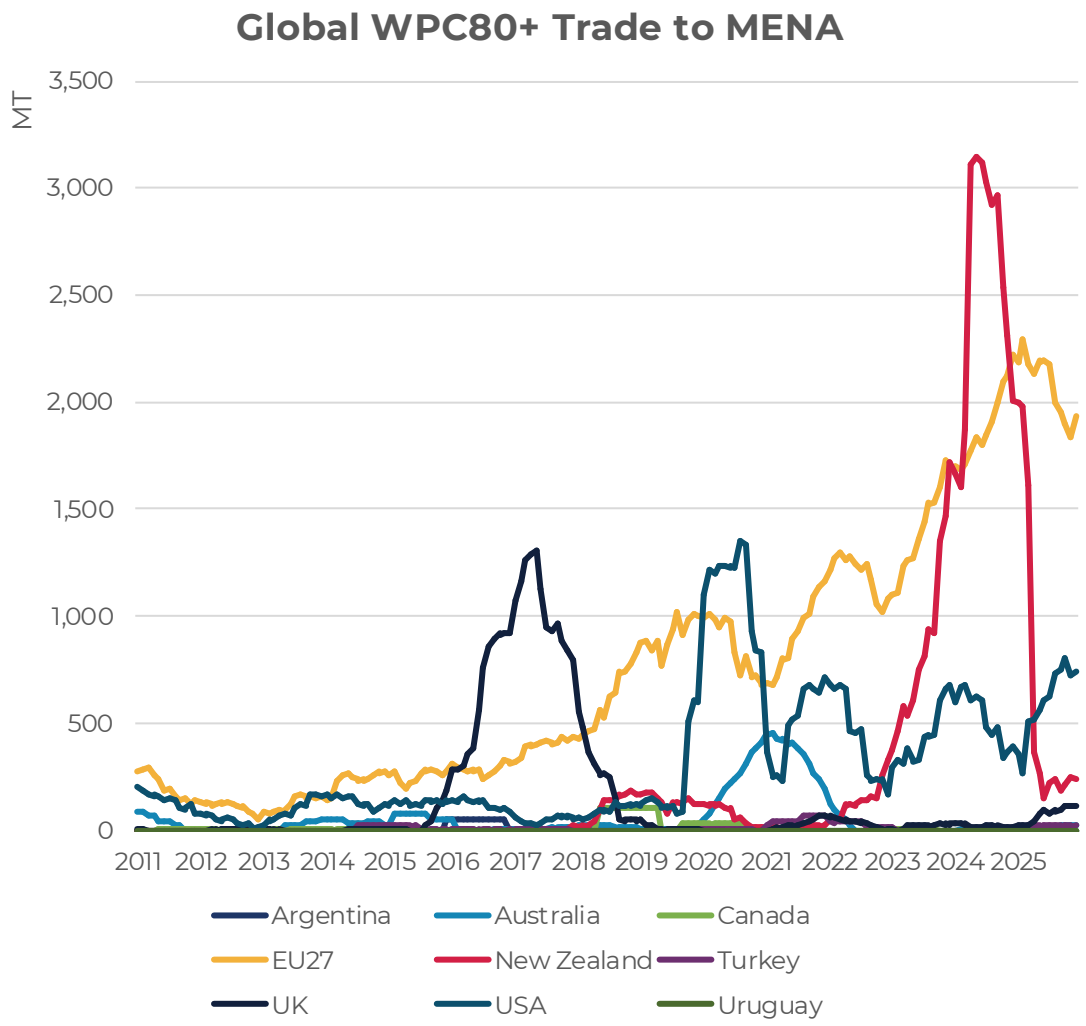


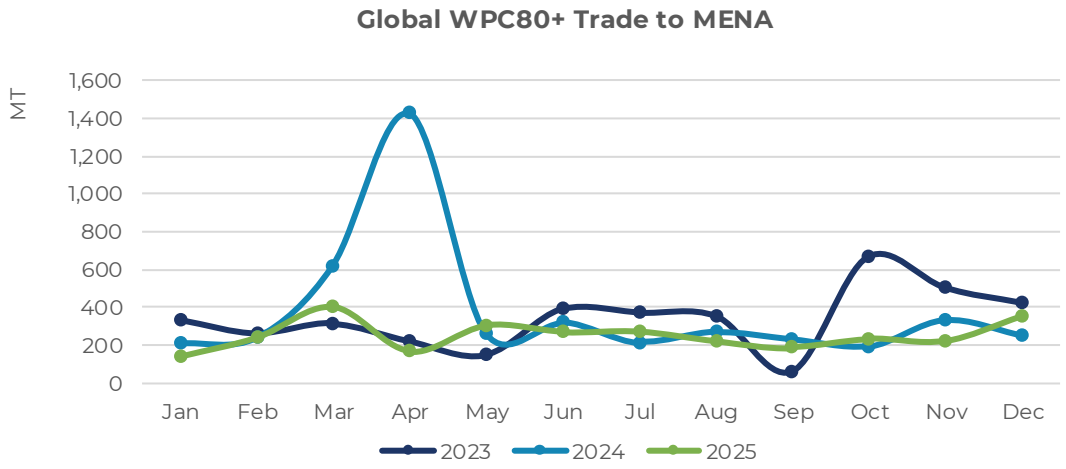


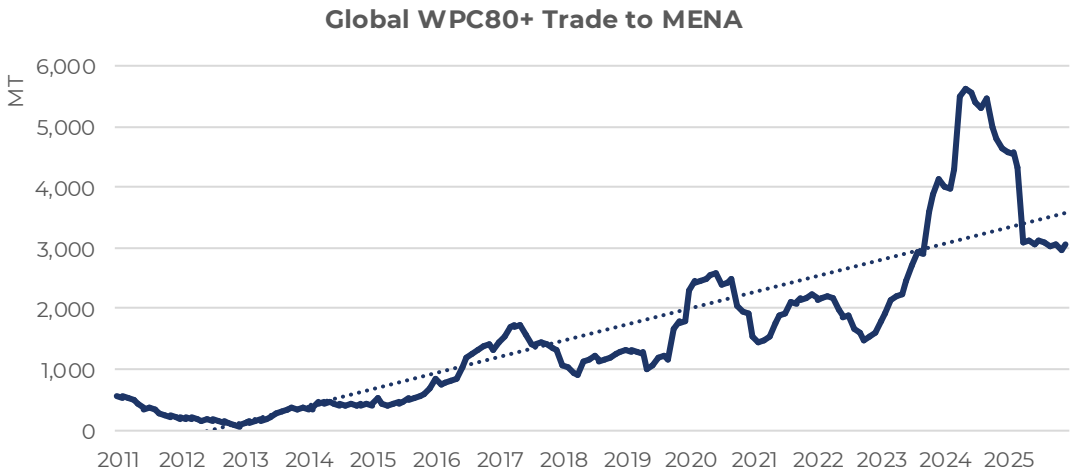


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

MENA

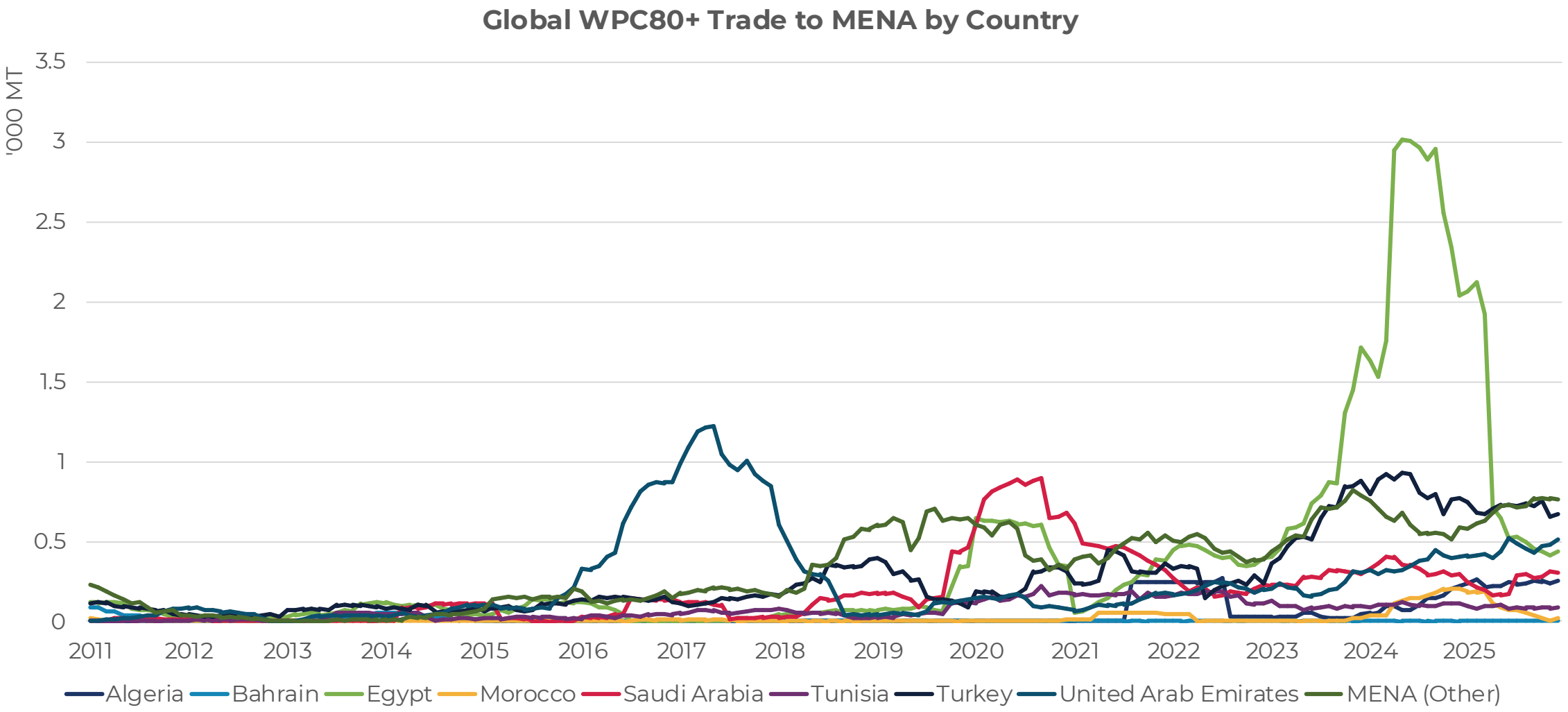






Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Middle East-North Africa Country Breakdown



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

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Other Dairy Products

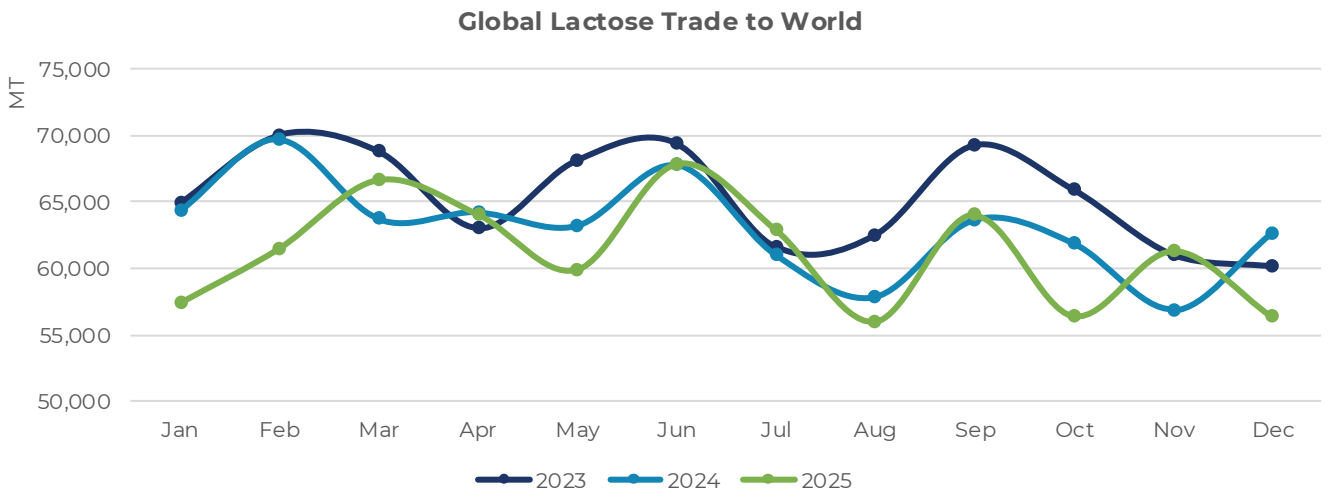
Global Overview: Lactose

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Global Lactose Trade

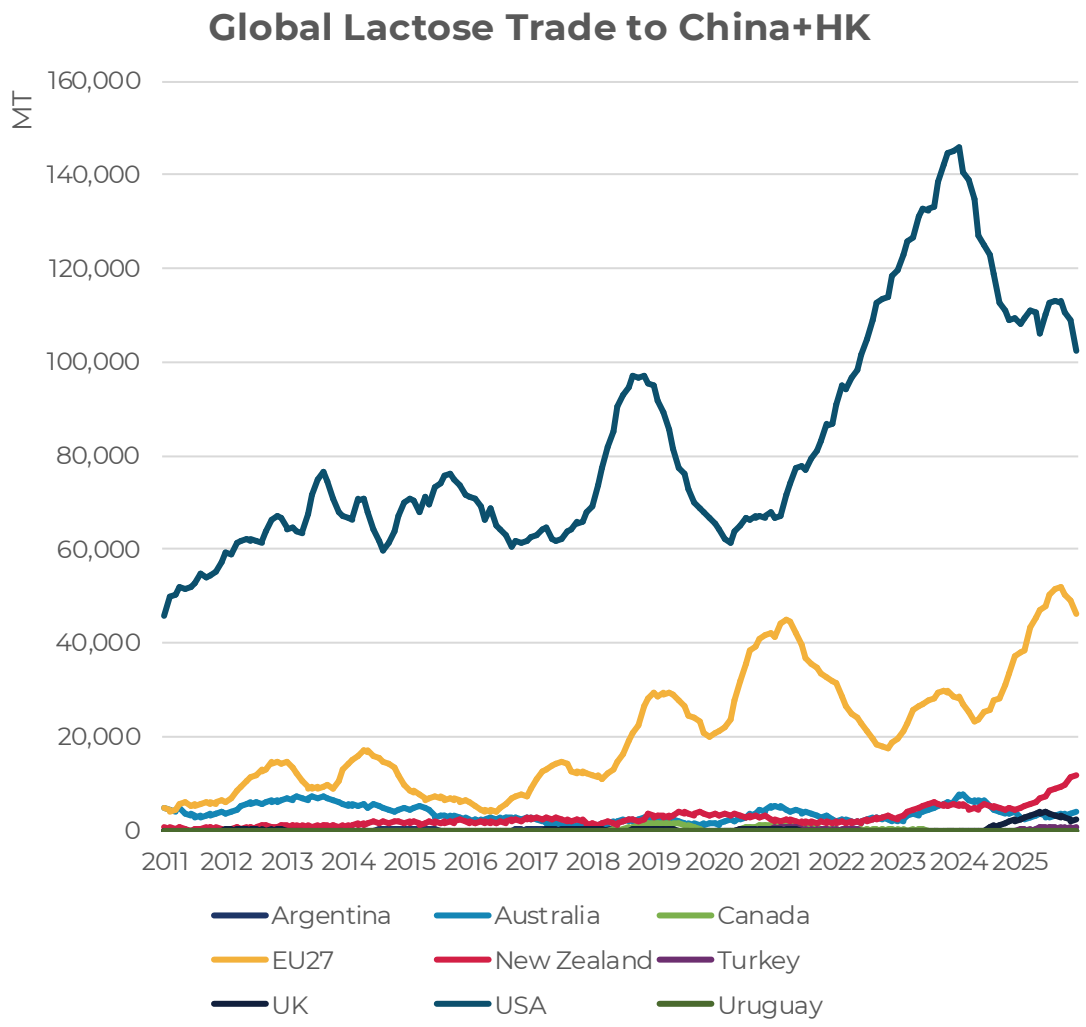
-9.9%	-2.9%	-2.9%	-1.1%
Dec YoY	YTD, Ending Dec	Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	3-Year CAGR

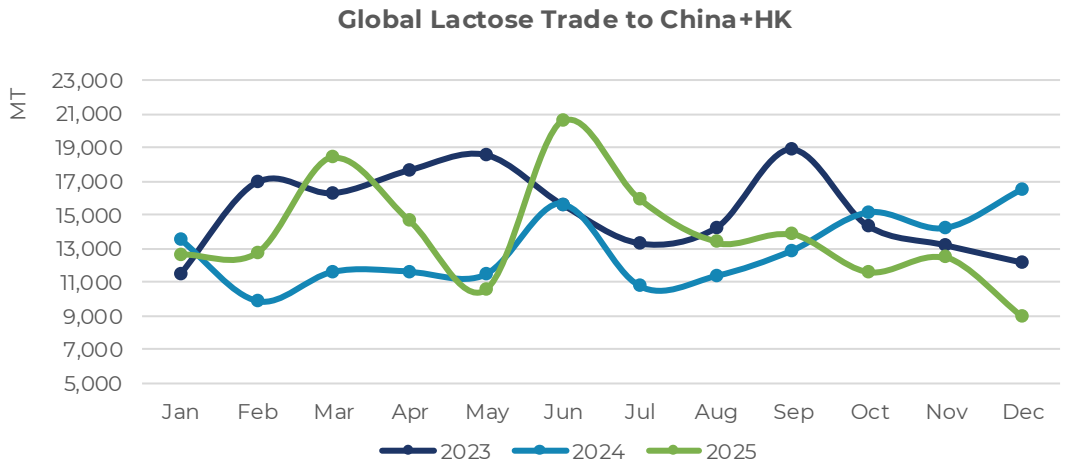
- 2025 was a year of mixed movement in lactose trade, but the overall trend turned downward as the year ended. Southeast Asia was one of the major contributors to the decline in shipments; a strong Q4 was not enough to turn around the uninspired demand through the rest of the year (-5%, -6,076 MT YTD). Also driving the descent was Mexico (-25%, -12,422 MT YTD), though this is in comparison to an impressive 2024 for the region.
- In December, lactose exports to China were muted (-46%, -7,802 MT), putting downward pressure on global numbers despite stronger demand in New Zealand (+27%, +2,163 MT).
- Lactose trade has been challenged for several years now, especially as prices have steadily moved upwards. If that trend continues, demand is not likely to turn around in 2026.



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

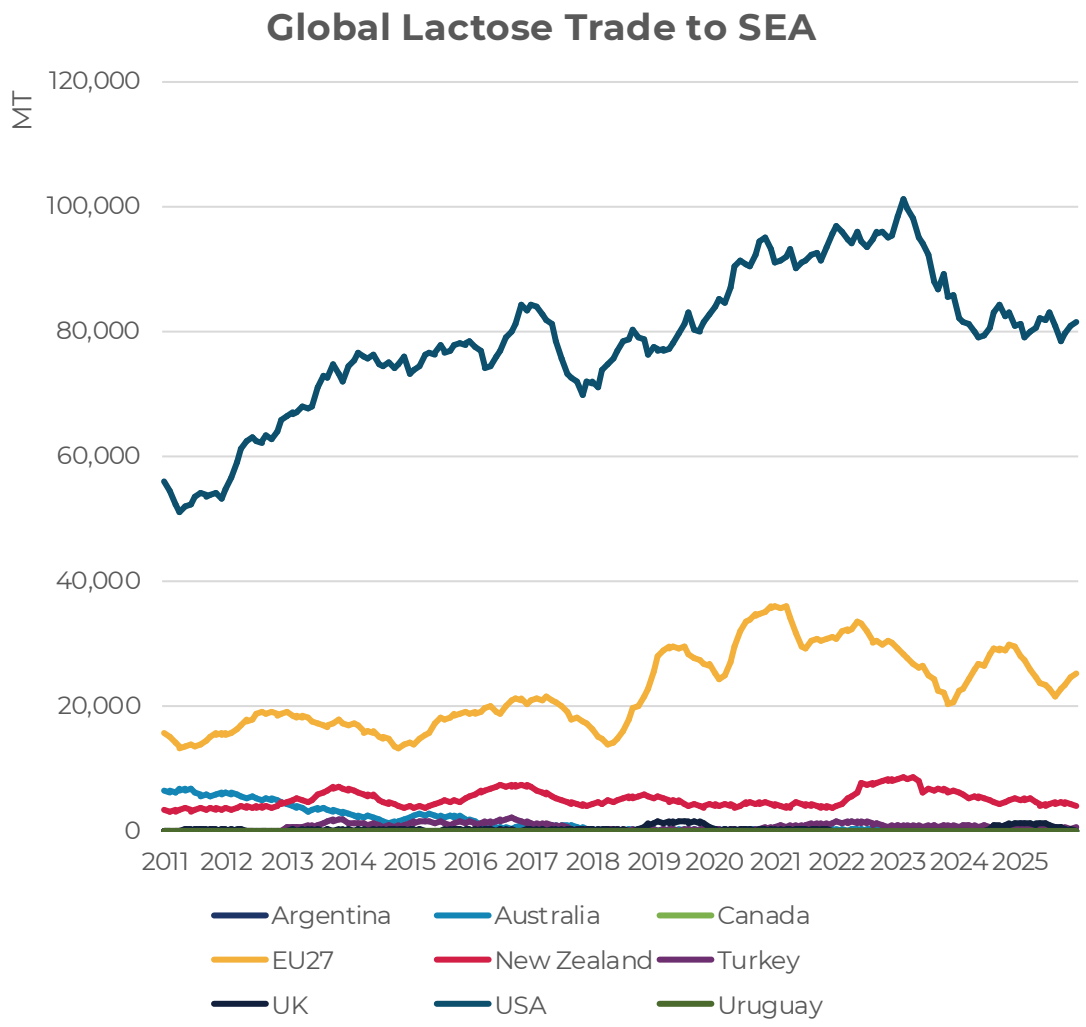
Lactose – China

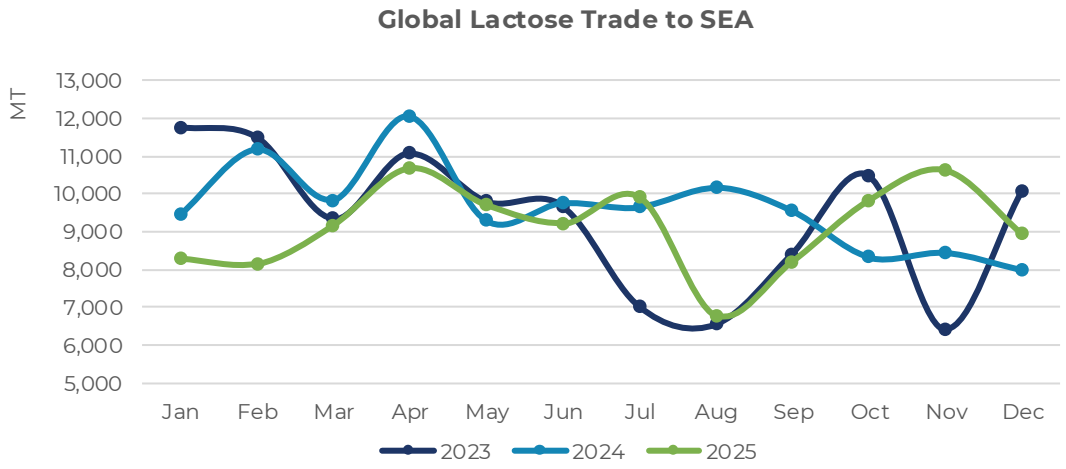


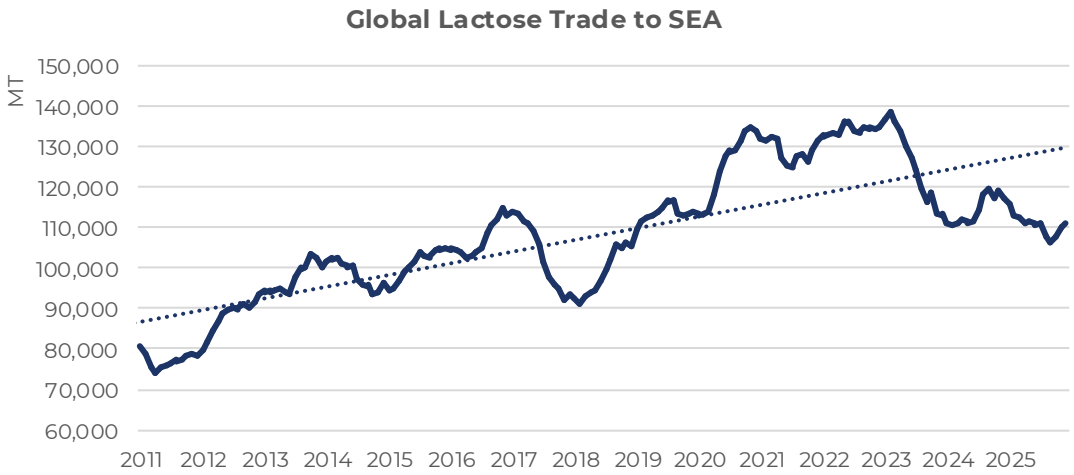


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Lactose – Southeast Asia

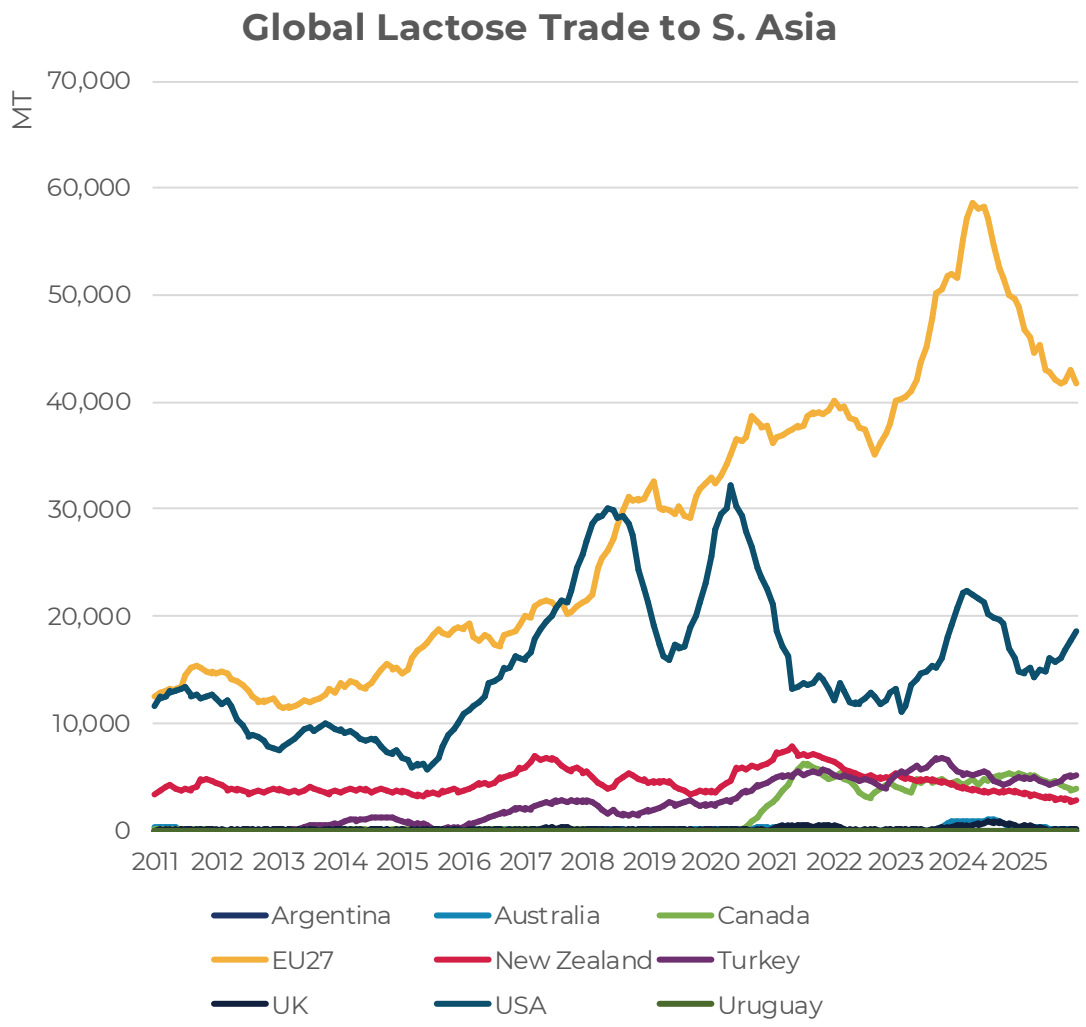


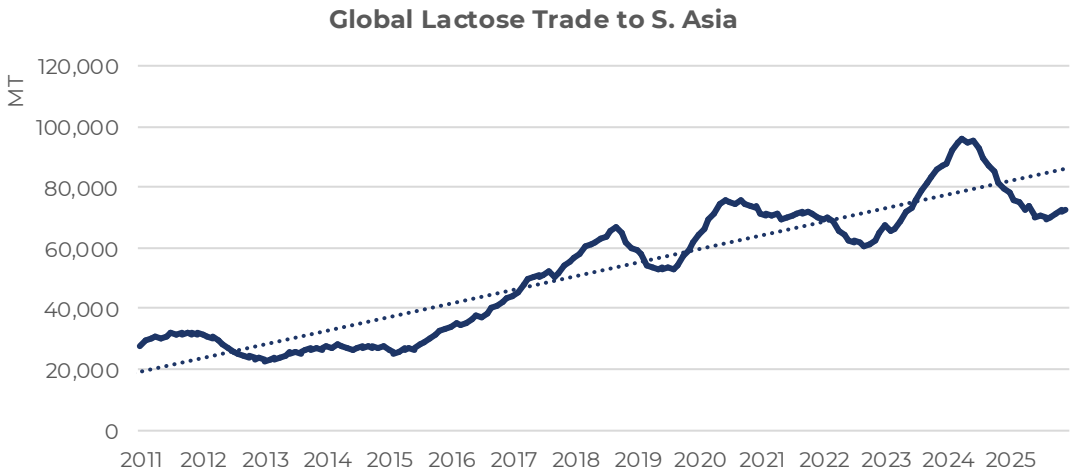




Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Lactose – South Asia





Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

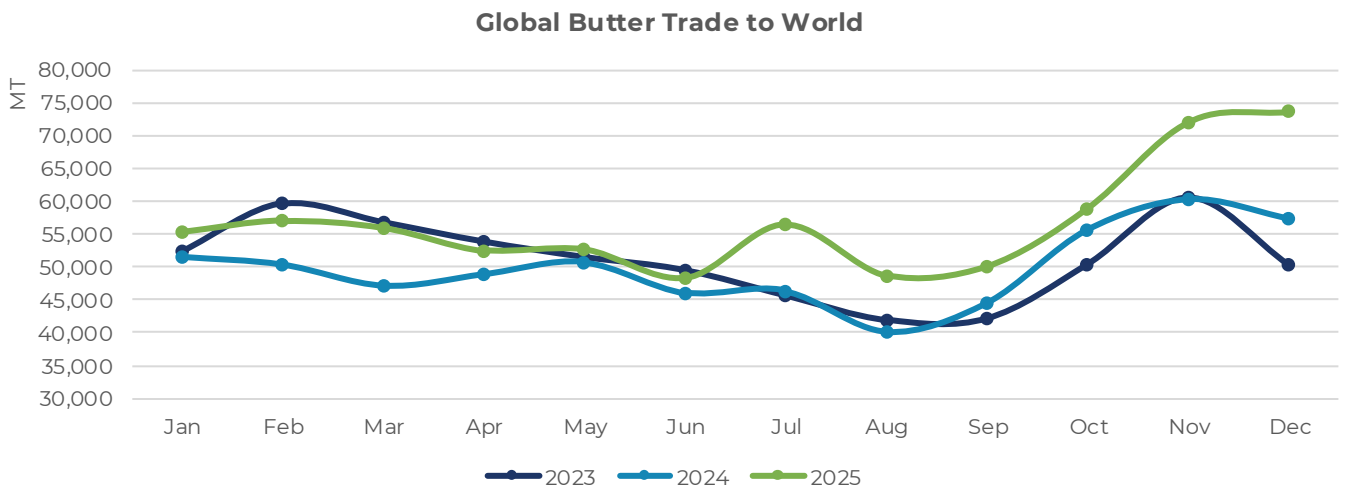
Global Overview: Butter

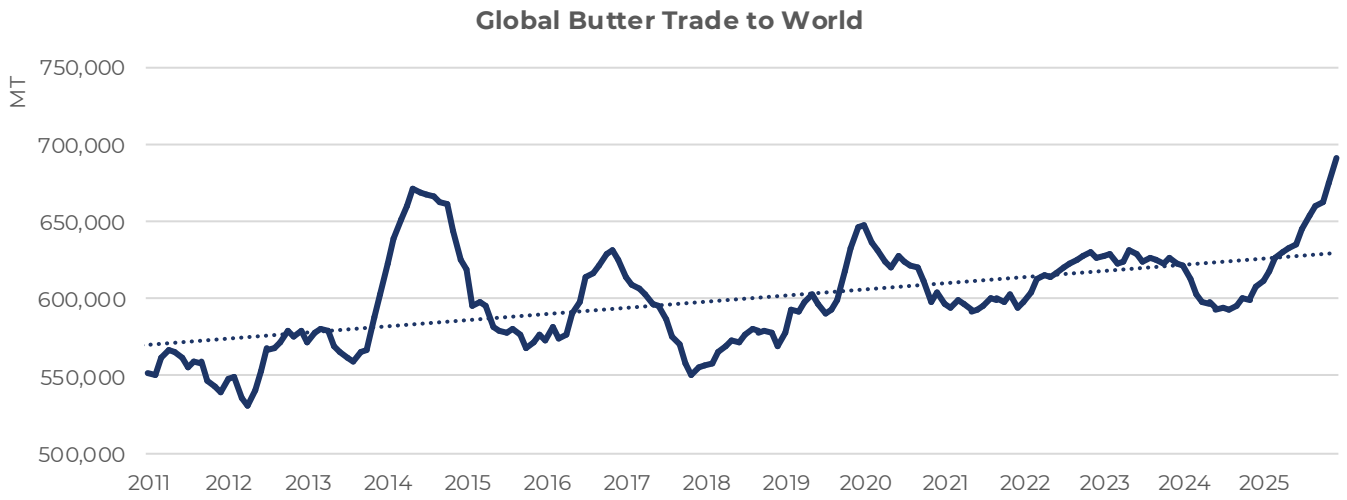
KEY TAKEAWAYS

Global Butter Trade

+28.3%	+13.8%	+13.8%	+3.4%
Nov YoY	YTD, Ending Nov	Last 12-Months, Ending Nov	3-Year CAGR

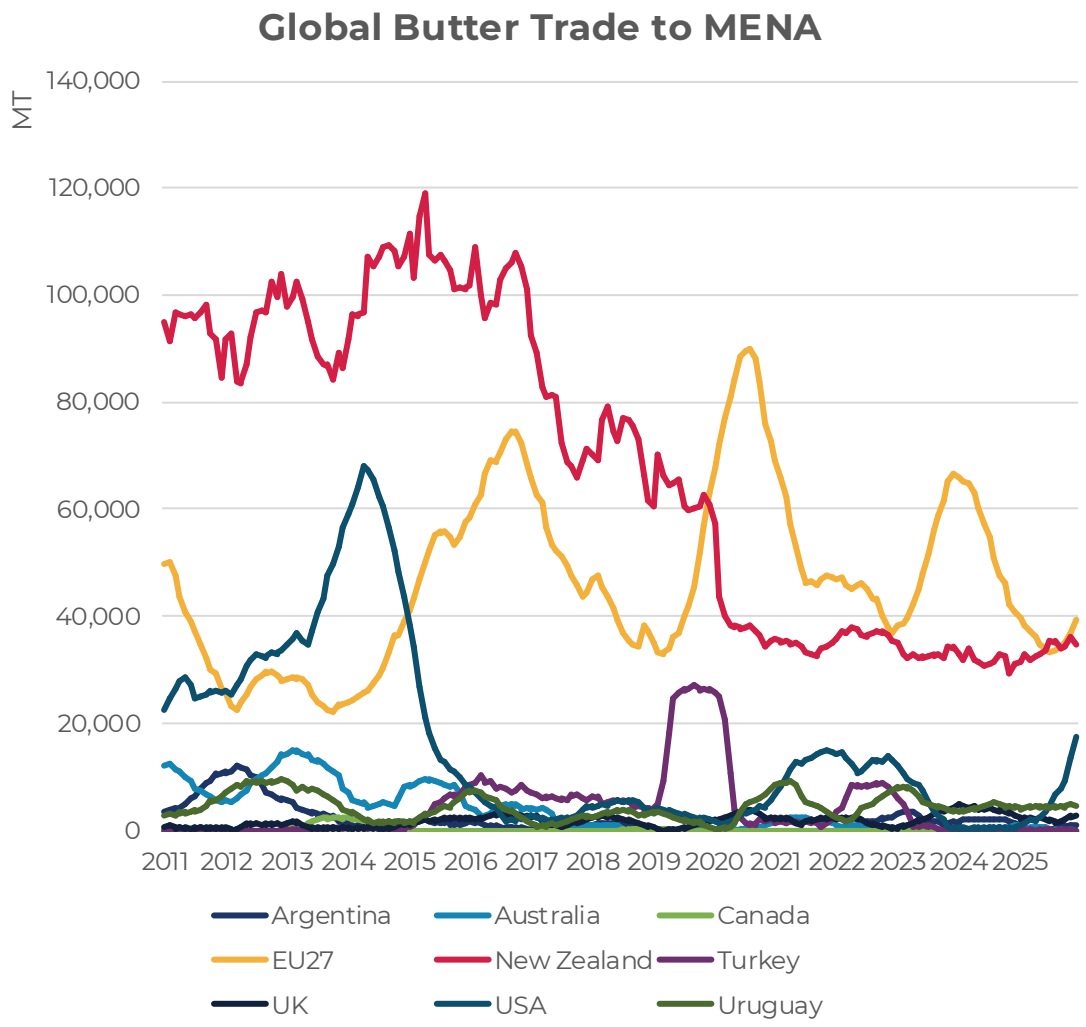
- The world couldn't get enough butter in 2025. More butter left ports than ever before, setting an annual record as over 691,000 MT of butter moved through the year. Demand grew across the board and growth was varied as no single region was the sole driver. Major butter exporters like the U.S. and EU have continued to grow milk production, providing ample supply for exports through the coming months.
- Exports to MENA continued to grow in December (+55%, +5,142 MT), adding to the strong demand in China (+41%, +4,705 MT). Some of this strength may be due to buyers stocking up for early spring holidays; growth in these regions may stagnate in the beginning of 2026 as the holidays pass and geopolitics impact demand.

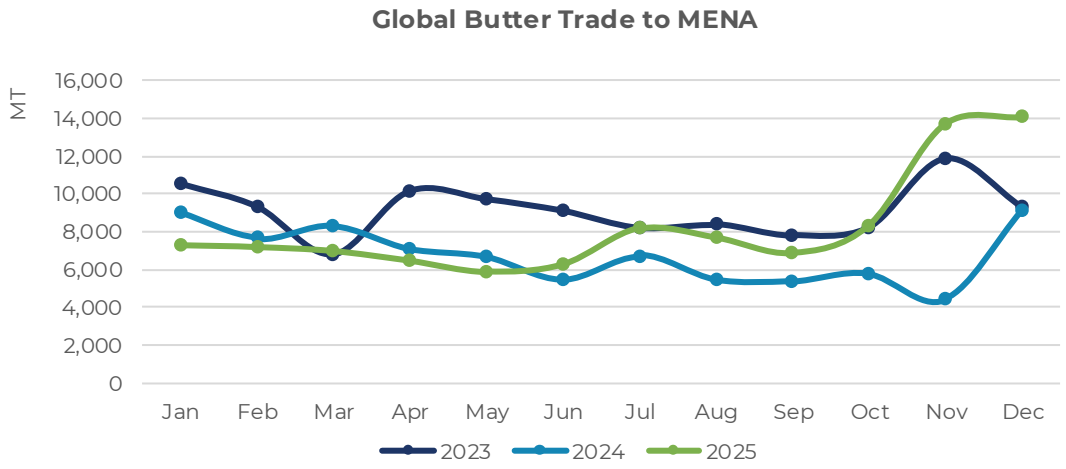


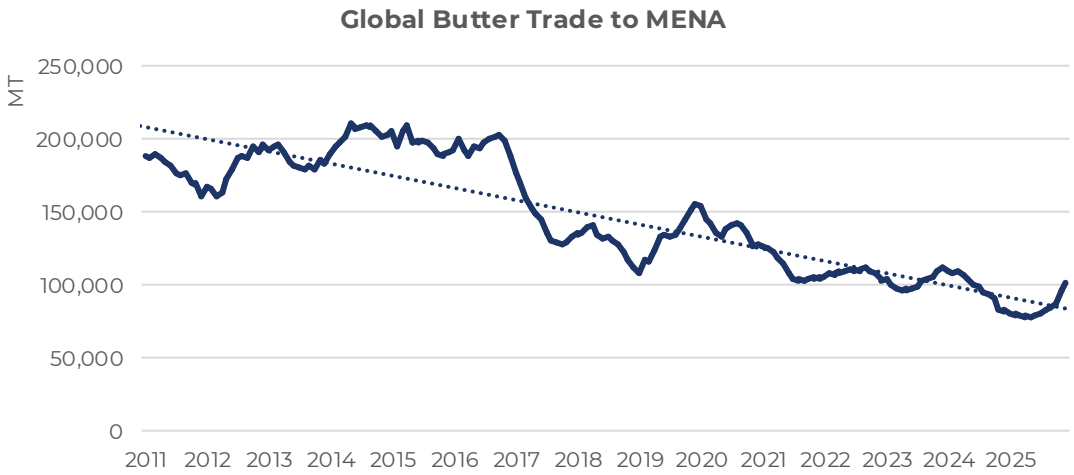


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Butter – MENA

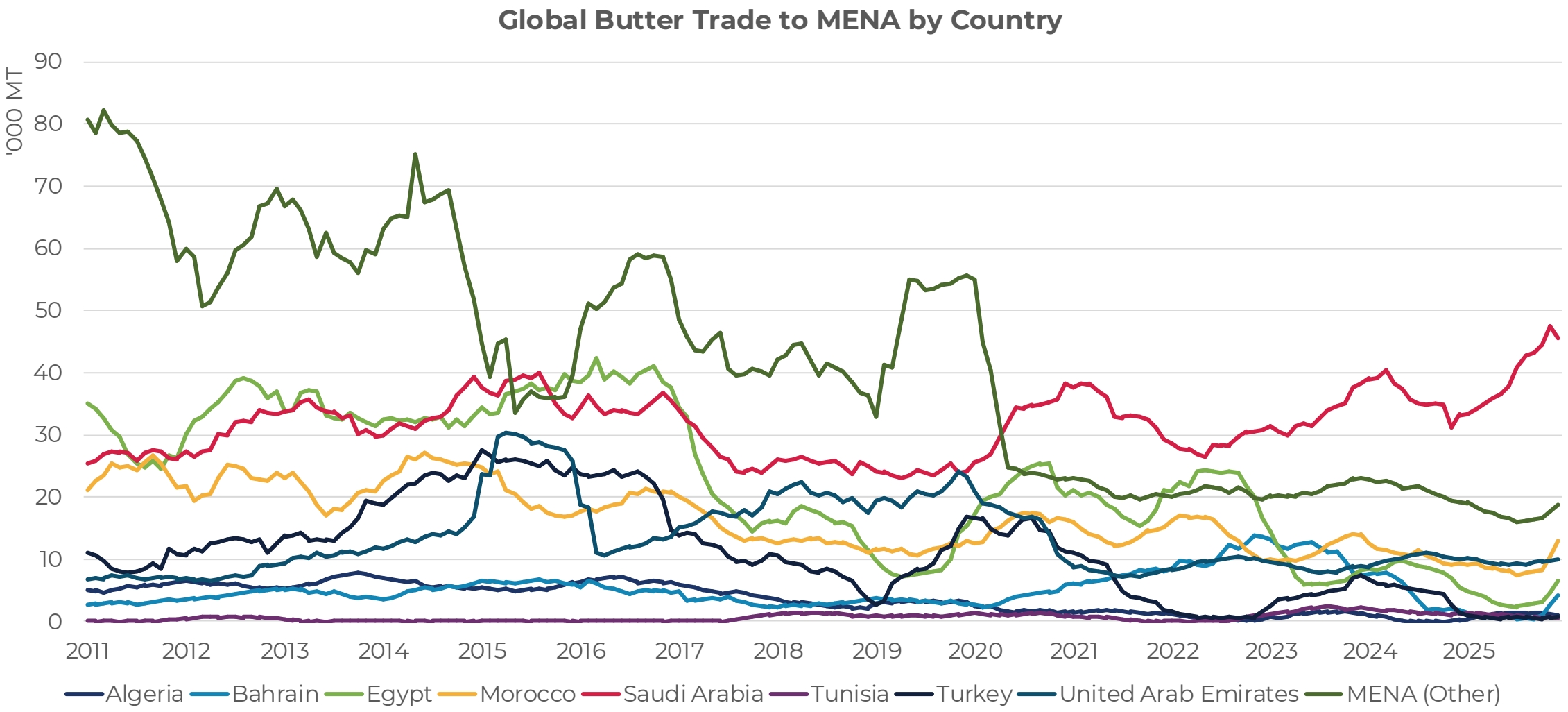






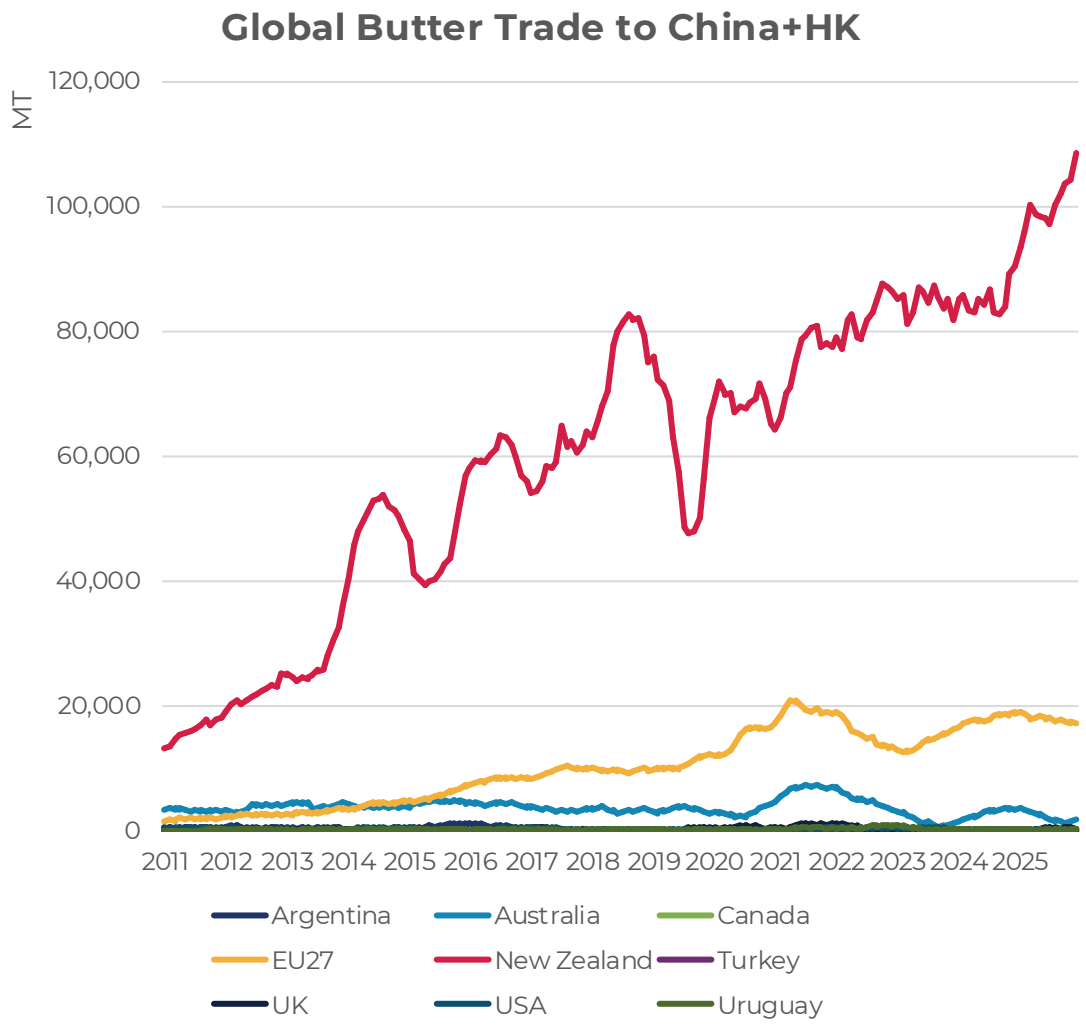
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

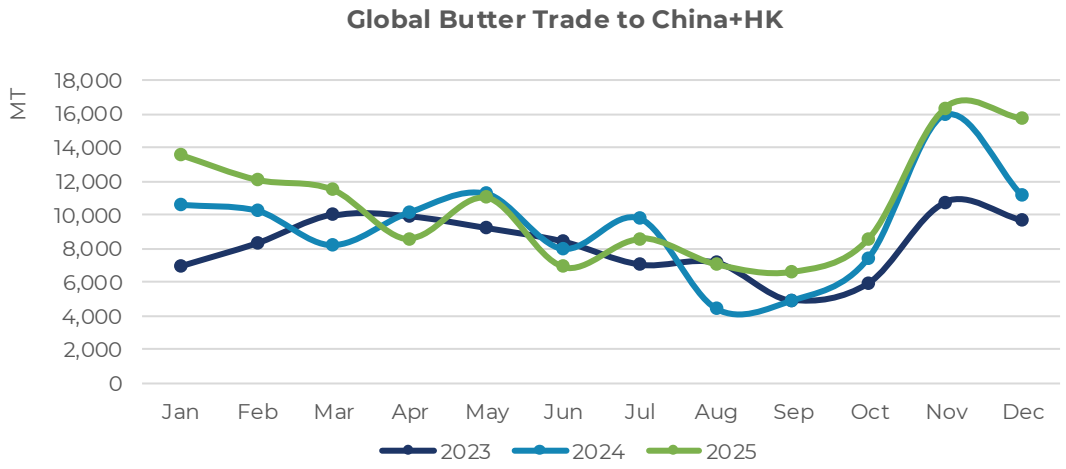
Middle East-North Africa Country Breakdown



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Butter – China





Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

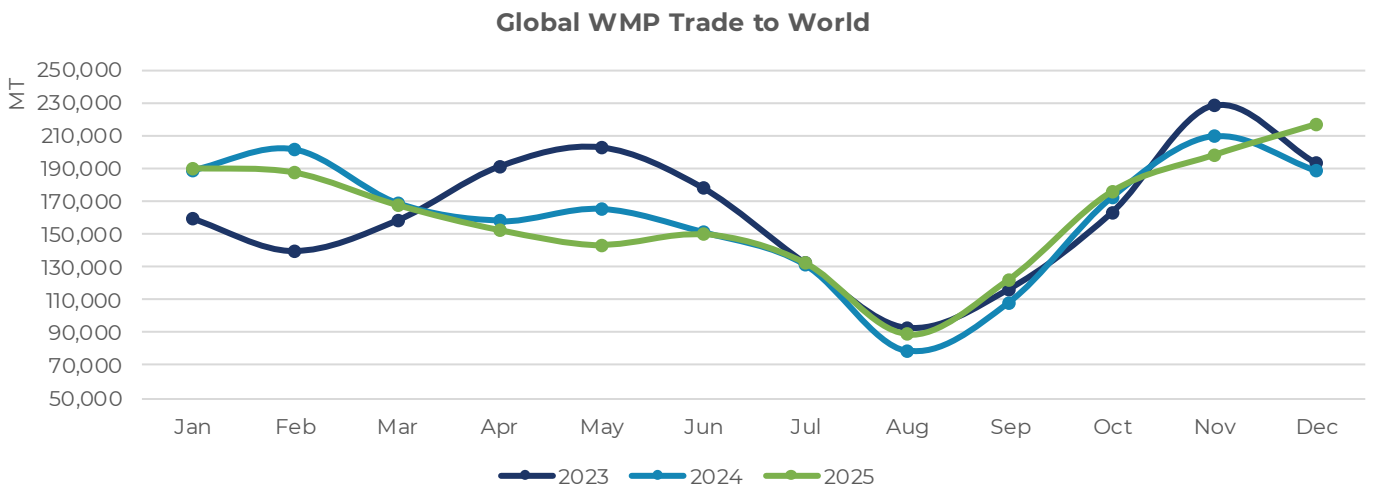
Global Overview: Whole Milk Powder

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Global WMP Trade

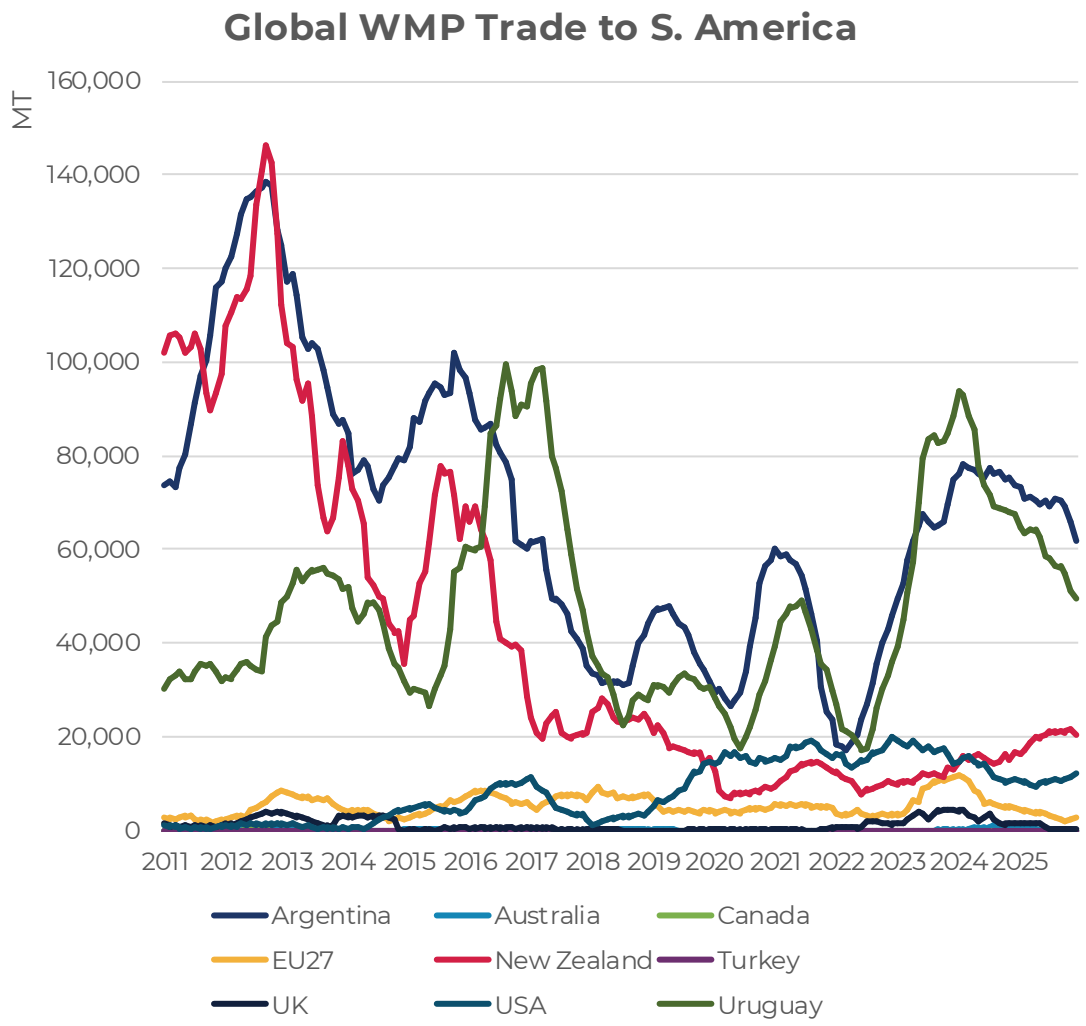
+14.4%	+0.2%	+0.2%	-0.3%
Dec YoY	YTD, Ending Dec	Last 12-Months, Ending Dec	3-Year CAGR

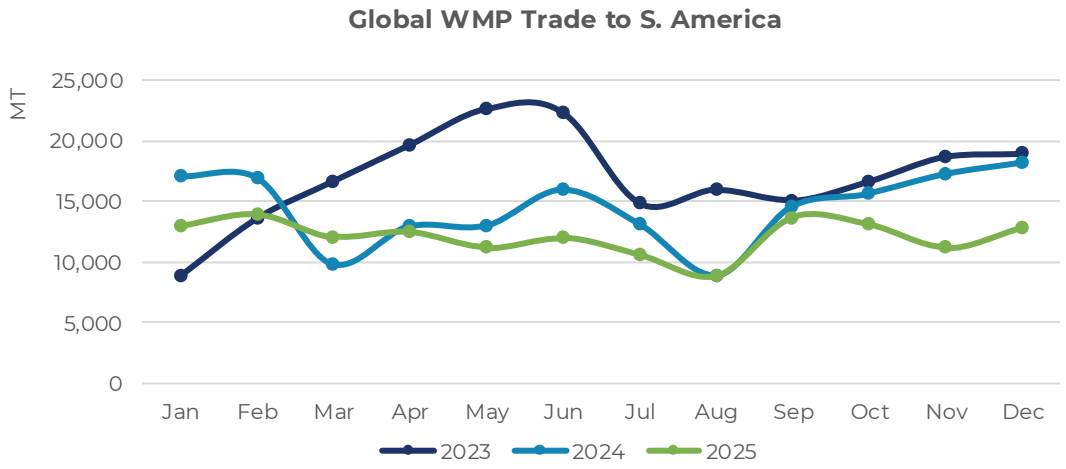
- A late-in-the-game surge pushed WMP trade just slightly back into the black. WMP exports ended the year virtually flat compared to 2025 with mixed demand across several geographies. Exports to South America dipped significantly in 2025 with growing milk production in the region. This was countered by growing shipments to MENA, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.
- Despite an impressive showing from MENA in December as exports to the region nearly doubled (+97%, +39,786 MT), total WMP exports stayed below 2 million MT for the fourth year in a row. Growing domestic production in key markets like China and South America has reduced reliance on imports, resulting in WMP trade not moving much in either direction.

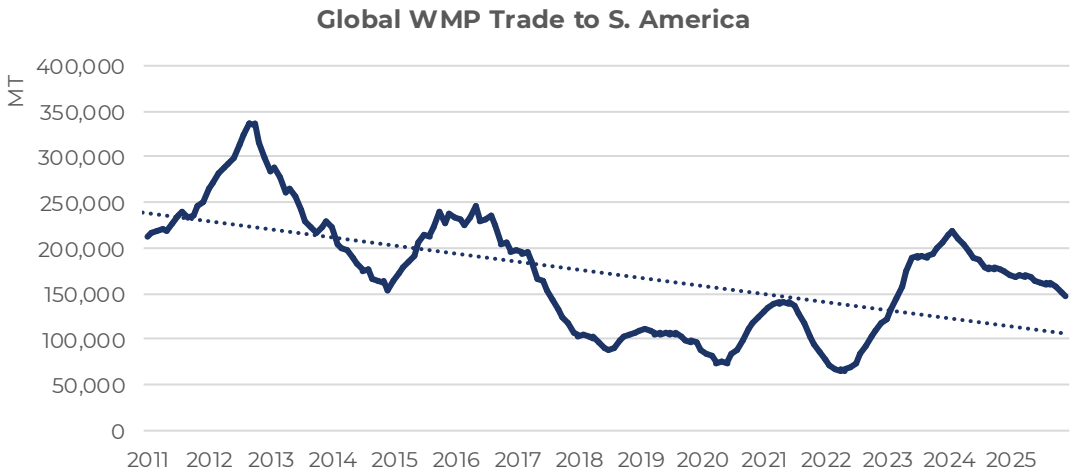


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Whole Milk Powder – South America

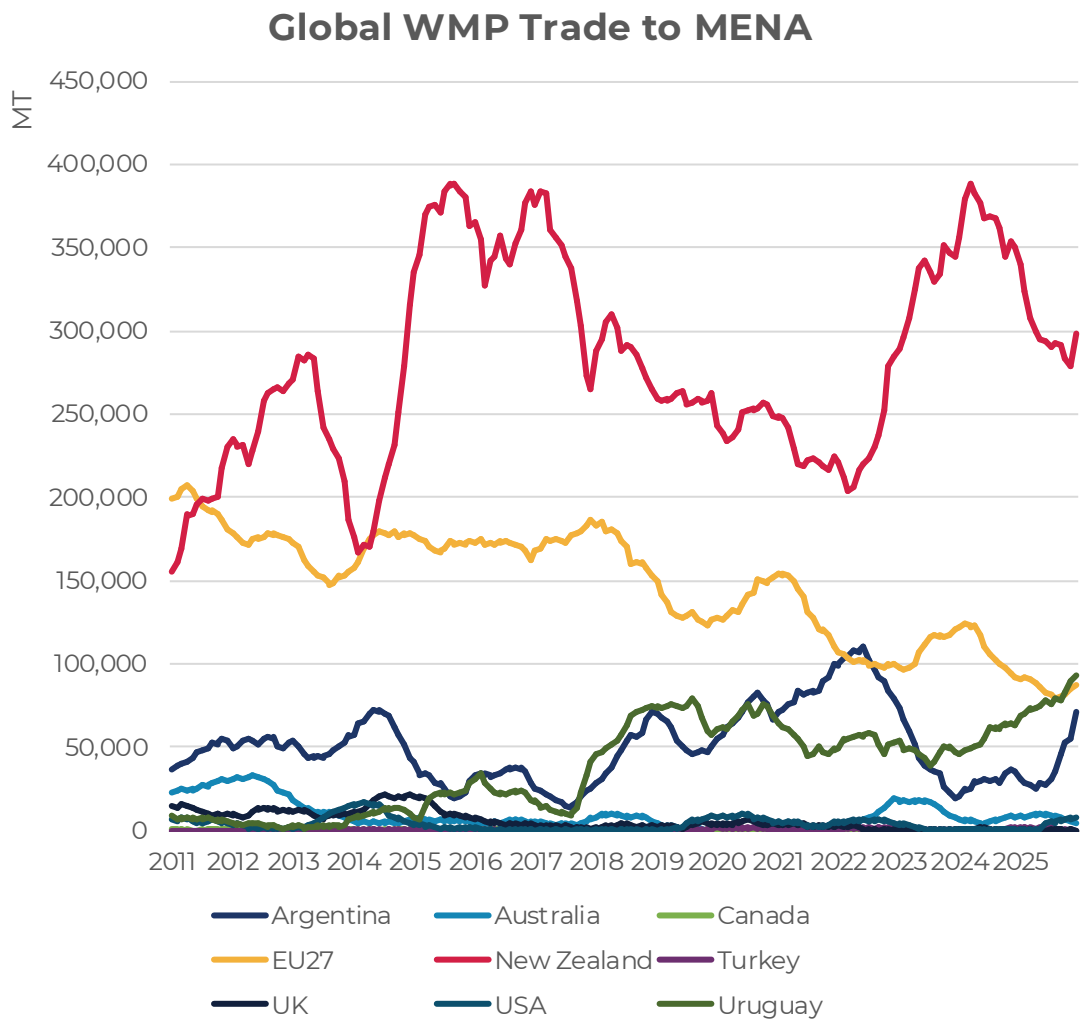


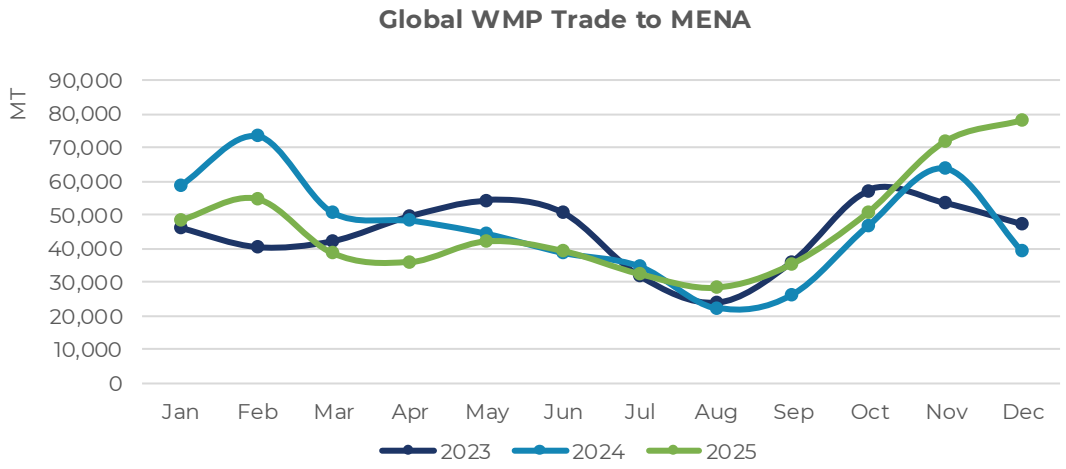


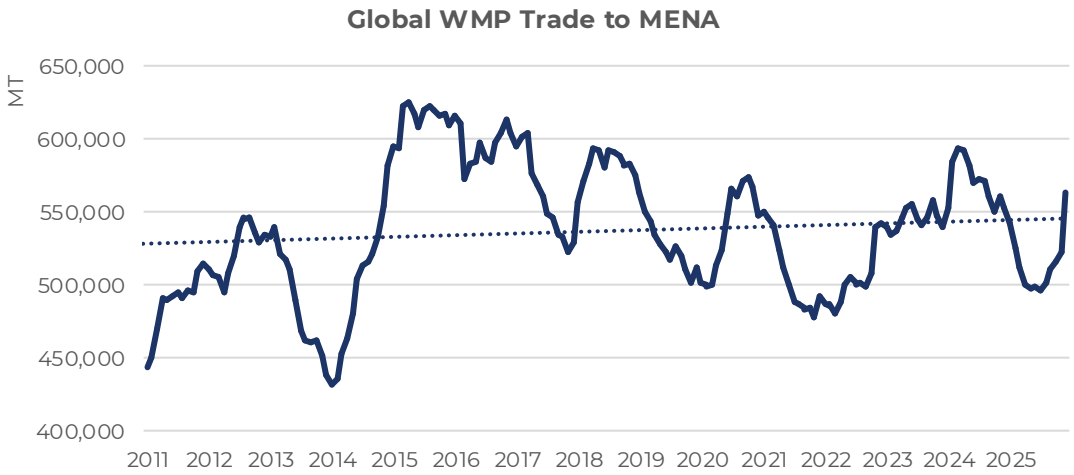


Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Whole Milk Powder – MENA

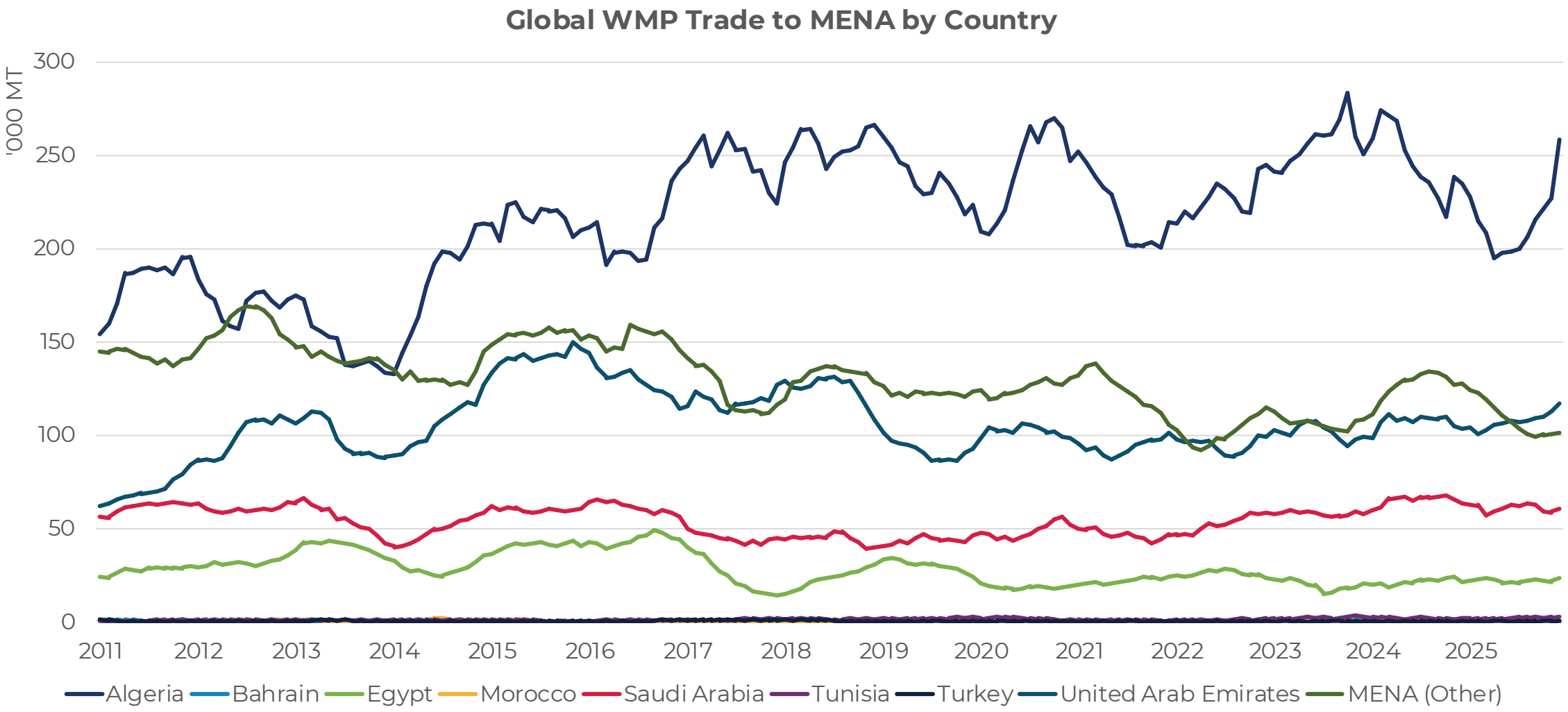






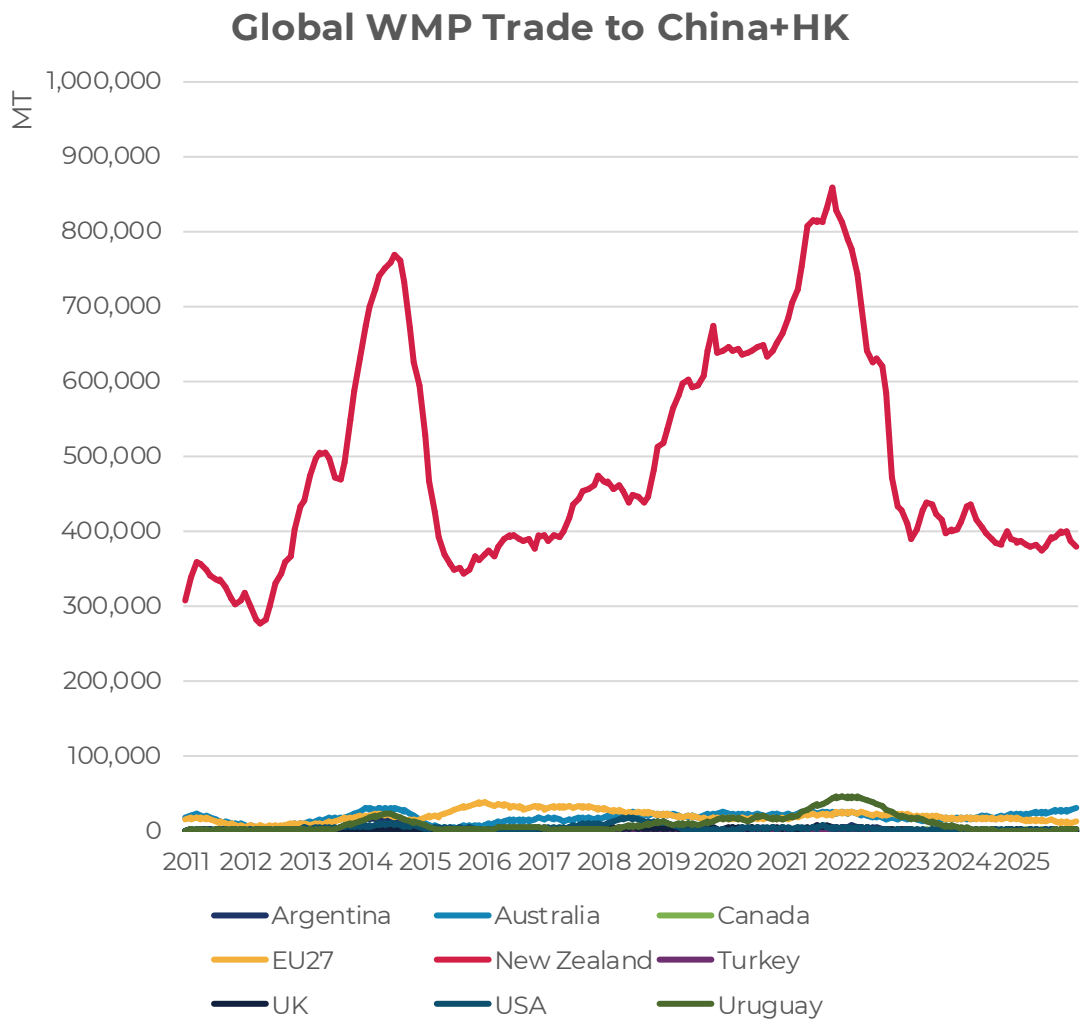
Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

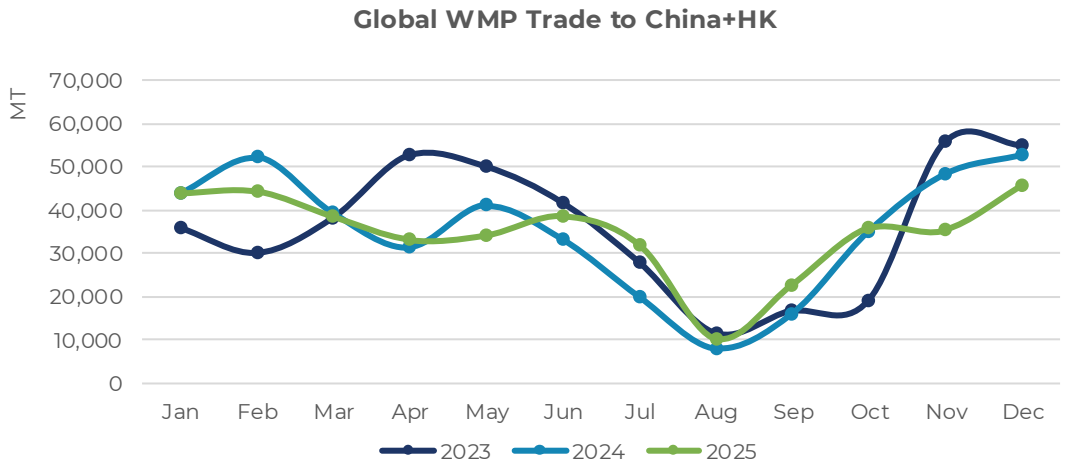
Middle East-North Africa Country Breakdown



Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

Whole Milk Powder – China





Source: NMPF/USDEC, TDM

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DAIRY ECONOMICS

Reach Out for Questions or Comments

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