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Scottish salmon top food export from UK in 2023

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Scottish salmon was named the UKâ??s top food export in 2023, following the publication of annual HMRC figures.

Sales of the nutritious fish grown in the waters of the Highlands and islands increased by 0.5 per cent to Â£581 million in the calendar year â?? equivalent to Â£1.6 million every day.

France once again led the global demand, however, the US and Asian markets saw sharp growth, with the popularity of premium high-quality Scottish salmon increasing among chefs, restaurants, and consumers.

Scottish salmon exports were far higher than the UK's second-largest food export, Cheddar cheese, as well as other popular British products like lamb and beef.

Salmon is also by far the most popular fish among UK shoppers, with sales running at around Â£1.25 billion a year.

But while the market demand is soaring, the sector is facing several business challenges.

Values rose in 2023 given the high demand, yet export volumes were down 11 per cent compared to the previous year.

The increased red tape following Brexit continues to add costs and delays for Scottish salmon farmers, while the UKâ??s recession has dampened the economic environment.

The slow pace of reform of cumbersome regulation in Scotland further adds to the challenges facing farming companies.

Ahead of this yearâ??s general election, trade body Salmon Scotland has urged all political parties to do more to support the countryâ??s most important food sector, setting out a series of manifesto asks.

The organisation has also warned that other nations are looking to increase salmon sales at a faster rate, highlighting how vital it is that Scotland is seen as open for business.