USA Import and Export codes – what are they and how to use them?

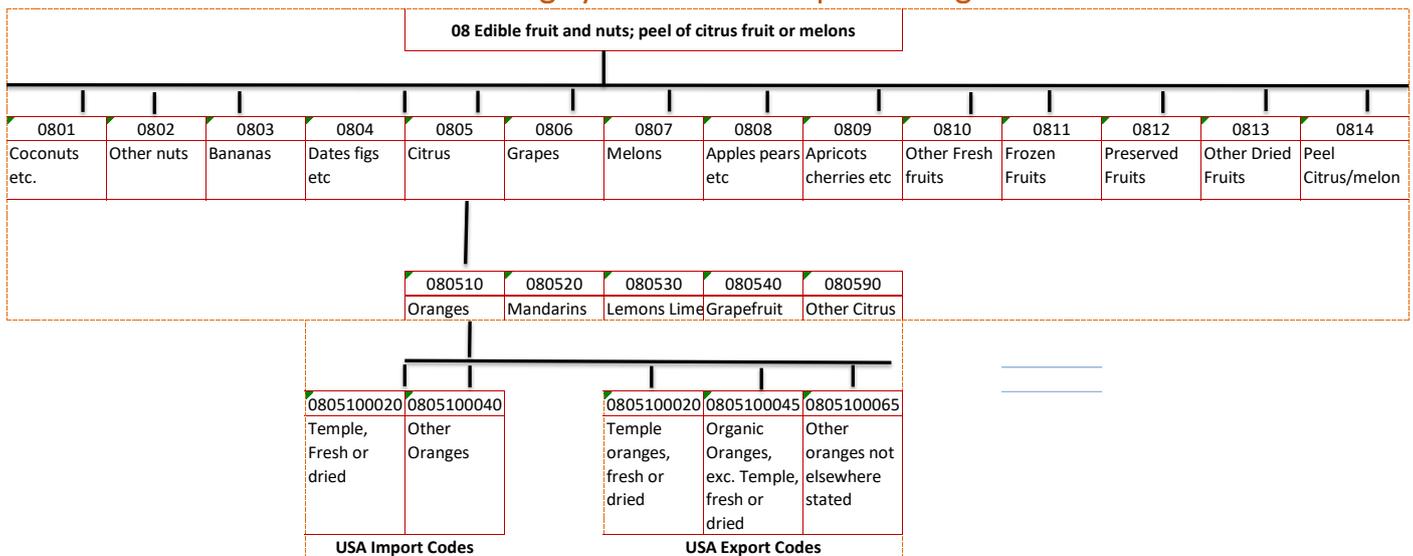## How are Products Coded in USA trade statistics? What are HS Codes?

When products are exported or imported their trade is measured in terms of HS codes. All products have a HS code. The HS codes are an international hierarchical system of coding from 2-digits down to 8 or 10-digits. To demonstrate how the coding system works, the table below shows USA Import and Export codes for "Oranges".

At the 2-digit level all Fruits and Nuts are coded under the 2-digit Code 08. Under Code 08 there are 14 different 4-digit codes of which one is 0805 Citrus Fruit. Under the 4-digit code 0805, there are 5 different 6-digit citrus fruit codes representing different types of citrus fruit. Oranges is found under code 080510 - Fresh or Dried Oranges.

At the 6-digit level all countries use the same codes as it is an international standard that they adhere to. All countries will classify oranges under code 080510. However, countries can choose to further subdivide to an 8 or 10-digit level if they wish. These 8 or 10-digit codes will comprise the original 6-digit codes (the first 6 digits) and any further digits the country chooses. These 8 or 10-digit codes are then unique to each country. International standardization is only available to the 6-digit level.

In the example below, the USA subdivides imports of Oranges into 2 codes, and exports into 3 codes.

HS Coding System – an example - Oranges

08 Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons													
0801	0802	0803	0804	0805	0806	0807	0808	0809	0810	0811	0812	0813	0814
Coconuts etc.	Other nuts	Bananas	Dates figs etc	Citrus	Grapes	Melons	Apples pears etc	Apricots cherries etc	Other Fresh fruits	Frozen Fruits	Preserved Fruits	Other Dried Fruits	Peel Citrus/melon

080510	080520	080530	080540	080590
Oranges	Mandarins	Lemons Lime	Grapefruit	Other Citrus

0805100020	0805100040		0805100020	0805100045	0805100065
Temple, Fresh or dried	Other Oranges		Temple oranges, fresh or dried	Organic Oranges, exc. Temple, fresh or dried	Other oranges not elsewhere stated
USA Import Codes			**USA Export Codes**		

How to Select the Correct HS code?

The first step in any trade analysis is to select the correct HS code for your product. At TradeData we offer:
- a Free online tool to assist; or
- we are happy to assist - please send us an email describing your product(s) and we will find the correct code for you.

Does the HS code accurately represent my product to enable accurate analysis?

It is an important initial step to judge how well the chosen HS code represents your product. The best HS codes are those that represent homogeneous products – that is codes that represent products that are similar. An example is the USA export code of 0805100020 = Temple Oranges, fresh or chilled. If it is a Temple Orange, it is not a Navel Orange, or a lemon and so on.

Other HS codes may have several product segments within them. However, if the different products are quite distinctive in terms of their characteristics, a meaningful analysis can usually be undertaken. An example is the USA import code covering Stainless Steel Flat Wire. Within this code most imports arrive from Canada at prices around $US 4,000 per tonne. However, there are significant import volumes at $US 8,000 per tonne from Japan. Obviously, the higher and lower priced wire are quite different products. If you were knowledgeable in this industry, you would be able to relate these higher/lower priced imports to individual product segments and it would be sensible to analyze them separately.

Dividing import or export statistics into discrete market segments is one of the more important analyses that can be undertaken using trade statistics. TradeData can assist you to undertake these analyses.

The last HS code example is one where the code does not well represent an individual product and is USA export code 8443992250 Parts and accessories for the goods of subheading 8443.31 and of printer units of subheading 8443.32.10, other than ink. This code will have a wide range of different parts included within it. In this instance, other than very general information on the total value of imports, little meaningful analysis can be undertaken with this data.

Once you have selected the correct code it is important then to assess how accurately the code(s) represents your product(s) and will this then enable accurate analysis. TradeData are happy to assist in this.