



**Harmonized Tariff Schedule System
External User Guide**

Table of Contents

1. External User Capabilities.....	4
1.1. Search HTS.....	4
1.1.1. Search Terms.....	4
1.1.2. Search Results.....	5
1.1.3. No Results Found.....	7
1.2. View HTS.....	8
1.2.1. HTS Archive.....	9
1.3. Export HTS Data.....	10
1.4. RESTful Api.....	11
1.4.1. Search.....	11
1.4.2. Export.....	11
1.4.3. Error Codes.....	11
Appendix A: Description of the HTS.....	12
Appendix B - Words Ignored by HTS Search.....	15

Introduction

This section provides an introduction to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) External User Guide. See Appendix A of this document for a detailed description of the HTS.

Background

In May, 2013, the United States International Trade Commission (USITC) contracted with NCI, Inc. (formerly Computech, Inc.) to build a software system to produce and maintain the HTS with enhanced consistency, audit capability, and ease in updating document entries. Previously the official HTS was maintained and reviewed manually using word processing files. Updates were made in secondary electronic repositories which supported search and reporting features. The USITC was urged by the Inspector General to modernize the HTS processes to meet certain audit and data integrity standards and to manage all HTS data in a centralized, electronic repository.

This new HTS System was formulated as a software solution to those recommendations. It is designed as a web based system intended to allow designated internal users the ability to update, search, and publish new editions of the HTS with emphasis on security, data accuracy, and action traceability.

The new external HTS system provides the user with the ability to search the HTS database, print entire (or sections of) HTS releases, view change records for each HTS release, and export the HTS data in various consumable formats.

1. External User Capabilities

The external HTS system provides the user with the ability to:

1. Search the HTS database
2. View entire (or sections of) HTS releases
3. Export the HTS data in various consumable formats

1.1. Search HTS

The HTS Search functionality allows users to query the database to find information specific to certain goods or items found in the officially published HTS document.

To perform a search using this module, the user begins by selecting [Search] from the menu bar. Next, the user enters a search term, which is a text string of a word(s) or a numeric value matching an HTS heading or subheading number. To initiate the search, the user presses Enter on the keyboard or clicks on the Search button to the right of the search bar.



1.1.1. Search Terms

The user may search for an individual word, a phrase, or an HTS Heading or Subheading number. Different search terms will produce different behaviors for finding search results.

Search term	Search Behavior
Single word	Returns tariff records containing the word, or a related version of the word
Phrase surrounded by double-quotes	Returns tariff records containing the exact phrase
Phrase with no quotes	Returns tariff records containing AT LEAST ONE word from the search term, or a related version of the word
Phrase with each word surrounded by double-quotes	Returns tariff records containing EVERY word from the search term; every word must be exact

HTS Heading/Subheading	Returns the specified HTS Heading/Subheading as well as all nested Subheadings
Prefixing a word with a hyphen sign (-)	Negates the word so that any tariffs containing that word will be excluded from the search results

Note: The HTS search will ignore common words that are listed in Appendix B.

Note: When searching without quotes, the HTS search will return results which have the same root word as the search term (i.e., stemming). For example, the same results are returned when the user searches for any of these words: sensitized, sensitizing, sensitivity.

The HTS Search feature does not support:

- Wildcards or regular expressions to search partial words or phrases
- Searching chapter or section notes
- Searching data being updated for future releases; the search module queries only data that has reached its effective date

1.1.2. Search Results

The search results will appear in two panes:

The screenshot displays the 'Harmonized Tariff Schedule (2015)' search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Search', 'View', 'Export', and 'Feedback' options. Below this, a search bar contains the text 'milk'. To the right of the search bar are buttons for 'Search', 'Download Chapter', and 'Guide'. The main area is divided into two panes. The left pane, titled 'Search Results : 45', lists several HTS headings with their descriptions: 0401 (Milk and cream, not concentrated nor containing added sugar or other sweetening matter), 0402 (Milk and cream, concentrated or containing added sugar or other sweetening matter), 0403 (Buttermilk, curdled milk and cream, yogurt, kephir and other fermented or acidified milk and cream, whether or not concentrated or containing added sugar or other sweetening matter or flavored or containing added fruit, nuts or cocoa), 0403.90.8500 (Fermented milk other than dried fermented milk or other than dried milk with added lactic ferments), and 0404 (Whey, whether or not concentrated or containing). The right pane, titled 'Rates', shows a table of search results for 'milk'. The table has columns for HTS heading, description, units, and rates. The first row shows heading 0401 with a description 'Milk and cream, not concentrated nor containing added sugar or other sweetening matter'. Below it, there are two rows for subheadings: 0401.10.00 (Of a fat content, by weight, not exceeding 1 percent) and 0401.20 (Of a fat content, by weight, exceeding 1 percent but not exceeding 6 percent). The final row shows heading 0401.20.20 (For not over 11,356,236 liters entered in any calendar year).

- 1) The left window pane shows all the HTS Subheading numbers and Article Descriptions (see Appendix A for more information) with the search results count displayed at the top. Results are displayed in order of the HTS Number, lowest to highest. Clicking upon an HTS Number updates the contents of the right window pane.



- 2) The right window pane shows the tariff rates for the relevant chapter, scrolled such that the chosen search result appears at the top of the screen. Initially, the first search result is shown. The search term is highlighted in green within the Article Description section.

The Search Results Rates tab is selected by default and displays the following information:

- Heading/Subheading, which is the HTS Number (4, 6, and 8 digits)
- Stat Suffix, which combined with the Heading/Subheading is the 10 digit HTS Number
- Article description
- Unit of Quantity
- Tariff Rates
 - General Rate of Duty
 - Special Rate of Duty
 - Column 2 Rate of Duty

The Stat Suffix column contains a link to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Customs Rulings Online Search System (CROSS) for information on classification rulings regarding that item.

Hint: Scroll to the top of the chapter to view the column headings.

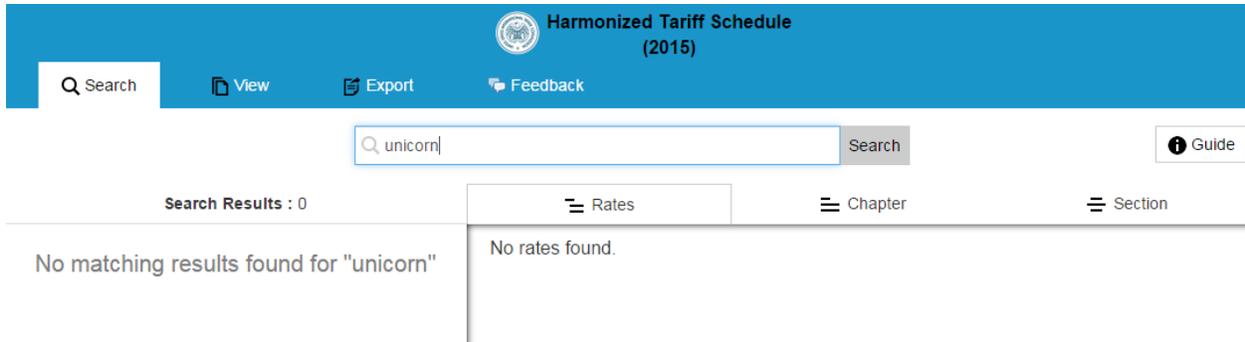
Additionally, users can select the following tabs to view respective data.

- Chapter notes
- Section notes

The Download Chapter allows users to download the PDF version of the chapter, which they may save electronically or print.

1.1.3. No Results Found

The user may enter a word(s) that will not return a search result. In the case where the user enters a string of characters that cannot be matched in HTS, the user shall see the message, “No matching results found for ‘xxxxx’”



The screenshot displays the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (2015) search interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the title "Harmonized Tariff Schedule (2015)" and a logo. Below the header, there are navigation buttons: "Search", "View", "Export", and "Feedback". A search bar contains the text "unicorn" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar is a "Guide" button. Below the search bar, the interface shows "Search Results : 0" and three tabs: "Rates", "Chapter", and "Section". The "Rates" tab is selected, and the content area displays "No rates found." The main search results area shows "No matching results found for 'unicorn'".

The user must modify the search criteria in order to find the correct data in HTS.

1.2. View HTS

The HTS View module provides users with the ability to view PDF versions of the Cover, Change Record, Preface, General Notes, Notice to Exporters, Chapters 1-99, Chemical Appendix, Pharmaceutical Appendix, Chemicals for Dyes Appendix, Statistical Annexes, and the Alphabetical Index for any HTS Release published through the HTS system.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar with a search icon, a 'View' button (highlighted), an 'Export' button, and a 'Feedback' button. Below the navigation bar, the version '2015' is displayed, along with a 'Go To Archive' link. A 'Full Document' link is also present. The main content area contains a paragraph explaining the page's purpose and a note about section notes. Below this, a list of links is provided for 'Cover', 'Change Record', 'Preface', 'General Notes', and 'Notice to Exporters'. A section titled 'Section I: Live Animals; Animal Products' is expanded, showing links for 'Chapter 1' through 'Chapter 5' with their respective descriptions.

Version: 2015 [Go To Archive](#)

[Full Document](#)

This page contains the chapter-by-chapter listing of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule and general notes. The links below correspond to the various sections in the Table of Contents for the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. Clicking on a link will load the corresponding Adobe .pdf file

(Note: Section notes, if any, are attached to the first chapter of each section. "Page down" to view chapter after selecting.)

- [Cover](#)
- [Change Record](#) (The record of legal and statistical changes in this edition of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule)
- [Preface](#)
- [General Notes; General Rules of Interpretation; General Statistical Notes](#)
- [Notice to Exporters](#)

Section I:
Live Animals; Animal Products

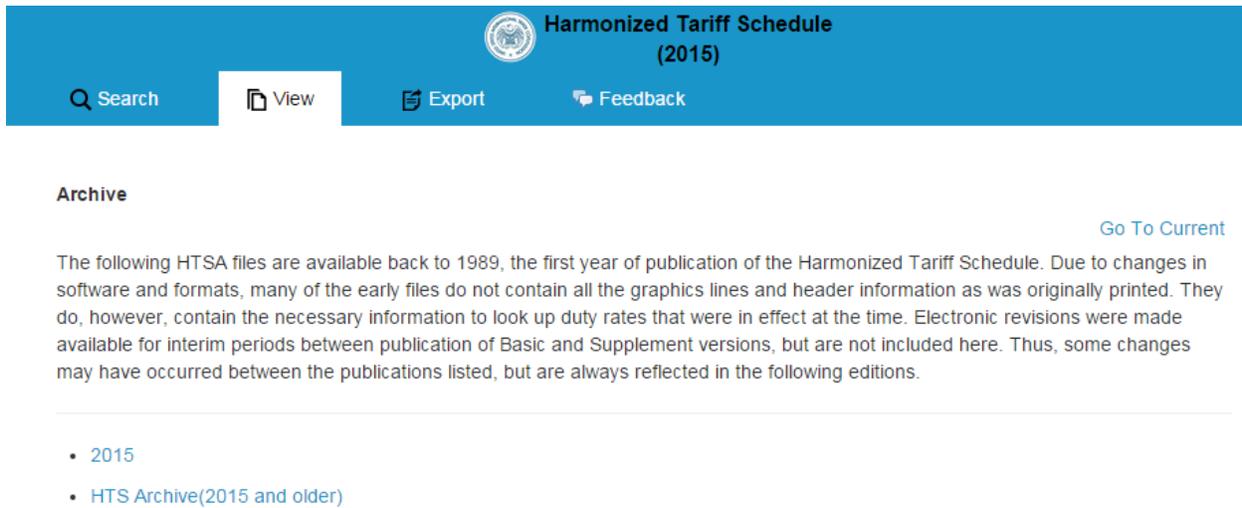
- [Chapter 1](#) Live animals
- [Chapter 2](#) Meat and edible meat offal
- [Chapter 3](#) Fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates
- [Chapter 4](#) Dairy produce; birds eggs; natural honey; edible products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified or included
- [Chapter 5](#) Products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified or included

To access this module, the user clicks on [View] from the top menu bar. The current HTS version is displayed as an outline of the HTS document with hyperlinks to each section of the overall HTS document. By clicking on a hyperlink, a user can access a PDF for the corresponding portion of the current HTS version.

A list of previous releases can be accessed via the “Go To Archive” link in the upper-right corner of the screen.

1.2.1. HTS Archive

The Archive page displays a hyperlink to each available release published through the HTS system.



Archive [Go To Current](#)

The following HTSA files are available back to 1989, the first year of publication of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. Due to changes in software and formats, many of the early files do not contain all the graphics lines and header information as was originally printed. They do, however, contain the necessary information to look up duty rates that were in effect at the time. Electronic revisions were made available for interim periods between publication of Basic and Supplement versions, but are not included here. Thus, some changes may have occurred between the publications listed, but are always reflected in the following editions.

- [2015](#)
- [HTS Archive\(2015 and older\)](#)

With the exception of the last link, “HTS Archives (2015 and older),” which takes the user to the archive of the previous HTS system, clicking on any HTS version will open a page outlining the selected HTS version.

The selected HTS version is displayed as an outline of the HTS document with hyperlinks to each section of the overall HTS document. By clicking on a hyperlink, a user can access a PDF corresponding to the effective period in which the HTS version was published.

Note: This list only shows officially published versions of the HTS.

1.3. Export HTS Data

The Export tool allows users to download HTS tariff data in a number of consumable data formats. It allows the user to select the format in which to receive the data and the range of HTS numbers to be included in the result. A user can access this module by selecting the [Export] tab from the main menu bar at the top of the screen.

Harmonized Tariff Schedule

Search View Export Feedback

Export Format: CSV

HTS Number:

From:

to:

Include styles(i.e bold, italics):

Submit

The Export HTS Data page displays the following information:

- Export Format - This is the format in which the data will get exported. The options are:
 - CSV: Comma-separated value
 - Excel: Similar to CSV, but formatted for immediate access to Microsoft Excel
 - JSON: Javascript Object Notation. This is a standard format used for data object notation on the web (also mandated by data.gov)
- HTS Number - There are two boxes to indicate the range of HTS Article numbers to include in the export. The export will include the two article numbers at the start and the end of the range.
- Include styles – If checked, all style and formatting information (e.g bold, italics, underline, superscript, subscript) is included in the exported data

The output of the export include all the columns included as part of the main HTS Tariff Schedule, including HTS Number, Article Description, Unit of Quantity, General Rate of Duty, Special Rate of Duty, Column 2 Rate of Duty.

1.4. RESTful API

To support Open Government initiatives, the HTS system provides an interface to extract search and export results. HTS uses a Representational State Transfer (RESTful) web service API to provide this data.

The base URL for all calls to the HTS REST API (HRA) is: <http://hts.usitc.gov/api>

1.4.1. Search

GET: <http://hts.usitc.gov/api/search>

DESCRIPTION: Search for tariff articles containing a given word/phrase as specified by the parameter

PARAMETER	TYPE	REQUIRED	DESCRIPTION
query	String	yes	Search phrase. For a detailed explanation on search terms please see the section " Search Terms " of this document.

EXAMPLE: <http://hts.usitc.gov/api/search?query=copper>

RESULT: List of up to the first 100 tariff articles in JSON format matching the query

1.4.2. Export

GET: <http://hts.usitc.gov/api/export>

DESCRIPTION: Export a given range of tariff articles as specified by the parameters

PARAMETER	TYPE	REQUIRED	DESCRIPTION
format	String	yes	Export format type - Supported format values are json, csv or excel
from	String	yes	HTS Number denoting the start of the range
to	String	yes	HTS Number denoting the end of the range
styles	String	no	If value is "false" then all styling information such as underline, bold, italics, subscript, superscript is removed from the output

EXAMPLE: <http://hts.usitc.gov/api/export?format=csv&from=0100&to=0200&styles=false>

RESULT: List of tariff articles within the specified range and in the specified format

1.4.3. Error Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION
500	Internal Server side error

Appendix A: Description of the HTS

Introduction to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule

The Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, Annotated for Statistical Reporting Purposes (HTS), is published by the U.S. International Trade Commission (Commission) as directed by Congress. The HTS contains both legal (enacted or proclaimed) and nonlegal (statistical or reference) provisions specifically designated. All goods imported into the United States are subject to the provisions of the HTS, as well as to regulations of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (Customs) and laws that Customs enforces.

Section 1204(c) of the Trade Act states that the legal provisions contained in the Commission's publications of the HTS, as updated, are statutory in nature. Other resources provided by the Commission, such as the online trade Data Web or the HTS search tool, can assist in classifying goods in trade, but importers should rely primarily on the legally authoritative HTS itself in preparing Customs documents. The classification of imported goods is first the responsibility of importers, while the interpretation of the HTS with regard to such goods is the responsibility of Customs. Except for goods listed in the Notice to Exporters, goods being exported from the United States can also be reported under the HTS provisions covering them; the goods listed in that Notice must instead be reported under provisions of Schedule B, administered by the United States Census Bureau (Census).

Goods are described in terms of the structured nomenclature commonly known as the Harmonized System (HS), whose numbered provisions appear in the HTS as 4-digit headings and 6-digit subheadings, together with legal rules and notes. Subordinate U.S. categories may appear as 8-digit subheadings with their rates of duty; in some cases, U.S. duty rates are in fact added to HS product categories. The 4- and 6-digit HS provisions contained in HTS chapters 1 through 97 are administered by the World Customs Organization (WCO), and their wording, numbering, and coverage are internationally agreed, subject to periodic changes (usually implemented every five years). These changes are proclaimed in the HTS by the President under section 1206 of the Trade Act, following a USITC investigation under section 1205 of that Act and the required Congressional lay-over under section 1206. In general, requests for changes in the HS notes or nomenclature must be submitted first to the Commission for appropriate review and potential submission to the WCO, while changes in HTS legal provisions or rates of duty must be enacted.

The HS General Rules of Interpretation (GRIs) and the Additional U.S. Rules of Interpretation are applied to the nomenclature in chapters 1 through 97 to determine how goods should be classified in the headings and subheadings of the HTS. Although classification is

largely uniform among countries using the HS, national differences may exist due to judicial or customs rulings or national legislation, and may also exist with regard to newly developed types of goods. Because the HTS is a hierarchical system of product description, it is not possible to classify all goods in trade by doing an electronic search, and HTS provisions must be reviewed to locate the one that most specifically describes each shipment. Thus, the potentially applicable headings should first be compared; once a heading is chosen, its subordinate provisions at the same indentation level in the nomenclature structure should be compared. Goods are classified in the provisions of chapters 1 through 97, although many shipments may be eligible for different duty treatment under U.S. chapters 98 or 99.

The nonlegal statistical elements that appear in the HTS are formulated by an interagency committee authorized under section 484(f) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1484(f)) or by the Commission. Information about the operation of this Committee and procedures for requesting statistical changes in the HTS or in the export schedule, Schedule B, are set forth later in this preface. Other statistical elements are included for the convenience of the user. For example, footnotes (which may elaborate on a provision or refer to another HTS provision) are merely informational, their presence or absence has no legal effect, and the language contained in footnotes has no effect on the legal text or its interpretation. A list of legal instruments and nonlegal actions affecting an HTS edition is set forth in the preface and, together with the change record and chapters 98 and 99, should be consulted to locate any actions that may apply to specific goods. (See changes pertaining to the current edition, below.)

Note that this edition of the HTS does not contain complete updates to the rules of origin used to determine product eligibility under U.S. free trade agreements. Updates to existing rules are negotiated to take into account the changes made in the HS, which are reflected in the HTS and the national schedules of partner countries. A Compiler's Note set forth below the Additional U.S. Rules of Interpretation provides updated information on the status of each agreement's rules. Customs officials should be consulted when the rules of origin and updated headings/subheadings do not align.

A "basic edition" of the HTS is printed and posted for each year in which staged duty reductions or major legal changes must be reflected. Online electronic revisions to the printed HTS are posted to the Commission's web site (www.usitc.gov) periodically when the HTS is changed, along with links to the public laws, Presidential proclamations or Federal Register notices that make such changes. Large-scale changes affecting many chapters may also be issued as printed supplements; however, in some years no printed supplements are issued and all changes are reflected in online revisions. The entire HTS is posted for each revision, even if changes are not made in all chapters, but the change records for revisions are not cumulative of all changes since the basic edition or printed supplement. The change record for each revision relates to that revision's preface list of documents making legal or statistical changes. The

change record in any printed edition or supplement contains all changes since the previous printed document (and thus cumulates all changes from online revisions since that printing).

The HTS is a U.S. nomenclature system used to classify traded goods based on their material composition, product name, and/or intended function. The HTS is designed so that each article falls into only one category. It is divided into chapters, each of which has a 2-digit number. Each product category within the various chapters is designated by 4, 6, 8, or 10 digits. The 4-digit categories are called "headings." The 6-, 8- and 10-digit classifications are called "subheadings."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) uses this system and its rules to classify imported goods. Nearly every good that is imported into the United States is classified in an 8-digit category. For example, the 8-digit classification for "cotton sewing thread put up for retail sale" imported into the United States is HTS subheading 5204.20.00, and the 8-digit classification for copper cathodes is subheading 7403.11.00. There are over 10,000 of these 8-digit subheadings covering goods in the HTS.

One function of the HTS is to enable CBP to determine the rate of duty applied to an imported good. Using the examples above, the general rate of duty for cotton thread is 4.4%, and for copper cathodes the general duty rate is 1%. "Duty" is often used interchangeably with the word "tariff." Rates of duty vary depending on whether a good originates in a country that benefits from a preference (Canada has completely duty free trade under the North American Free Trade Agreement, (NAFTA)). There are columns in the HTS to denote the general, special and maximum duty rates for each line item.

The HTS contains the nomenclature structure of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, otherwise known as the Harmonized System (HS). The HS is administered by the World Customs Organization (WCO). WCO committees are composed of member country representatives that keep the system up-to-date and make decisions about classification questions submitted by governments. The underlying idea of the Harmonized System is to use a common set of descriptive categories for goods in trade and to allow these categories to be further subdivided in the tariff schedules of WCO member countries for more detailed duty or statistical purposes.

The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) maintains the HTS system so that the public and other agencies calculate the tariff rates for products into the United States. The primary users of the HTS are Customs and Border Protections (CBP) and USTR (United States Trade Research), who use this information for actual application of tariff rates and for data analysis.

The HTS system provides the user with the ability to search the HTS database, print entire (or sections of) HTS releases, view change records for each HTS release, and export the HTS data in various consumable formats.

Appendix B - Words Ignored by HTS Search

a	each	its	that	where
about	few	itself	that's	where's
above	for	let's	the	which
after	from	me	their	while
again	further	more	theirs	who
against	had	most	them	who's
all	hadn't	mustn't	themselves	whom
am	has	my	then	why
an	hasn't	myself	there	why's
and	have	no	there's	with
any	haven't	nor	these	won't
are	having	not	they	would
aren't	he	of	they'd	wouldn't
as	he'd	off	they'll	you
at	he'll	on	they're	you'd
be	he's	once	they've	you'll
because	her	only	this	you're
been	here	or	those	you've
before	here's	other	through	your
being	hers	ought	to	yours
below	herself	our	too	yourself
between	him	ours	under	yourselves
both	himself	ourselves	until	
but	his	out	up	
by	how	over	very	
can't	how's	own	was	
cannot	i	same	wasn't	
could	i'd	shan't	we	
couldn't	i'll	she	we'd	
did	i'm	she'd	we'll	
didn't	i've	she'll	we're	
do	if	she's	we've	
does	in	should	were	
doesn't	into	shouldn't	weren't	
doing	is	so	what	
don't	isn't	some	what's	
down	it	such	when	
during	it's	than	when's	