



Uncle Sam Joins Your Marketing Team!



Looking to increase sales and expand your customer base? Exporting may be the answer! While selling to overseas markets has become a lucrative activity for many U.S. companies, all of them began by researching, planning and making critical decisions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Foreign Agricultural Service \(FAS\)](#) has many resources, products, and services that can help your company explore the potential for international sales.

Take the Test!

The first question is very basic but does not have a simple answer.

Are you ready to export?

While your product has been successfully sold in the domestic market, do you have sufficient production capacity to be committed to the export market? Do you or your staff have adequate knowledge in modifying product packaging and ingredients to meet foreign import regulations, food safety standards, and cultural preferences?

Visit <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/exporttest.asp> to take the FAS Export Readiness test. Receive your score and information on how to improve your company's weak areas.

Develop a Plan

The best way to achieve export success is to formulate an export strategy based on solid information and sound assessments. Some companies being export activities haphazardly, without carefully screening target markets or options for market entry. While these companies may have a measure of success, they most likely have overlooked better export opportunities.

There are many planning resources available to beginning exporters. For instance, FAS offers a "Creating an Export Plan" tutorial on its Web site at http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/export_plan.

Market Research! Should I Export My Strawberries to Dubai?

Where are the markets for your products? Should you sell to wholesalers or retailers? In addition to their regular duties, the FAS overseas offices, staffed by Americans and foreign nationals, produce a range of reports from *Citrus Annual* to *Exporter Guides* to *Food Processing Ingredients Annual*. These reports provide valuable insights into the market demand for a range of products, import regulations, and channels of distribution. This type of information will assist you in developing a strong export plan.

For example, the Retail Food Sector reports typically list "products present in the market which have good potential" and "products not present in significant quantities but which have good sales potential." In the case of the United Arab Emirates Retail Food Sector Report 2002 ([GAIN #TC2007](#)) listed strawberries as present and fresh citrus fruits as not present in the market but both having good sales potential.

Needles in a Haystack – Finding the Right Buyers

Once you have a solid export plan, it is time to start advertising your product and finding buyers. Five services offered by FAS' AgExport Division (AGX) help buyers and sellers find each other and are described below. U.S. exporters can use any or all of these services, tailoring their use for the individual needs.

1. Buyers Want To Know You

New exporters can benefit from registering on the U.S. Suppliers List (USL). Used by FAS to connect potential buyers with U.S. suppliers, the USL is a searchable database of over 3,500 exporters and their products. FAS overseas staff in over 70 offices worldwide turn to this resource first when looking for a supplier. The USL can be directly utilized by foreign buyers via the FAS ["Buying U.S. Products"](#) Web site. With 500 product categories for companies to select to include in a listing, it is easy for buyers to find the exact product they are looking for. Best of all, registration is free and can be done via the Internet at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/ussupplier/>!

2. Targeting Your Products to Buyers

The Foreign Buyer List (FBL) offers information on more than 20,000 foreign buyers of food, natural fiber, and wood products in 80 countries. Want to know what companies in Austria purchase fresh vegetables? FAS can tell you! FBLs are available by product for a particular country.

The FBLs provide important information on each firm such as contact person, address, telephone, fax, and type of product(s) imported. Available in either hard copy or labels (name and address only), there is a \$15 fee for each list. For more information visit <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/forbuy.html>.

3. Alert Buyers About New or Existing Products

The Buyer Alerts service is a proven way to inform foreign buyers about your products and company. Whether your company has a new product or is new to FAS services, Buyer Alerts are well worth experimenting with. In the last two years, \$30 million in sales were attributed to this service.

The Buyer Alerts is a biweekly newsletter distributed by FAS overseas offices that allows a "for sale" ad to be read in 75 countries, often in the local language, by over 17,000 buyers worldwide. For a \$15 fee, each Buyer Alert announcement provides a product description, offer terms, and information about your company. To try one today visit <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/bainfo.html>.

4. Leads to Increase Your Sales

What if a foreign buyer is looking for exactly one of the products that you offer? Trade Leads offer U.S. exporters timely information on foreign buyers who are seeking U.S. products. For example, a buyer in Latvia alerts the local FAS staff that her company is seeking single strength orange juice. The FAS office electronically sends this information to Washington, DC, where it is compiled and made available to U.S. companies.

A typical Trade Lead provides the foreign buyer's name, address, phone and fax; specific products and quantities needed, packaging and labeling requirements, if any; type of quotation required; and a bank reference. They are made available to U.S. companies via e-mail. In the last two years, \$14 million in sales are attributed to this service that is available at no cost to foreign buyers and U.S. exporters. To register to receive Trade Leads visit <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/tleadsinfo.html>.

5. Showcasing Your Products Overseas

International trade shows are an important opportunity for U.S. companies to improve their visibility, further analyze the local market, and observe their competition. The FAS-AGX Trade Show Office (TSO) in cooperation with FAS overseas offices sponsors or endorses about 30 trade shows and missions every year. TSO also supports many more show opportunities endorsed by FAS overseas offices.

To search upcoming international trade shows visit <http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/agexport/EventQuery.asp>. To search shows currently being recruited for, visit http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/TS_WhatsHot.html.

Our Partners

Our staff also works in conjunction with FAS cooperators that help U.S. food producers and processors sell their products overseas. Funded in part by FAS, the cooperators carry out promotional activities that increase exports of U.S. high-value food and agricultural products. Activities of the organizations are coordinated with FAS' Washington and country offices overseas and include:

- ❖ International trade exhibitions
- ❖ Overseas trade missions
- ❖ Reverse trade missions
- ❖ Export education
- ❖ In-country research
- ❖ Point of sale promotions in foreign food chains and restaurants in markets around the world.

For more information on FAS cooperators visit <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/psinfo.html>.

Getting Started

For more information on all the services listed above:

- Visit "Exporter Assistance" at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/exporter.html>
- Contact Claire Klotz at (202) 720-8557 or Claire.Klotz@fas.usda.gov.