

# A Small Agency With a Big Mission: 50 Years of the Foreign Agricultural Service

**1953**—Secretary’s Memorandum No. 1320 of March 10 establishes FAS (Foreign Agricultural Service). Agency was formed to help U.S. farmers, ranchers, traders, exporters and consumers through market information, market access and market development activities. It accomplishes this through overseas staff backed by team of economic analysts, negotiators, marketing specialists and development experts in Washington, DC.

**1954**—Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act transfers agricultural attachés back to USDA from U.S. Department of State (where they were transferred in 1939 as part of general reorganization).

**1954-55**—William G. Lodwick is FAS’ first administrator.

**1954**—P.L. 480, Food for Peace Program (also known as Agricultural Trade and Development Assistance Act) is enacted on July 10 as temporary surplus disposal program; it also establishes market development program and cooperator system.

**1955-58**—Gwynn Garnett becomes administrator. A proponent of P.L. 480, Garnett encourages training FAS’ agricultural attachés to promote exports and administer food assistance.

**1956**—Fourth round of multilateral trade negotiations through the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). (Other rounds were conducted in 1947, 1949 and 1951.)

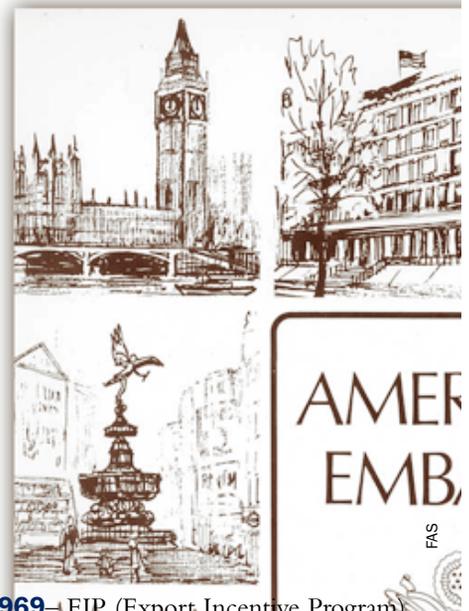
**1958-61**—Max Meyers, administrator.

**1960-62**—Dillon Round of trade negotiations involved further revision of the GATT and addition of more countries.

**1961-62**—Robert Tetro, administrator.

**1962-73**—Raymond Ioanes, administrator.

**1963-67**—Kennedy Round of multilateral trade negotiations was hybrid of earlier product-by-product approach and new formula tariff-reduction approach with across-the-board reductions.



**1969**—EIP (Export Incentive Program) establishes innovative relationship with independent firms that wish to expand in specific markets. State departments of agriculture join program.

**1969**—International Agricultural Development Service, USDA agency that coordinated all USDA overseas technical assistance and training work, is disbanded and its functions taken over by a unit of FAS. Later in 1969, the Foreign Economic Development Service, independent of FAS, is established. Over next 15 years, what would eventually become the Office of International Cooperation and Development is transferred to USDA’s Economic Research Service, Office of the Secretary, made an independent agency and then in 1993 made part of FAS again.



Undergraduate students in early FAS junior development program. 1959

FAS



U.S. Feed Grains Council presents sample from first shipload of premium quality corn to Norwegian Grain Corporation, Bergen, Norway. Attaché Harlan Dirks on right. 1973

FAS

**1973-77**—David L. Hume, administrator.

**1973**—Export reporting system established to ensure that all parties involved in production and export of U.S. grain have access to up-to-date export information. System had its roots in unanticipated purchase of large amounts of grain by Soviet Union in 1972, also known as the “Great Grain Robbery.”

**1973-79**—Tokyo Round of multilateral trade negotiations centers on negotiation of additional tariff cuts and develops series of agreements governing use of many nontariff measures. Many developing countries, as well as several East European countries, participate in negotiations for first time.

**1975**—U.S.-USSR Long-Term Grain Agreement signed in October, bringing stability to U.S.-Soviet grain trade.

**1977-81**—Thomas R. Hughes, administrator.

**1976**—LACIE (Large Area Crop Inventory Experiment) project launches crop reports via satellite in August. FAS is lead USDA

agency on LACIE project, which tests crop reporting possibilities of space satellites.

**1977**—Title III, Food for Development, added to P.L. 480 to help world’s needy help themselves by allowing foreign governments to purchase U.S. agricultural commodities on Title I terms and resell them in their own countries, using proceeds for self-help projects. If successful, the Title I debt was forgiven.

**1978**—Agricultural Export and Trade Expansion Act of 1978 establishes network of agricultural trade offices in key markets. Act also grants diplomatic rank and title of counselor to at least 10 agricultural representatives abroad.

**1978**—Office of International Cooperation and Development established as separate agency from FAS on May 1.

**1980**—Foreign Service Act enables USDA (and several other government departments and agencies) to give embassy employees foreign service officer status while remaining on their home department pay-rolls.

**1980**—GSM-102 Export Credit Guarantee Program, covering credit terms up to three years, is established on October 1.

**1980**—FAS establishes Office of Food Safety and Technical Services.

**1981-85**—Richard Smith, administrator.



FAS

**1981**—First attaché report (grain) transmitted electronically from agricultural office in London to FAS headquarters in Washington on July 1.

**1982**—First personal computers installed in FAS headquarters.

**1983**—First personal computers installed overseas.

**1984**—First electronic e-mail with overseas posts (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia).

**1984**—Cochran Fellowship Program launched, providing training for senior and mid-level specialists from the public and private sectors concerned with agricultural trade, agribusiness development, management, policy, marketing and technology transfer.

**1985**—Food Security Act of 1985 creates Targeted Export Assistance Program (later Market Promotion Program and now Market Access Program) providing funds and promotion for farm products subject to unfair trade practices overseas.

**1985**—EEP (Export Enhancement Program) created in May to help exporters meet competition from subsidizing countries. USDA pays cash to exporters as bonuses, allowing them to sell U.S. agricultural products in targeted countries at prices below exporter's cost of acquiring them.

**1985**—Food Security Act establishes Food for Progress Program, providing responsive food aid mechanism to encourage and support expansion of private enterprise in recipient countries and to help countries seeking to implement democratic and market reforms.

**1985**—Section 416(b) program, providing overseas donations of surplus commodities to needy countries, is reinstated.

**1986-89**—Thomas O. Kay, administrator.

**1986-94**—Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations focuses on strengthening GATT and expanding its disciplines to new areas, including agriculture. Agreement on Agriculture is one of 29 individual legal texts under umbrella agreement establishing WTO (World Trade Organization), replacing GATT.

**1986**—GSM-103 Intermediate Export Credit Guarantee Program, covering credit terms up to 10 years, begins on October 1.

**1987**—USDA announces DEIP (Dairy Export Incentive Program) in

February to help exporters of U.S. dairy products meet prevailing world prices for targeted dairy products and destinations.

**1989-91**—Rolland E. Anderson, Jr., administrator.

**1989**—The U.S.-Canada FTA (Free Trade Agreement) goes into effect on January 1. Goal is to remove all tariff and some non-tariff barriers to agricultural trade between two countries within 10 years.

**1989**—In January, FAS' monthly magazine, *Foreign Agriculture*, is renamed *AgExporter*, reflecting shift in emphasis from reporting on crops in foreign markets to promoting U.S. agricultural exports.

**1990**—FACT Act (Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade) authorizes Emerging Markets Program.

**1991-92**—Duane Acker, administrator.

**1992-93**—Stephen L. Censky, acting administrator.

**1993-94**—Richard B. Schroeter, acting administrator.

**1993**—Secretary's Memorandum 1020-39 merges USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development into FAS on September 30.

**1994-97**—August Schumacher, Jr., administrator.

**1994**—Uruguay Round of trade negoti-



U.S. Agricultural Counselor Turner Oyloe accompanies U.S. Ambassador Price to Court of St. James to present credentials to Queen Elizabeth II. 1984



ations ends with signing of Marrakech Declaration in December.

**1994**—NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) begins to go into effect. FAS had significant role in securing legislation and helping with implementation. U.S.-Canada FTA is folded into NAFTA.

**1995**—WTO is established through GATT Uruguay Round.

**1995**—FAS launches Internet home page on July 11: [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov)

**1996**—FAIR Act (Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform) authorizes two new guarantee programs for agricultural exporters. Facility Guarantee Program provides guarantees to improve agriculture-related facilities in emerging markets. SCGP (Supplier Credit Guarantee Program) guarantees short-term credit extended by U.S. exporters directly to overseas customers.

**1996**—Farm Act authorizes Emerging Markets Program, providing \$10 million per year of CCC (Commodity Credit Corporation) funding to support technical assistance to promote market development, improve market access and assist in development of emerging market economies.

**1996**—U.S. agricultural exports reach record-high level of \$59.8 billion.

**1996**—World Food Summit held in Rome, November 13-17. United

States joined more than 180 countries in renewing commitment to alleviation of hunger and malnutrition worldwide. Summit's goal is to reduce by half the number of undernourished people by no later than 2015.

**1997-99**—Lon S. Hatamiya, administrator.

**1997**—SCGP has first sales registration.

**1999-2001**—Timothy J. Galvin, administrator.

**1999**—Quality Samples Program is announced to help U.S. agricultural trade organizations provide samples of agricultural products to potential importers in emerging markets.

**2001**—Mattie R. Sharpless, acting administrator.

**2001-02**—Mary Chambliss, acting administrator.

**2001**—New round of world trade negotiations (Doha Development Agenda) is launched November 14

in Doha, Qatar. As in Uruguay Round, agricultural discussions are top priority, but this round seeks to address concerns of developing, as well as developed, countries.

**2002**—Present—A. Ellen Terpstra, administrator.

**2002**—FAS provides record levels of technical assistance in trade capacity building to over 4,500 individuals in 80 developing countries or emerging markets.

**2002**—FAS launches new electronic reporting system to collect U.S. export sales information for beef.

**2002**—World Food Summit: *Five Years Later* held in Rome, June 10-13. United States reaffirms commitment to ending global hunger and poverty, noting that increased agricultural productivity would be one major step toward greater food availability and access in poor countries. To assist, FAS increases efforts in areas such as biotechnology and trade capacity building. ■

