



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

National Export Initiative: Importance of U.S. Agricultural Exports

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“We need to export more of our goods around the world. We will double our exports over the next five years, an increase that will support two million new jobs in America. To meet this goal, we’re launching a National Export Initiative that will help farmers and small businesses increase their exports and expand their markets.”

President Barack Obama
State of the Union Address
January 27, 2010



Importance of U.S. Agricultural Exports

- U.S. agriculture looks overseas to expand sales and boost incomes. Exports also generate additional economic activity that ripples through the domestic economy.
- Expanding existing market access and opening new markets under future trade agreements will significantly boost U.S. agricultural export sales.
- The President’s FY2011 budget provides increased discretionary spending of \$54 million to enhance USDA’s export promotion activities.
- Compared to the overall economy, U.S. agriculture is **twice** as reliant on overseas markets.
- USDA estimates that anywhere from **26 to 30 percent** of farm cash receipts in any one year comes from exports.
- **Every dollar** of exports creates another **\$1.40** in supporting activities to process, package, finance and ship agricultural products.
- U.S. agricultural exports, which in FY 2009 reached **\$96.6 billion**, generated an additional **\$135 billion** in supporting business activity in transportation, distribution, food processing and manufacturing.
- These exports support approximately **1 million U.S. jobs** both on and off the farm.
- Some agricultural commodities benefit dramatically from sales in overseas markets. For example:
 1. **64 percent** of our almond crop is shipped overseas.
 2. **74 percent** of cotton is exported.
 3. Nearly **89 percent** of U.S. cattle hides are exported.
 4. **49 percent** of U.S. rice goes to international markets.
 5. **50 percent** of U.S. wheat goes into the export market.
 6. **34 percent** of our soybeans are exported.
- **96 percent** of the world’s consumers live outside the United States.
- U.S. agricultural export growth is led by the NAFTA countries of **Canada** and **Mexico** and **non-Japan Asia**.
- The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works to develop and expand market access for U.S. products, improve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace.

For more information on FAS export programs go to <http://www.fas.usda.gov>.