



# FAS WORLDWIDE

United States Department of Agriculture  
Foreign Agricultural Service

February 2008

An online review of Foreign Agricultural Service initiatives and services

## U.S. Exporter Assistance

### Trade Shows in a New Context: The Overseas Trade Support Branch

**By Maria Nemeth-Ek**

For years, the FAS Trade Show Office helped U.S. suppliers capitalize on foreign markets by handling U.S.A. pavilions at major trade shows and by holding its own exhibitions. In the past decade, FAS involvement in shows has changed dramatically, although the agency remains actively involved in shows that support the strategic plans of the agency as a whole and FAS posts abroad.

The FAS Overseas Trade Support Branch, which replaced the Trade Show Office two years ago, rarely handles trade shows directly. But it continues to provide the liaison, coordination, and information that U.S. suppliers need to succeed at trade shows, supporting the larger purpose of helping U.S. companies realize their export potential.

#### How FAS Adds Value to Shows

FAS has streamlined its involvement in trade shows, shifting the agency's focus to an inherently governmental role. But the agency still performs key functions that are value-added and unique.

FAS no longer manages every detail of trade shows, such as direct recruitment and mass mailings. Instead, it relies on show organizers, primarily private firms, for all logistics. FAS partners with show organizers to assure quality of services for U.S. suppliers in the USA Pavilion. The organizers also bear the financial risk of the shows.

FAS has also increased reliance on other partners, such as state departments of agriculture, NASDA (the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture), the four state-regional trade groups, cooperators in USDA's Foreign Market Development Program, and U.S. food distributors.

FAS lends clout, information, and contacts that benefit U.S. participants. For example, the names USDA and the USA Pavilion are known and respected by foreign industries all over the world, giving companies that exhibit under them the cachet of brand-name recognition. In addition to facilitating U.S. companies' exhibition in the USA Pavilion at certain shows, FAS also assists them in participating in the American Café at other shows, to which the companies provide samples.

FAS works with NASDA on show design, service enhancements, market information, pre-show preparation, sample certification, and buyer meetings. NASDA manages the supplier list of U.S. companies able and willing to export their products. The database of U.S. trade show exhibitors in the USA Pavilion at endorsed shows, has also migrated to NASDA. FAS tracks results via show evaluations from participants.



USA Pavilion showcasing U.S. products at SIAL 2006  
Photo by Maria Nemeth-Ek, FAS Office of Trade Programs, Overseas Trade Support Branch



Exhibitors displaying Native American foods at ANUGA 2007  
 Photo by Maria Nemeth-Ek, FAS Office of Trade Programs, Overseas Trade Support Branch

### Who Benefits?

FAS focuses its trade show activities on emerging markets that have good growth potential, but where companies might not venture on their own because they need more guidance in tackling them, or because of the risks involved. But the agency does not neglect more mature markets, where our competition is intensifying.

Whether emerging or mature, reaching markets beyond our borders is crucial for the United States for several reasons. Competition in the U.S. domestic market is fierce, and the number of items vying for consumers' attention is constantly growing.

On the other hand, approximately 95.4 percent of the world's consumers live in foreign countries. The growth markets are overseas, not just for U.S. agriculture but for value-added exports and the jobs they create here at home – jobs in marketing, packaging, transportation, and other areas. So these exports and the jobs they sustain have a multiplier effect throughout the U.S. economy.

The Overseas Trade Support Branch plays its part in promoting this growth by serving as a navigator, guide, and catalyst for U.S. suppliers in foreign markets. The branch helps them to build personal relationships and partnerships with import agents and buyers. Small, minority, and women-owned companies especially benefit from the branch's efforts, because two-thirds of all U.S. exhibitors are small and medium-sized companies that tend to have less experience and need more assistance than large firms in reaching foreign buyers.

### Results!

Here are the overall results of FAS trade show efforts in calendar year 2007:

- **USDA-endorsed international trade shows:** 29
- **Foreign buyer missions to U.S. shows:** 8
- **On-site sales:** \$54 million

- **Projected 12-month sales:** \$759 million.
- **U.S. show participants:** more than 880
- **Serious contacts reported:** 8,420
- **New products introduced:** 3,128

Among the most successful shows for U.S. exhibitors was Gulfood 2007, held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. As total of 72 U.S. companies participated, garnering \$7 million in on-site sales and \$54 million in projected 12-month sales. The products that did best at the show were meat products (such as canned chicken and other poultry), frozen liquid eggs, snack foods, Mexican foods, frozen desserts, nuts (such as almonds), cheeses, and ingredients (such as cheese powder).

At ANTAD 2007, held in Guadalajara, Mexico, 45 U.S. companies participated, logging \$1.3 million in on-site sales and \$16 million in projected 12-month sales. The best products at ANTAD were drinkable yogurt, baking mixes, cheeses, deli meats, rice pudding, nacho products, poultry, onions, beef, popcorn, ice cream, energy drinks, snacks, soups, and pies.

At SIAL China, the 44 U.S. companies that took part registered \$1 million in on-site sales and \$38 million in projected 12-month sales. At World Food Moscow, 16 companies garnered \$1.3 million in on-site sales and \$3.3 million in projected 12-month sales. At SIAL Mercosur, 13 companies logged \$495,000 in projected 12-month sales.

### Trade Show Trends

Trade shows have consistently been rated among the most effective market development tools, providing excellent vehicles for entering new markets, developing and maintaining contacts with customers, introducing new products, finding agents, and checking out the competition.

However, shows are changing. Many events are becoming more focused on a single theme. Organizers are providing more value-added services (such as product information, matchmaking, web-based directories, chef competitions, and seminars). Shows are placing greater emphasis on product innovation and consumption trends, including food safety, wellness, organics, and natural products (such as sports or energy drinks, gluten-free products, omega-3 acids and antioxidants, and identity-preserved grains).

But despite changes in trade show trends and in FAS, the Overseas Trade Support Branch continues to secure a high level of service for U.S. participants in USDA-endorsed shows, as evidenced by responses from exhibitors at recent shows:

"The package of participating in the USA Pavilion was a good value for us as a first-time ANUGA exhibitor. The exhibitor lounge was



Exhibitors and products at ANTAD 2007's USA Pavilion  
 Photo by FAS Agricultural Trade Office, Mexico City, Mexico

**e-Sources**

**FAS Online Resources for Trade Events:**

FAS maintains several information resources on trade shows and other marketing events on its website.

**The Marketing Events Calendar** contains a variety of international promotional activities, from major trade shows to smaller promotional events organized by FAS offices abroad, as well as events supported by the state-regional trade groups. The calendar can be found at:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/agexport/EventQuery.asp>

**What's Hot** provides information, contacts, and flyers on shows for which the Overseas Trade Support Branch is currently recruiting:

[http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/TS\\_WhatsHot.html](http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/TS_WhatsHot.html)

**Trade Show Tidbits** is a newsletter prepared by the branch with interesting background nuggets about the shows:

[http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/Whats%20Hot/Tidbits/2008/January\\_2008.pdf](http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/Whats%20Hot/Tidbits/2008/January_2008.pdf)

**NASDA and State-Regional Trade Groups:**

**NASDA**, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, which works closely with FAS on trade shows and other activities, can be found online at: <http://www.nasda.org/>

The four state-regional trade groups, which also work with FAS and are dedicated to helping U.S. suppliers in their export efforts, can be found at the following websites:

**Food Export USA-Northeast:** <http://www.foodexportusa.org/>

**The Southern United States Trade Association:**

<http://www.susta.org/>

**The Western United States Agricultural Trade Association:**

<http://www.wusata.org/>

**The Food Export Association of the Midwest USA:**

<http://www.foodexport.org/>

was particularly useful – a great place to conduct media interviews and relax a bit." – Shirley Horn, Almond Board of California

"ANUGA provided many leads and contacts to the European market. Well worth our effort!!" – Joseph Lothamer, Atwater Foods

The branch and offices abroad still work together to provide companies with counseling, briefings, contacts, and troubleshooting, and to assure that organizers deliver the services necessary, to help U.S. suppliers succeed in trade shows.

*Maria Nemeth-Ek is the chief of the FAS Office of Trade Programs Overseas Trade Support Branch. E-mail: Maria.Nemeth-Ek@fas.usda.gov*

**FAS Worldwide** is an online magazine from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. Text of this magazine is in the public domain and may be reprinted freely. Photographs may not be reprinted without permission.

Use of commercial and trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by USDA or by FAS.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.