

U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service Strategic Plan

FY 2015-2018



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Table of Contents

Message from the Administrator	5
Strategic Plan Framework	6
Legislative and Departmental Authorities	7
FAS's Unique Role in Government.....	8
Mission and Vision Statement	10
Core Values	10
Strategic Goal:	11
Pillar # 1: Trade Promotion.....	12
Objective 1.1:.....	12
Objective 1.2:.....	13
Objective 1.3:.....	13
Pillar # 2: Trade Policy.....	14
Objective 2.1:.....	14
Objective 2.2:.....	15
Objective 2.3:.....	15
Pillar # 3: Trade Capacity Building and Food Security.....	16
Objective 3.1:.....	16
Objective 3.2:.....	17
Management Initiatives	19
Initiative I:.....	19
Initiative II:.....	19
Initiative III:	20
Initiative IV:	20
Initiative V:.....	20
Initiative VI:	21
Appendix A: Program Evaluations.....	22
Appendix B: Strategic Consultations.....	24
Appendix C: FAS Linkages to USDA Strategic Plan.....	25

Message from the Administrator

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is U.S. agriculture's link to the constantly changing global marketplace. FAS serves as the principal coordinator for international activities within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), drawing on the broad expertise of U.S. agricultural organizations. These groups range from governmental to non-governmental, and from the private sector to the academic and research community. As departmental coordinator for international activities, FAS helps strengthen food and agricultural systems in developing countries, establishing a foundation for future trading opportunities while supporting U.S. national security interests.

The core mission of FAS is to facilitate trade and international cooperation, which are critical to the economic vitality of the U.S. agricultural sector and the Administration's priority of jobs and opportunity. FAS also supports U.S. agriculture in its vital role of helping to feed hungry people around the world through USDA food assistance programs and provision of technical expertise to developing countries. These assistance programs are the longest and most successful having enriched the lives of people in more than 100 countries.

FAS's core functions, which are carried out by a cadre of highly professional staff stationed in Washington, DC, and in 94 overseas offices covering 196 foreign countries, are delivered through three activity pillars: trade promotion, trade policy, and capacity building/food security. These are supported by a global market intelligence network, which helps policy-makers better position the broad array of tools and services designed to facilitate agricultural trade and link U.S. agriculture to the world. From market development programs, export credit guarantee risk insurance programs, scientific exchange programs and food assistance, FAS deploys its resources to expand market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products.

Over the next three years, FAS staff will continue to collaborate across the U.S. government and partner with the private sector and others to link U.S. agriculture to the world, to further the economic prosperity of rural America and U.S. farmers, ranchers, fishermen, foresters and agribusinesses.



Phil Karsting,
Administrator

Strategic Plan Framework

For U.S. agriculture to continue to thrive, we must continue to open, expand, and maintain access to foreign markets, where 95 percent of the world's consumers live. That's why the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) works around the globe to build new markets, to sustain and expand existing ones, to improve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture, and to ensure food security and build agricultural capacity in fragile and developing markets – the markets of tomorrow.

The FAS Strategic Plan for 2015-2018 will support the USDA Strategic Plan and the Administration's priority of jobs and opportunity for every American. This will be accomplished by using all the tools in the FAS tool box -- through market development programs, trade shows, prevention/resolution of market access issues, trade capacity building, and market-expanding trade agreements.

Strategic Objectives include performance measures that track progress towards attaining each objective. These measures specify baseline information (where available) and long-term performance targets. Strategies and means describe how FAS will operate in the international trade and food security arenas and define the tools that its staff will employ to achieve the Agency's objectives.

FAS's strategic framework includes a commitment to provide exceptional service and consistent excellence in management across the Agency. FAS also has separate management plans under six Management Initiatives that detail strategies to achieve objectives in enterprise governance, financial resource management, human capital management, performance and efficiency, information technology, and emergency preparedness.

The strategic plan represents the dynamic process within FAS to ensure the best results for American exporters. Through this process, the agency is able to continually strive to take advantage of its unique focus on global agricultural trade and food security issues.

Legislative and Departmental Authorities

FAS was established on March 10, 1953, by Secretary's Memorandum No. 1320, Supplement 1. Public Law 83-690, approved August 28, 1954, transferred the agricultural attachés from the Department of State to FAS. These memoranda were consolidated in Title 5 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended. Secretary's Memorandum No. 1020-39, dated September 30, 1993, transferred the functions of the former Office of International Cooperation and Development to FAS.

Title 5 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, most recently amended in 2008, states that the Administrator of FAS is given the power to "exercise such functions and perform such duties related to foreign agriculture," and may also be assigned other duties by law or by the Secretary of Agriculture (Title 5, section 502b). Additionally, the Administrator is responsible for oversight of FAS, the General Sales Manager, and the Agricultural Attaché Service (Title 5, section 502c).

Specifically, 7 USC §5693, mandates: *"The Service shall assist the Secretary in carrying out the agricultural trade policy and international cooperation policy of the United States by -*

- (1) *Acquiring information pertaining to agricultural trade;*
- (2) *Carrying out market promotion and development activities;*
- (3) *Providing agricultural technical assistance and training; and*
- (4) *Carrying out the programs authorized under this Act, the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1691 et seq.), and other Acts." (Title 5, section 503)"*

USDA Regulation 1051-001 (June 2005) defines the role of the Foreign Agricultural Service as the Department's lead agency in coordinating all agricultural matters with foreign countries. Regulation 1051-002 (December 2004) further states that FAS's responsibilities "include, but are not limited to, the responsibility to coordinate the carrying out by Department agencies of their functions involving foreign agriculture policies and programs and their operations and activities in foreign areas; acting as a liaison on these matters and functions relating to foreign agriculture with the Department of State, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and foreign governments; conducting functions of the Department relating to the World Trade Organization, and legislation affecting international agricultural trade; and administering and directing the Department's programs in international development, technical assistance and training carried out under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended."

FAS's Unique Role in Government

FAS is unique within the U.S. Government for its sole focus on global food and agricultural trade and food security issues. Its core capabilities include the following:

Global network of civil servants, agricultural attachés and locally engaged staff providing eyes, ears, and voice for U.S. agriculture

FAS has foreign service officers and locally engaged staff across the globe to address trade policy and market development issues as they arise. FAS brings:

- Ability to link foreign buyers and U.S. sellers to promote U.S. food and agricultural products;
- On-ground intelligence on foreign agricultural markets, crop conditions, and agro-political dynamics;
- Institutional knowledge of host countries;
- Long-term, agriculture-specific relationships with foreign stakeholders;
- Talented and highly skilled locally engaged staff; and
- Cultural and linguistic competencies.

Direct connection and partnership with the broad U.S. agricultural community, from farmers and ranchers to food processors, from U.S. Government (including Congress) to non-governmental organizations,

FAS works closely with the U.S. agricultural industry and other federal and state government agencies involved in agricultural trade issues. FAS focuses its efforts on maintaining a level playing field in existing markets, and working to expand opportunities in countries with market potential.

Market development, risk mitigation, trade capacity-building, and food security programs

FAS administers an array of programs to facilitate food and agricultural trade and increase global food security:

- Market development and promotion programs;
- General Sales Manager (GSM) export credit guarantee programs to offset foreign country risk;
- Trade capacity building to strengthen international trade and overseas agricultural development; and
- Non-emergency food assistance through direct feeding and monetization programs.

Expertise in international trade policy negotiations and enforcement, and in working to reduce or eliminate Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) trade restrictions

FAS works to create and maintain a level playing field in the international marketplace. We work with other USDA agencies to resolve both tariff or non-tariff barriers that affect the export of U.S. food and agricultural products.

Comprehensive, timely, unbiased, and first-hand agricultural analysis and market intelligence

Strategic Goal:

Increase U.S. food and agricultural exports by \$10 billion by end-year 2018.

Increased economic activity in food-related sectors of the economy help rural communities build and maintain prosperity. Nowhere is this more evident than in food and agricultural trade.

U.S. farmers and ranchers are among the most productive and efficient in the world. However, they face complex, unfair obstacles in the global marketplace where 95 percent of the world's consumers are. Cooperative efforts with U.S. industry will ensure that U.S. producers have fair market access, understand market trends, and help in overcoming constraints.

FAS expands international market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products in many ways. Our unrivaled global network of agricultural affairs and agricultural trade offices connects agricultural exporters to foreign customers and provides crucial information on international agricultural markets. In addition, FAS delivers technical and regulatory capacity building programs that help partner countries understand and accept U.S. agricultural and trade policies and new technologies. Our Washington-based staff of trade specialists and technical experts coordinates closely with our network of 94 overseas offices covering 196 countries around the world.

Through market development programs, trade shows, prevention/resolution of market access issues, trade capacity building, and market-expanding trade agreements, we will achieve our goal to increase agricultural exports by \$10 billion over the official USDA Baseline Projection released in 2015.

Objective 1.2: Manage FAS credit guarantee programs to yield the greatest benefit to U.S. agriculture

Time Frame for Completion: Ongoing activities, 2012-2018

Strategies and Means:

- Focus FAS credit program tools on maintenance or development of markets in need of credit to enhance U.S. food and agricultural exports;
- Expand network and outreach with all interested parties, foreign and domestic, having specific regional or commodity expertise, working closely with FAS Field Offices;
- Ensure long-term program sustainability by improving risk assessment and recovery of assets and, as needed refining program fee structure and actuarial data to ensure it appropriately reflects long-term operational cost; and
- Work closely with U.S. commodity exporters, financial institutions, and industry trade groups to improve delivery of the programs.

Measures:

	<i>Baseline Average Annual (FY 2007-2010)</i>	<i>Target Average Annual (FY 2012-2018)</i>
<i>Benchmark Benefit of Investment:</i>		
+ GSM-102 Loan Guarantees Underwritten	\$3.135 Billion	\$2.990 Billion
+ Agricultural Trade Multiplier (\$1.34 based on ERS Study)	\$4.201 Billion	\$3.798 Billion
+ Total Accrued Returns	\$7.336 Billion	\$6.788 Billion
+ Economic Return Ratio (\$: Total Returns/Total Costs)	\$99.81/\$1 invested	\$100/\$1 invested

**/ Total appropriations amount reported above for staffing and administrative overhead cost includes \$6.4 million in FAS salaries and expenses and \$0.4 million in Farm Service Agency (FSA) salaries and expenses.*

Verification and Validation of Results: Cost data are derived from annual funding levels for the baseline and projected budget outlays for the target year. [Appendix A: Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses](#) provides a list of evaluations and analyses, and general scope, methodology, and time tables used to estimate the benchmark benefits of investments in activities described in this strategic objective.

Objective 1.3: Maintain a global market intelligence information system that supports policy and program objectives

Time Frame for Completion: Ongoing activities, 2012-2018

Strategies and Means:

- Promote awareness of FAS analytical and intelligence resources through Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) reports, publications on global production, supply, and distribution (PS&D), publicly available databases of PS&D information, and network of industry and government contacts maintained by FAS headquarters and overseas staff.
- Provide timely and accurate market information (e.g., the P S&D System, Export Sales Reporting System, attaché reporting, market analysis, FAS Trade Leads System, overseas customer database); and
- Analyze satellite imagery to generate intelligence, especially on regions where information is scarce or unreliable.

Verification and Validation of Results: Cost data are derived from annual funding levels for the baseline and projected budget outlays for the target year. Appendix A: Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses provides a list of evaluations and analyses, and general scope, methodology, and time tables used to estimate the benchmark benefits of investments in activities described in this strategic objective.

Objective 2.2: Prevent or resolve foreign Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) or Sanitary/Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures that hinder U.S. food and agricultural exports

Time Frame for Completion: Ongoing activities, 2012-2018

Strategies and Means

- Monitor foreign proposals and mobilize USDA resources to avoid restrictive new regulations;
- Negotiate solutions to free U.S. exports detained at foreign ports, and to proposed/existing trade barriers, including those affecting the products of new technologies;
- Represent U.S. agriculture in diplomatic interactions with foreign governments;
- Build coalitions of like-minded countries to oppose unnecessary TBT and SPS measures by cultivating bilateral and regional relationships; and
- Help developing-country partners comply with internationally recognized SPS and TBT standards and resolve specific trade issues through technical assistance, training and exchanges.

Measure:

	<i>Baseline (FY 2012)</i>	<i>Target (FY 2018)</i>
+ Value of trade preserved or attained through resolution of foreign market access issues such as U.S. export detention, and restrictive SPS & TBT issues, and trade regulations	\$3.7 Billion	\$4.1 Billion

Verification and Validation of Results: Cost data are derived from annual funding levels for the baseline and projected budget outlays for the target year. Appendix A: Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses provides a list of evaluations and analyses, and general scope, methodology, and time tables used to estimate the benchmark benefits of investments in activities described in this strategic objective.

Objective 2.3: Pursue the development of rules-based international systems that facilitate global trade

Time Frame for Completion: Ongoing activities, 2012-2018

Strategies and Means:

- Support the development and adoption of international standards based on science through bilateral/regional engagements, technical assistance, scientific exchanges, and educational

Time Frame for Completion: Ongoing activities, 2015-2018

Strategies and Means:

- Improve literacy, health, hygiene and nutrition of school- aged beneficiaries in targeted countries via the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education program;
- Increase productivity and expand trade in the agriculture and food sector through the Food for Progress program; and
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of USDA food assistance programs
- Deploy experts from a wide range of USDA agencies in capacity building programs to help strengthen agricultural systems and markets in developing countries;
- Work with foreign counterparts to develop and adopt market-based policies and institutions to expand international trade through trade capacity building in strategically targeted markets;
- Help to create enabling environment for increased private-sector participation in agricultural value chains;
- Leverage partnerships with U.S. government agencies, land grant universities, other institutions, and the private sector to conduct technical assistance and training for food-insecure nations; and
- Support trade capacity through research, development, and extension of improved techniques and technologies.

Measure:

	<i>Baseline Average Annual (FY 2012)</i>	<i>Target Average Annual (FY 2018)</i>
+ Number of individuals in food-insecure countries assisted by USDA technical assistance	5.9 Million	5.0 Million

Verification and Validation of Results: Cost data are derived from annual funding levels for the baseline and projected budget outlays for the target year. Appendix A: Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses provides a list of evaluations and analyses, and general scope, methodology, and time tables used to estimate the benchmark benefits of investments in activities described in this strategic objective.

Objective 3.2: Enhance partner countries’ capacity for agricultural development and participation in international trade through USDA-led technical assistance and training

Time Frame for Completion: Ongoing activities, 2012-2018

Strategies and Means:

- Deploy experts from a wide range of USDA agencies in capacity building programs to help strengthen agricultural systems and markets in developing countries;
- Work with foreign counterparts to develop and adopt market-based policies and institutions and expand international trade through trade capacity building in strategically targeted markets;

Management Initiatives

By strengthening management operations and engaging employees, FAS will improve customer service, increase employee satisfaction, and develop and implement strategies to enhance leadership, performance, diversity, and inclusion. This transformation will result in process improvements and increased performance.

FAS's plan includes:

- Improve program delivery by enhancing leadership, encouraging employee inclusion, and focusing on improving customer and employee satisfaction;
- Provide civil rights leadership training to its employees, applicants, and customers to reduce the inventory of program civil rights complaints, analyze overseas field operations for systemic improvements and increase the use of early resolution processes (a form of alternative dispute resolution) for civil rights and equal employment opportunity complaints;
- Coordinate outreach efforts to increase access to programs and services among women-owned and minority businesses interested in exporting food and agricultural products;
- Incorporate new strategies and policies to improve performance, encourage efficiency, and align activities to the Agency's and Department's strategic goals;
- Implement modern information technology systems and policies in a cost-effective manner to improve program delivery and communicate more effectively with constituents;
- Improve Agency emergency preparedness and security measures to protect employees and ensure the continued delivery of its products and services; and
- Enhance human resource policies and practices to develop a workforce more representative of the national population, with the necessary skills to improve the delivery of services.

Initiative I: Engage Employees to Enhance Performance

Engaging employees to transform FAS into a high-performing, inclusive agency that benefits from leadership at all levels will require a pointed and comprehensive effort. FAS will continue to generate opportunities to listen to employees' concerns and ideas. The Agency also will design and implement beneficial systemic changes to processes that affect employee satisfaction and human resources.

FAS's plan includes:

- Developing and implementing comprehensive strategies to improve leadership;
- Effectively managing employee development, talent management, employee progression; and
- Measuring and increasing the satisfaction of its customers and employees.

Initiative II: Provide Civil Rights Services to Employees and Customers

Protecting civil rights is a top priority of FAS. To be successful, all employees must be committed to respecting the civil rights of fellow employees and constituents. FAS will follow the Department's lead in administering programs to ensure equal employment opportunity and civil rights.

FAS's plan includes:

- Increasing early resolution usage in program civil rights and equal employment opportunity complaints;
- Reducing the inventory of program civil rights complaints; and

- Addressing current or future gaps in skill sets and workforce capacity;
- Increasing diversity in its workforce;
- Aligning its human resources policies;
- Streamlining hiring processes; and
- Establishing an employee satisfaction action team.

Initiative VI: Enhance Collaboration and Coordination on Critical Issues Through Enterprise Governance

More than ever, the problems facing our customers require a holistic response. To enable program areas and staffs to more effectively and efficiently accomplish the objectives established in this plan, FAS will establish and implement an enterprise governance process to ensure the agency focuses its efforts on the most critical and complex challenges. This process is being designed to strengthen collaboration and cooperation across program areas, offering an innovative environment for learning, sharing, and problem solving across traditional organizational boundaries.

FAS's plan includes:

- Establishing enterprise governance charter to more effectively address critical challenges;
- Identifying opportunities to implement enterprise governance to increase collaborative problem-solving across FAS; and
- Creating new, results-based reporting mechanisms to improve communication, problem solving, and decision making.

Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses				
FAS Goal - Activity Pillar/Objectives	Evaluations/Analyses	General Scope	Methodology	Timetable
Pillar 1/ Objective 1.2	Economic Research Service (ERS) annual macroeconomic estimates	Review, analyze, and estimate the impact of agricultural export activity on jobs and income at both farm and non-farm levels.	ERS uses sophisticated econometric modeling techniques to estimate the macroeconomic impact of exports on various economic criteria, including jobs and income, at both farm and non-farm levels.	Annually
Pillar 1/Objective 1.1	Third Party Evaluator (Global Insight, Inc.)	Study analyzed the economic impact of market development programs on U.S. exports in the period of the 2002 Farm Bill.	The 2007 study reported that every dollar of market development programming expended by government and industry resulted in a Return On Investment (ROI) of \$25 in increased food and agricultural exports; the 2010 updated report noted an increase in ROI to \$35 per dollar expended.	3-5 year intervals
Pillar 2/Objective 2.3	Pakistan SPS Project	Review, analyze, and estimate the impact of the three-year SPS project being implemented in Pakistan.	Contractor will work with stakeholders to develop an evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness and impact of the Afghanistan SPS Project.	End of first year of implementation
Pillar 3/Objective 3.1	FAS survey of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	NGOs that distribute school lunches and other assistance available through the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.	Standardized survey and reporting tool used by NGOs to report results of program outlays in various countries targeted for program resources.	Ongoing
Pillar 3/Objective 3.2	Surveys for Agricultural Attaches	Collect long-term data on capacity-building projects and scientific exchanges after closeouts to determine long-term benefit/impact.	Standardized FAS field office surveys	Ongoing

Appendix C: FAS Linkages to USDA Strategic Plan

USDA Objective	FAS Strategy Pillar/Objective:
<p>1.2 Increase Agricultural Opportunities by Ensuring a Robust Safety Net, Creating New Markets, and Supporting a Competitive Agricultural System (Facilitate Access to International Markets).</p>	<p>1.1 <u>Trade Promotion</u>: Increase effectiveness of market development programs and outreach activities.</p> <p>1.2 <u>Trade Promotion</u>: Manage credit programs to yield the greatest benefit to U.S. agriculture.</p> <p>1.3 <u>Trade Promotion</u>: Maintain a market intelligence information system, second to none.</p> <p>2.1 <u>Trade Policy</u>: Negotiate and enforce agreements that expand market access for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products.</p> <p>2.2 <u>Trade Policy</u>: Prevent or resolve Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) or foreign Sanitary/Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures that hinder U.S. food and agricultural exports.</p> <p>2.3 <u>Trade Policy</u>: Pursue the development of rules-based international systems that facilitate global trade.</p>
<p>3.1 Ensure U.S. agricultural resources contribute to enhanced food security.</p>	<p>3.1 <u>Trade Capacity Building and Food Security</u>: Promote global food security by strengthening agricultural productivity and markets and reducing hunger and malnutrition through food assistance programs.</p>
<p>3.2 Enhance America's ability to develop and trade agricultural products derived from new technologies.</p>	<p>3.2: <u>Trade Capacity Building and Food Security</u>: Enhance partner countries' capacity for agricultural development and participation in international trade through USDA-led technical assistance and training</p>
<p><u>USDA Management Initiatives</u></p> <p>I. Engage USDA employees to transform USDA into a model agency.</p> <p>II. Provide Civil Rights Services to Agriculture Employees and Customers.</p> <p>III. Coordinate Outreach and Improve Consultation and Collaboration Efforts to Increase Access to USDA Programs and Services.</p> <p>IV. Leverage USDA Departmental Management to Increase Performance, Efficiency & Alignment.</p> <p>V. Enhance the USDA Human Resources Process to Recruit and Hire Skilled, Diverse Individuals to meet the Program Needs of USDA.</p> <p>VI. Enhance Collaboration and Coordination on Critical Issues through Cross-cutting Department-wide Initiatives.</p>	<p><u>FAS Management Initiatives</u></p> <p>I. Engage Employees to Enhance Performance.</p> <p>II. Provide Civil Rights Services to Employees and Customers.</p> <p>III. Improve Efforts to Increase Access to FAS Programs and Services.</p> <p>IV. Re-Engineer FAS Business Processes to Increase Performance, Efficiency, and Alignment.</p> <p>V: Recruit and Hire Skilled, Diverse Individuals to Meet the Program Needs of FAS.</p> <p>VI: Enhance Collaboration and Coordination on Critical Issues Through Enterprise Governance.</p>

