

April 4, 2016
MAP 16-004



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm and Foreign
Agricultural
Services

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

1400 Independence
Ave, SW
Stop 1052
Washington, DC
20250-1052

SUBJECT: Submission of Brand Program Operational Procedures

TO: All Market Access Program (MAP) Participants

Background

The current MAP regulations were published in the Federal Register on May 17, 2012, and were effective beginning with program year 2013. Regulations regarding operational procedures for brand programs are found at 7 CFR 1485.15.

Section 1485.15 applies to all Participants that operate a brand program. Participants with brand programs are required to submit brand program operational procedures annually for review and approval by FAS.

Until written approval is received from FAS, Participants cannot enter into a participation agreement with any branded entity and may not implement any brand programs.

During their reviews, FAS' Compliance Review Staff will confirm if the brand program operational procedures are being implemented as approved.

Brand Program Operational Procedures – Participants that Administer Brand Programs (1485.15)

1. At a minimum, brand operational procedures must include the following items:
 - a. Brand program application;
 - b. Application procedures;
 - c. Application review criteria;
 - d. Brand participant eligibility requirements;
 - e. Participation agreement;
 - f. Reimbursement requirements;
 - g. Compliance requirements;
 - h. Reporting and recordkeeping requirements;
 - i. Employment practices;
 - j. Financial management requirements;
 - k. Contracting procedures; and
 - l. Evaluation requirements.

2. All brand program operational procedures must be received by FAS no later than 30 days after the Unified Export Strategy (UES) submission deadline.
3. Participants should submit electronic versions of their brand program operational procedures to FAS via email to uesadmin@fas.usda.gov by the submission deadline.
4. FAS has developed an optional brand program operational procedures template that Participants can use to develop and submit their plans. This optional template is available to Participants on the homepage of the online UES system.
5. FAS will endeavor to evaluate the brand program operational procedures and notify Participants of approval or disapproval within 30 days of the submission deadline.

/s/

Mark A. Slupek
Acting Deputy Administrator
Office of Trade Programs