

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Announcement of the Market Access Program for Fiscal Year 1999

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds for the Fiscal Year 1999 Market Access Program (MAP).

DATES: All applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 26, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250, (202) 720-4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that applications are being accepted for participation in the Fiscal Year 1999 MAP. The MAP is designed to encourage the development, maintenance, and expansion of commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products. Cost share assistance is provided to eligible applicants to implement approved market development programs. Financial assistance under the MAP will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein. The MAP is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

Under the MAP, CCC enters into agreements with eligible participants to share the costs of certain overseas marketing and promotion activities. MAP participants may receive assistance for either generic or brand promotion activities. The MAP

generally operates on a reimbursement basis.

Authority

The MAP is authorized under section 203 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended, and MAP regulations are set forth in 7 CFR part 1485.

Eligible Applicants

To participate in the MAP, an applicant must be: A nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization, a nonprofit state regional trade group (an association of State Departments of Agriculture), a U.S. agricultural cooperative, a State agency, or a small-sized U.S. commercial entity (other than a cooperative or producer association).

Available Funds

\$90 million of cost-share assistance may be obligated under this announcement to eligible applicants.

Application Process

In order to be considered for the MAP, an applicant must submit to FAS information required by the MAP regulations set forth in 7 CFR part 1485. The FAS administers various agricultural export assistance programs, including the MAP, the Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program, Cochran Fellowships, the Emerging Markets Program, Section 108, Pub. L. 480 and several Export Credit Guarantee programs. Organizations which are interested in applying for MAP funds are encouraged to submit their requests using the Unified Export Strategy (UES) format. This allows interested entities to submit a consolidated and strategically coordinated single proposal that incorporates requests for funding and recommendations for virtually all FAS marketing programs, financial assistance programs, and market access programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade they face, identify activities which would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals. Applicants are not required, however, to use the UES format.

Organizations can submit applications in the UES format by two methods. The first allows an applicant to submit information directly to FAS through

data entry screens at a specially designed UES application Internet site. FAS highly recommends applying via the Internet, as this format virtually eliminates paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle. Also, by using the Internet, applicants currently participating in the 1998 MAP will not need to enter certain historical information as it will appear automatically in the data entry screens. Applicants also have the option of submitting electronic versions (along with two paper copies) of their applications to FAS on diskette.

The Internet-based application, including the step-by-step instructions for its use, is located at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html>. Applicants planning to use the Internet-based system must contact the Marketing Operations Staff of FAS at (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information.

Applicants who choose to submit applications on diskette can download the UES handbook, including the suggested application format and instruction, from the following URL address <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/ues/unified.html>. A UES handbook may also be obtained by contacting the Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720-4327.

All MAP applicants, whether or not utilizing the UES format or applying via the Internet or diskette, must also submit by the March 26, 1999, deadline, via hand delivery or U.S. mail, an original signed certification statement as specified in 7 CFR 1485.13(a)(2)(i)(G). The UES handbook contains an acceptable certification format. Incomplete applications and applications that do not otherwise conform to this announcement will not be accepted for review.

Any organization which is not interested in applying for the MAP but would like to request assistance through one of the other programs mentioned, should contact the Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720-4327.

Review Process and Allocation Criteria

FAS allocates funds in a manner that effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign

markets, FAS seeks to identify a clear, long-term agricultural trade strategy by market or product and a program effectiveness time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. These performance indicators are part of FAS' resource allocation strategy to fund applicants which can demonstrate performance based on a long-term strategic plan, consistent with the strategic objectives of the United States Department of Agriculture, and address the performance measurement objectives of the GPRA.

Following is a description of the FAS process for reviewing applications and the criteria for allocating available MAP funds.

(1) Phase 1—Sufficiency Committee Review

Applications received by the closing date will be reviewed by FAS to determine the eligibility of the applicants and the completeness of the applications. These requirements appear at § 1485.12 and § 1485.13 of the MAP regulations.

(2) Phase 2—FAS Divisional Review

Applications which meet the application procedures will then be further evaluated by the applicable FAS Commodity Division. The Divisions will review each application against the criteria listed in § 1485.14 of the MAP regulations. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals and to recommend an appropriate funding level for each application based upon these criteria.

(3) Phase 3—Competitive Review

Meritorious applications will then be passed on to the office of the Deputy Administrator, Commodity and Marketing Programs, for the purpose of allocating available funds among the applicants. Applications which pass the Divisional Review will compete for funds on the basis of the following evaluation criteria (the number in parentheses represents a percentage weight factor):

(a) Applicant's Contribution Level (40)

- The applicant's 4-year average share (1996–99) of all contributions (cash and goods and services provided by U.S. entities in support of overseas marketing and promotion activities may be considered in the allocation process as part of the applicant's contribution and should be reported separately from the applicant's contributions) compared to

- The applicant's 4-year average share (1996–99) of the funding level for all MAP participants.

(b) Past Performance (30)

- The 3-year average share (1996–98) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to

- The applicant's 2-year average share (1997–98) of the funding level for all MAP applicants plus, for those groups participating in the Cooperator program, the 2-year average share (1998–99) of Cooperator marketing plan budgets and the 2-year average share (1997–98) of foreign overhead provided for co-location within a U.S. agricultural office;

(c) Projected Export Goals (15)

- The total dollar value of projected exports promoted by the applicant for 1999 compared to

- The applicant's requested funding level;

(d) Accuracy of Past Projections (15)

- Actual exports for 1997 as reported in the 1999 MAP application compared to

- Past projections of exports for 1997 as specified in the 1997 MAP application.

The Commodity Divisions' recommended funding level for each applicant is converted to a percentage of the total MAP funds available and multiplied by the total weight factor as described above to determine the amount of funds allocated to each applicant.

Closing Date for Applications

All Internet-based applications must be properly submitted by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 26, 1999. Signed certification statements also must be received by that time at one of the addresses listed below.

All applications on diskette (with two accompanying paper copies and a signed certification statement) and any other applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 26, 1999, at one of the following addresses:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, etc.): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, Room 4932–S, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250–1042.

U.S. Postal Delivery: Marketing Operations Staff, STOP 1042, 1400

Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250–1042.

Mary T. Chambliss,

Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, and Acting Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 99–2255 Filed 1–29–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–10–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Foreign Agricultural Service

RIN 0551–AA26

Announcement of the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program for Fiscal Year 2000

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds for the Fiscal Year 2000 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program.

DATES: All applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 26, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250–1042, (202) 720–4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announces that applications are being accepted for participation in the Fiscal Year 2000 Cooperator program. The program is intended to create, expand, and maintain foreign markets for United States agricultural commodities and products. FAS administers the Cooperator program and provides cost share assistance to eligible trade organizations to implement approved market development activities. Financial assistance under this program will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein.

Background

Under the Cooperator program, FAS enters into Market Development Project Agreements with nonprofit U.S. trade organizations. FAS enters into these agreements with nonprofit U.S. trade organizations that have the broadest possible producer representation of the commodity being promoted and gives priority to those organizations that are nationwide in membership and scope. Program participants may not, during