

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number: 1051-001
SUBJECT: Coordination of USDA Activities with Foreign Countries	DATE: June 13, 2005	
	OPI: Foreign Agricultural Service, FAA	

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1 PURPOSE

- a This regulation defines the role of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) as the Department's lead agency in coordinating all agricultural matters with foreign countries. This regulation covers all agencies involved in overseas activities, including those having representatives stationed abroad.
- b The Department's overseas activities are increasingly recognized for their important contributions to the trade, development, and stability of many countries of the world, as well as to the prosperity and well being of U.S. citizens. The diversity of these activities truly demonstrates the scope of USDA's responsibilities and capabilities. By their very nature, USDA's activities are a positive force in the world and represent the strengths, values, traditions, and talents of the American agricultural community.
- c Several USDA agencies have important technical responsibilities in support of the Department's foreign affairs objectives. The responsibility for successfully carrying out those specific objectives is

enhanced and strengthened through effective coordination and cooperation across the Department.

- d It is important that the visibility of USDA's overseas activities be increased and that accomplishments and contributions be communicated in the host country. USDA's activities should be seen as contributing to the entire U.S. representation and country team effort for which the U.S. Chief of Mission (normally an Ambassador) is responsible.

2 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

This regulation supersedes DR 1051-1, dated September 17, 2001.

3 POLICY

- a In foreign countries, the FAS Head of Post, whether a Minister-Counselor, Counselor, Attache, or Trade Officer, serves under the U.S. Chief of Mission as the Secretary's principal representative for agricultural matters under USDA's jurisdiction. In countries where there is both an Agricultural Affairs Office and an Agricultural Trade Office, the head of the Agricultural Affairs Office is the FAS Head of Post.
- b In Washington, FAS coordinates appointments with foreign visitors for the immediate Office of the Secretary and all arrangements for foreign travel for that office. In addition, all Departmental communications with U.S. Missions and FAS offices abroad are to be coordinated by FAS Washington.

4 THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR, COUNSELOR, ATTACHE, OR TRADE OFFICER

- a The FAS Agricultural Minister-Counselor, Counselor, Attache, or Trade Officer serves as the Secretary's and Chief of Mission's principal representative and coordinator in the country(ies) assigned for agricultural matters for which USDA has primary responsibility. This assignment of responsibility will not conflict in any way with current USDA agency responsibilities or lines of authority. Each agency must follow individual lines of authority and communication to maintain effective and efficient program direction and control. Agencies should, however, advise personnel either traveling or assigned overseas of FAS responsibility.

- b The FAS Head of Post must be kept fully informed of substantive aspects of any official USDA activity in the country(ies) assigned. Arrangements for contacts with host government officials will be coordinated through the FAS Head of Post who should always be kept informed of any other official business activities. Normally this can be done by agencies providing copies of correspondence and reports to the FAS Head of Post. The FAS Head of Post must be consulted before contacting host government officials to discuss policy matters, and is always responsible for setting appointments for any USDA delegation of one or more officials with the heads of departments or ministries in foreign countries. The FAS Head of Post will be informed of, and invited to, meetings between USDA agencies and other host foreign agricultural officials that involve matters of a policy or significant program nature. He or she will invite officials of other USDA agencies to meetings dealing with the subject matter handled by those agencies.
- c To the extent possible, FAS will inform the appropriate agency officials in Washington of opportunities to meet with visiting foreign agricultural officials or to brief FAS Minister-Counselors, Counselors, Attaches and Trade Officers while in Washington. When substantive meetings are held with foreign officials in Washington, the FAS Head of Post in the country concerned should be advised, beforehand if possible, or afterward by providing a brief report of the meeting. Whenever possible, the FAS Area Director in Washington will be invited to attend such agency meetings.

5 FOREIGN TRAVEL

- a The Agriculture Travel Regulation, DM2300-1, Chapter 301, part 301-18.4 provides specific instructions on the Department's administrative requirements concerning official travel in foreign countries.

The regulation contains an explanation of the process for foreign travel clearance and of the procedures for obtaining the proper passport and visas. The FAS International Services Branch, Travel Section (ITS) in room 1069-S is responsible for obtaining the necessary visas. ITS also can provide additional information on international travel, passports, and visas. Similar information is available from the Department of State on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov> and from USDA on the Internet at http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/visa_requirements/default.htm.

- b The instructions include a requirement that the FAS Head of Post be notified well in advance of each proposed visit. The country clearance request MUST be sent via the FAS International Cable System as a FAS WASHDC (FASTO), State or AIDAC message. This cable must be

cleared by the appropriate FAS/Foreign Agricultural Affairs Area Office. Travel shall not begin until the required travel clearance message is received from the Post. Communications via cmail, email, fax and Internet SHALL NOT be used to request nor obtain travel clearance. This is in compliance with Department of State requirements.

6 USDA/WASHINGTON COORDINATION

- a The central coordinating points for all official contacts with U.S. Missions abroad and the USDA/FAS global network of Agricultural Officers are the Area Directors in the Office of the Deputy Administrator for Foreign Agricultural Affairs in FAS. They are the principal contact points for any USDA agency with employees traveling overseas on official business. A current list of FAS posts by country and area, including the telephone and room numbers of the Area Director is available at http://www.fas.usda.gov/faa/Area_officers_res.htm. Each agency should keep FAS advised of its central coordinating office or contact point for overseas activities and official travel. Travel coordinators should keep in touch with the FAS Area Directors for changes in procedures for particular countries.
- b Arrangements for all meetings in Washington between foreign officials and the Office of the Secretary must be coordinated by the FAS Area Director responsible for relations with the country or countries of the foreign visitors. In cases where the primary subject matter of a proposed meeting falls in the area of responsibility of an agency other than FAS, the role of the Area Director will generally be limited to protocol and administrative aspects of the visit, and to ensuring that FAS Heads of Posts in the visitor's country or countries are informed and, as necessary, consulted.

7 OVERSEAS COORDINATION

- a Each USDA agency should examine the content, form, and frequency of communications between its overseas personnel, foreign officials, and the FAS Head of Post. All USDA agencies sponsoring, managing, or assisting overseas activities will maintain frequent and informative contact with the FAS Head of Post in the area or region where agency personnel are assigned or working. As appropriate, this includes furnishing copies of documents, periodic summary reports and correspondence, visiting the office, and attending staff meetings. USDA personnel working abroad will establish and maintain regular contact with the FAS Heads of Posts for their regions.

- b The FAS Head of Post will establish and maintain regular contact with USDA personnel in the area or region, and provide assistance as well as information about Mission objectives and activities. He or she will also keep the Ambassador and other interested parties in the Embassy informed of USDA activities in the host country, as appropriate.

- c It is of paramount importance that USDA agencies and their overseas personnel be aware of the role of Chiefs of Mission as the President's representatives in their country(ies) of assignment. While individual agencies may develop their own policies regarding the mission of their overseas personnel, it must be understood that overall authority abroad rests with the Chiefs of Mission. All U.S. Government personnel assigned to a country are subject to the authority of the Chief of Mission. If it is his or her wish that they participate in Mission operations outside of the responsibilities defined by their agency, they are obliged to comply whenever possible.

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