



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Foreign  
Agricultural  
Service

# FACT SHEET

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## FAS Reorganization Implementation Begins

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has the primary responsibility for USDA's international activities. FAS' staff of more than 700 employees is stationed in Washington, DC, and in about 80 countries around the world. The agency works to expand and maintain exports for U.S. agricultural, fish, and forest products; supports international economic development and trade capacity building; and improve the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) system to facilitate trade.

Since the agency was established in 1953, the world agricultural trade picture has changed significantly. To address these changes and new challenges FAS conducted a top-to-bottom review of what the agency does, how effective it functions, and what could be done better. Some of the concerns identified included: effectively supporting the agriculture sector during trade agreement negotiations; developing strategies in response to the emergence of "giants" like China and Brazil; and managing the trade impact of international food safety scares like AI and BSE. The review process included input from employees, private sector trade groups, and program participants. This effort pointed out the need for a new strategic focus for FAS and a

realignment of functions and personnel to increase the effectiveness of the agency.

The FAS reorganization plan was approved on August 30, 2006, and implementation begins on November 13, 2006.

### Goals of Reorganization

The reorganization focuses on inherently governmental activities such as:

- Building on FAS' strength in commodity analysis to do a better job of analyzing how U.S. exports may be affected by developments such as foreign import bans, new trade agreements, and new technologies like biotechnology and biofuels.
- More effectively linking the country expertise of FAS overseas offices with an increased focus in Washington on key countries and regions.
- Providing program participants with better, streamlined, and transparent service.
- Grouping staff members into single, focused work units with clearly defined missions.
- Strengthening FAS' ability to monitor and enforce trade agreements and to support the

dispute settlement efforts of the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) Office.

- Placing special emphasis on identifying and resolving SPS issues that affect trade.
- Providing better support, both at home and abroad, to USDA regulatory agencies that are essential partners in resolving foreign SPS issues.
- Focusing USDA international development and trade capacity work on building relationships with foreign governments for quicker informal solutions to trade disruptions.

### **Realignment into Three Key Areas**

Four major organizational components focus on FAS' *policy functions*.

- The **Office of Scientific and Technical Affairs** (OSTA) provides the industry with a portal for issues related to SPS, technical barriers to trade (TBT), and market access work. USDA takes a lead role as the U.S. enquiry point under the World Trade Organization's SPS Agreement and prepares and tracks foreign country submissions for U.S. SPS determinations.
- The **Office of Country and Regional Affairs** (OCRA) develops strategies to support bilateral negotiations and informal dispute settlement processes. OCRA analyzes agricultural, trade, macroeconomic, financial policies, and country positions on issues under negotiations. OCRA also prepares focused analysis on key countries and regions of the world and provides a strong link to the expertise of FAS' unique network of overseas offices.

- The **Office of Negotiations and Agreements** (ONA), in consultation with USTR, develops trade policy and strategy for international trade negotiations. ONA monitors trade agreement compliance and provides support for dispute settlements. The group also helps coordinate USDA policy positions in international organizations.
- The **Office of Global Analysis** (OGA) focuses on cross-cutting analysis on programs, policies, and industry-wide issues to support USDA's trade agenda. OGA also manages FAS global production, supply, and demand data and analysis.

Two program areas concentrate on *trade capacity building and agricultural development* in developing nations and administer export and import programs.

- In keeping with the President's National Security Strategy, the **Office of Capacity Building and Development** (OCBD) carries out activities that are in line with U.S. international economic development goals. OCBD operates food aid programs and trade, science, and regulatory capacity building projects, including training and technical assistance programs, and supports USDA's post-conflict, post-disaster reconstruction efforts.
- The **Office of Trade Programs** (OTP) administers programs that support marketing efforts, especially those carried out by the U.S. private sector, including the Market Access Program, the Foreign Market Development Program, Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops, and the Quality Samples Program. OTP also administers the export credit

guarantee and Dairy Export Incentive Programs. Import programs include those for sugar, dairy, and trade assistance.

Two areas focus on *operations*. The Office of Foreign Service Operations supports overseas Foreign Service staff, while the Office of Administrative Operations supports Washington headquarters staff.

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For information on the reorganization and to determine contact points for all programs needs, visit the FAS website at [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov)