



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

National Export Initiative: Importance of U.S. Agricultural Exports

April 2010

“We need to export more of our goods around the world. We will double our exports over the next five years, an increase that will support two million new jobs in America. To meet this goal, we’re launching a National Export Initiative that will help farmers and small businesses increase their exports and expand their markets.”

President Barack Obama
State of the Union Address
January 27, 2010



U.S. agriculture looks overseas to expand sales and boost incomes. Exports also generate additional economic activity that ripples through the domestic economy.

Expanding existing market access and opening new markets under future trade agreements will significantly boost U.S. agricultural export sales.

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works to develop and expand market access for U.S. products and improve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace.

With a global network of more than 90 [overseas offices](#) covering 154 countries, FAS agricultural attachés and locally engaged staff are the eyes, ears, and voice for U.S. agriculture overseas. FAS staff identify problems, provide practical solutions, and work to advance opportunities for U.S. agriculture and support U.S. foreign policy around the globe.

Find out more about what FAS has to offer U.S. agricultural exporters:

- [Market Development Programs](#)
FAS market development programs help U.S. exporters develop and maintain markets for hundreds of food and agricultural products, from bulk commodities to brand name items.
- [Exporter Assistance](#)
Looking to increase sales and expand your customer base? Exporting may be the answer! Selling to overseas markets is a lucrative activity for many U.S. companies and all of them began by researching, planning and making critical decisions.
- [Market and Trade Data](#)
FAS analysts provide objective intelligence and analysis on foreign market opportunities, prepare production forecasts, assess export marketing opportunities, and track changes in policies affecting U.S. agricultural exports and imports.

— **World Production, Market and Trade Reports** The World Market and Trade reports provide the latest analysis and data on a number of agricultural commodities, outlining the current supply, demand and trade estimates both for the United States and for many major foreign countries.

— **Weekly Export Sales** Weekly export sales reports serve as a timely early warning system on the possible impact of agricultural obligations on U.S. supplies and prices. The data can be used, for example, to assess the level of export demand, to determine where markets exist, and to assess the relative position of different commodities in those markets.

— **Attaché Reports** U.S. Foreign Service officers, working at posts overseas, collect

and submit information on the agricultural situation in more than 130 countries.

— **Featured Reports** and **Commodity Intelligence Reports** prepared by FAS economic analysts.

- **Commodity** and **Country** Information
- **Trade Agreements** The latest updates on trade negotiations and agreements.
- **Monitoring technical and sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to agricultural trade** FAS monitors technical and sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to agricultural trade, along with food safety related issues, with input from FAS field offices, other U.S. Government agencies, the private sector, and industry.

Importance of U.S. Agricultural Exports

- Expanding existing market access and opening new markets under future trade agreements will significantly boost U.S. agricultural export sales.
- The President's FY2011 budget proposes increased discretionary spending of \$54 million to enhance USDA's export promotion activities.
- Compared to the overall economy, U.S. agriculture is **twice** as reliant on overseas markets.
- USDA estimates that anywhere from **26 to 30 percent** of farm cash receipts in any one year comes from exports.
- **Every dollar** of exports creates another **\$1.36** in supporting activities to process, package, finance and ship agricultural products.
- U.S. agricultural exports, which in **FY 2009** reached **\$96.6 billion**, generated an additional **\$135 billion** in supporting business activity in transportation, distribution, food processing and manufacturing.
- These exports support approximately **1 million U.S. jobs** both on and off the farm.
- Some agricultural commodities benefit dramatically from sales in overseas markets. For example:
 1. **64 percent** of our **almond crop** is shipped overseas.
 2. **74 percent** of **cotton** is exported.
 3. Nearly **89 percent** of U.S. **cattle** hides are exported.
 4. **49 percent** of U.S. **rice** goes to international markets.
 5. **50 percent** of U.S. **wheat** goes into the export market.
 6. **34 percent** of our **soybeans** are exported.
- **96 percent** of the world's consumers live outside the United States.
- U.S. agricultural export growth is led by the NAFTA countries of **Canada** and **Mexico** and **Asia**.

For more information on FAS export programs go to <http://www.fas.usda.gov>.