



Foreign Agricultural Service Climate Change Activities



There are four main areas of Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) climate change activity:

Representing USDA in International Fora

FAS, for USDA, leads any negotiations on biofuel tariffs and market access, and ensures that international biofuel policies are consistent with international treaties and U.S. climate change policies. FAS also represents USDA in negotiations of any Climate Funds – particularly in conjunction with trade commitments. Some key climate change issues for agriculture and trade include: sustainability indicators; land use and land use change; carbon labeling and other environmental claims certification systems for agricultural and food products and production processes; biofuels; forestry and deforestation in developing countries; agriculture's role in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions; and adaptation and financing. FAS participates in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations seeking to ensure that the negotiations: do not adversely impact any U.S. domestic climate change legislation; are no more trade restrictive than necessary; include a focus on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries; and establish appropriate agriculture modalities.

Capacity Building and Scientific Exchange Programs

FAS is utilizing both appropriated and reimbursable funding for a growing portfolio of capacity building and scientific exchange activities to support our global climate change objectives. For example, this year, climate change emerged as a new topic for the Cochran Fellowship Program; FAS is responding to several countries that prioritized requests for Cochran Fellows related to climate change. Likewise, in cooperation with USAID, FAS will support Global Research Alliance Fellowships for scientists from developing countries in the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases, where competitively selected Fellows will work side-by-side with U.S. scientists on climate change mitigation research projects. FAS is collaborating with State Department on an Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas initiative that will promote renewable biomass for energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions among Partnership countries. In each of our capacity building and scientific exchange activities, FAS and its collaborators routinely communicate to plan activities, prioritize participants and in-country partners, and monitor results to achieve our climate change objective.

Monitoring Climate Change Policies

FAS monitors climate change policies by tracking developments occurring or reported by the World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade enquiry points; overseas FAS offices; and industry partnerships. Foreign governments and multinational organizations may introduce trade restrictive policies and regulations in such areas as carbon labeling, biofuels, genetic resources, and biotechnology which can adversely impact the market access of U.S. agricultural and food products, and can either distort carbon markets or impede the adoption of low carbon initiatives favored by the United States.

Building and Maintaining Relationships

FAS' overseas posts advocate for USDA's objectives on climate change by contributing to a Mission (U.S. Embassy) strategy on climate change and by engaging country officials and stakeholders. FAS field posts also report on the agricultural implications of climate change and country policies, including the impact on U.S. agricultural exports and local food security. FAS fosters dialogue about relevant international developments and USDA's climate change goals and objectives to key U.S. food and agricultural stakeholders and industry associations through briefing materials and presentations.