United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Food Safety Inspection Service
www.fsis.usda.gov

Foreign Agricultural Service
www.fas.usda.gov

ABOUT USDA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the leading Cabinet level agency responsible for U.S. agricultural policy.

USDA monitors food and agricultural policies in the United States to maintain the vitality of the U.S. agricultural sector. Its responsibilities include food and safety inspections, helping ensure continued improvements in agricultural productivity, organizing international food assistance and monitoring importation of agricultural products.

While the bulk of USDA activities are domestically focused, the agency also helps develop trade policy positions through the TPSC and TPRG processes. (See USTR memo.) The agency assists USTR negotiate and monitor aspects of trade agreements involving the agricultural sector.

USDA sub-agencies particularly involved in the implementation and development of agricultural trade policies include the: Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Foreign Agricultural Service
The Foreign Agricultural Service is the unit of the Department of Agriculture that advocates for the U.S. agricultural industry, especially with regards to increasing U.S. exports. This mission relies on a large network of 96 offices in over 169 countries that collect information about foreign markets and identifying agricultural opportunities abroad. FAS staff also work with the USTR, to break down trade barriers and enforce U.S. rights under existing trade agreements.

Food Safety and Inspection Service
FSIS is the arm of the USDA that conducts inspections of domestic and imported meats, eggs, and poultry products to ensure that they do not present a health hazard to U.S. consumers. For imports, FSIS attempts to establish that foreign sources of these items are produced and handled in a way that is equivalent to the standards required for domestic sources. If the FSIS determines that a country is eligible to export these products though the agency may audit foreign country
procedures to ensure continued adherence to U.S. minimum standards.

*Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service*
APHIS helps ensure the safety of animal and plants in the United States and therefore plays a role similar to FSIS. An important focus of APHIS is to try to eliminate pests and diseases in food imports into the U.S. APHIS also promotes U.S. agricultural exports by monitoring food and safety procedures in foreign markets to ensure that they do not result in unjustified barriers.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The USDA Economic Research Service provides data for a range of topics including international markets and trade, food markets and prices, farm practices and management, and others.

*Agricultural Research Service*: [www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)
The ARS produces reports and develops solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority such as food safety, nutrition, and biosecurity.

This website links to several databases including the Global Agricultural Trade System (addresses trade in agriculture, fish, forest, textiles), Export Sales Reporting (export sales by commodity and country), Production, Supply, and Distribution database, and Global Agricultural Information Network.

**RESOURCES FOR FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS**

The office is the main contact for international activities regarding agricultural research aimed to enhance productivity in the sector. The office has bilateral and global partnerships with laboratories and researchers.

**RESOURCES FOR FOREIGN BUSINESSES**

The National Agricultural Statistics Service provides agricultural-specific data around the United States daily, such as hatchability of chicken eggs per month, cattle counts, etc.