

Trade Notes...

FAS public affairs specialist
Donald Washington is at (202) 720-3101;
E-mail: Donald.Washington@usda.gov

USDA Launches New Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

USDA is accepting petitions from U.S. agricultural producers for assistance under the new TAA (Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers program) announced in August. Under the program, technical assistance and adjustment payments will be provided to U.S. agricultural, livestock and aquacultural producers, including qualified fishermen, if increased imports of competitive commodities have contributed importantly to a 20-percent or more price decline compared to the average price over five preceding marketing years. The Trade Act of 2002 established the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers program and authorized appropriations to carry out the program not to exceed \$90 million a year for fiscal years 2003 through 2007. The program will be implemented based on a notice published in the Federal Register on the Web at: www.fas.usda.gov/info/fr/notices.html. For further information, contact a county or state Farm Service Agency office or the FAS Trade Adjustment Assistance Office, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 1021, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-1021; Tel.: (202) 720-2916; E-mail: Trade.Adjustment@fas.usda.gov

Thailand Opens Import Market for Potatoes

In July, Thailand approved a TRQ (tariff-rate quota) allocation for processing potatoes, that means Thai processors may now import potatoes from the northern hemisphere. In 2003, Thailand approved out-of-quota import licenses for potatoes in the amount of 25,400 tons at a duty rate of 27 percent. This is a significant improvement over the original offer of a TRQ of 300 tons, at 27-percent duty, with the out-of-quota duty at 126.4 percent. In recent years, U.S. fresh potato (not including seed) exports to Thailand have dropped rapidly, from \$590,000 in 2000 to \$0 in 2002. The new TRQ allocation is expected to help boost U.S. potato exports to Thailand.

Cold Chain Seminar for Palestinians Held in Amman

In August, FAS in cooperation with the USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) Mission in Amman initiated the first phase of a three-part program designed to help local agribusiness interests in the West Bank and Gaza areas of Palestine with perishable food supply chain issues. The seminar was designed to foster agribusiness capacity building in Palestine, where severe structural impediments currently hamper economic growth and stability. About 50 key Palestinian perishable food sector business leaders attended.

Wood Product Exports Forecast To Reach \$5 Billion in Fiscal 2004

U.S. wood product exports are forecast to reach \$5.0 billion in fiscal 2004, an increase of \$100 million over the 2003 estimate of \$4.9 billion. Exports to Canada, our largest market, are projected to grow as demand for hardwood lumber increases. Many Canadian wood processing manufacturers use U.S. hardwoods to make molding, doors and windows for the U.S. market. Exports to China are also projected to increase, primarily due to demand from China's growing furniture industry. Although hardwood exports to the European Union will likely recover in 2004, overall wood exports to this market are projected to decrease.