

EMERGING MARKETS PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Regional Organics Seminar: Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia

Activity Planning Sheet

Activity Title: **Regional Organics Seminar: Organic Marketing and Accreditation**

Date Submitted: July 28, 2008

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Date of Activity: Winter/Spring, 2009

Activity Location(s): Sofia, Bulgaria

Funding Source: Emerging Markets Program Accounting Number: _____

Estimated Budget: See attached spreadsheet with detailed budget

Accepted: _____

Date: _____

Activity Description

Regional two-day seminar on Organic Marketing and Accreditation (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia).

The purpose of this activity is to increase U.S.-Eastern Europe/Balkans trade in organic products, and regional awareness and consumption of organic food and non-food products and ingredients.

Speakers: one speaker from the Organic Monitor Co. (U.S.), and one speaker from each invited country (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia).

Target participants: from three countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia. These participants will be government officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, and Health; the Veterinary

Services; local Organics Associations; farmers, importers, distributors, processors, and retailers; investors; and the press.

This activity builds on two hugely successful organics activities that were conducted by FAS Sofia in 2007 and 2008: in 2007, the first Cochran organics group was organized for Bulgaria, and a followup seminar was held in early 2008, for which the response was overwhelming. Many more guests attended than were invited; the Cochran participants made presentations on the U.S. NOP and how it fits with EU requirements; the Deputy Minister of Agriculture gave the keynote co-address (along with the DCM/Embassy Sofia) and was highly supportive of Post efforts; and the seminar was well-covered by the press. Bulgarian interest in doing a more expanded seminar with participants from Romania and Serbia is intense. Post has begun recruiting for this seminar and estimates that at least 100 Bulgarian participants will want to attend.

To gauge Romanian interest in this event, AgCounselor Reid raised the proposed seminar with Romanian Agriculture Minister Ciolos in a recent one-on-one meeting (July 2008), and the Minister and his counselors were extremely interested and supportive. The U.S. Ambassador in Romania is also highly supportive, as was the U.S. Ambassador in Bulgaria (who is now our Ambassador to Russia). The DCM in Sofia gave the co-keynote address at the opening of the Sofia seminar, and as Charge, is also very interested in supporting this proposed seminar. Post foresees that interest will be high in Serbia also, and the new Agricultural Attache in Sofia, who will begin covering Serbia in August 2008, will be able to confirm this.

This activity is one of public diplomacy. Around the world, the United States and FAS strongly support biotechnology. By organizing a regional organics conference, the U.S. Missions in Sofia, Bucharest, and Belgrade will demonstrate our commitment to supporting all agricultural technologies, without exception – from biotechnology (products of genetic engineering) to organically-produced products. The event broadens the message of FAS and U.S. missions overseas, that agricultural development in all its forms is to be supported and encouraged.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness of trade patterns, consumption trends, and production practices of organic products in the U.S. and the EU. It is to open lines of communication between regulators, retailers, processors, farmers, and investors, and to present to them the opportunities afforded by this expanding, high-value but still niche market. It is to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to supporting all agricultural technologies, with the goal of promoting consumer choice.

Expanding consumer purchasing power and awareness of organic products has convinced many business groups that this niche market is worth investing in. [New tariff-free access for Bulgaria and Romania to the entire EU market came in January 2007 with EU membership, while Serbia is being encouraged to adopt EU regulations and practices for eventual EU entry. The EU market, with its rapidly increasing demand for organic products, gives farmers in Eastern Europe and the Balkans a big incentive to convert to organic production; conversion in many places is not difficult due to the relative lack of agricultural activity in farming areas in the last decade.

In the cities, retailers are seeing steadily rising demand for labeled organic foods, many of which are either imported or contain imported ingredients. These retail products are becoming more widely available, and as consumption has increased, the demand by processors and retailers for both local and imported organic products and ingredients has risen.

U.S. products are well-regarded among distributors and wholesalers in the Balkans. Among the organic products for which there is immediate retail demand are maple syrup, peanuts, peanut butter and organic soy. Some high-end textiles from organic cotton are also sold in the region.

Proposed activity

FAS Sofia, in cooperation with FAS Bucharest and FAS Belgrade will organize a two-day seminar for retailers, processors, government officials, farmers, investors and other participants under the title “Organic Products Marketing and Certification”.

Speakers from the three participant countries and a representative of the U.S. organics industry will give an overview of USDA’s National Organic Program certification standards, EU regulations and requirements, and import/export opportunities. As result of this seminar, we expect to expand and reinforce liaison between government officials, producers and experts, for the purpose of supporting and developing trade, consumption, and production of organic products.

The event will conclude with a cocktail reception at the Residence of the Ambassador or DCM.

A detailed seminar agenda is attached.

Activity planning

Note: We foresee the need to contract with a conference support organizer to handle many of the three-country logistical arrangements for the conference.

- Conference support organizer (press, advertising and promotion, invitations, reproduction, information folders, follow up, other as noted below) – FAS Sofia
- Organic Monitor speaker arrangements - FAS Sofia
- One local speaker from each participating country – FAS Sofia/Bucharest/Belgrade (conference organizer)
- Venue for seminar – FAS Sofia
- Venue for closing reception at Residence – FAS Sofia
- Travel arrangements for participants and speakers – FAS staff (conference organizer)
- Accommodation arrangements for participants and FAS staff – FAS Sofia (conference organizer)
- arrangement for participants and FAS staff – FAS Sofia (conference organizer)
- Catering services for seminar (1 lunch and 3 coffee breaks) – FAS Sofia (conference organizer)
- Catering for cocktail party – FAS Sofia
- Translation Equipment – FAS Sofia (conference organizer)
- Interpreters – one from each participating country – FAS Sofia/Bucharest/Belgrade (conference organizer)

Performance measures

- Expand the awareness and expertise of the participants in organics certification, trade, marketing
- Bring regional regulations and certification practices into harmony with EU requirements thereby facilitating trade

- Demonstrated development of regional contacts and sharing of knowledge and ideas between participants in the three countries
- Increased interest and number of attendees at the annual U.S. organic trade show (successor to FMI in Chicago each year)
- Active public diplomacy: as the U.S. strongly supports biotechnology, so we also support organic production and trade. The United States supports the whole range of agricultural technologies, and exclude none of them.
- Raise awareness of U.S. organic practices and synergies between EU and U.S. certified producers
- The organics market is developing but in this region it is still in the early stages; this event gets experts and interested parties together on the ground floor, building a foundation from which to begin or to expand trade relations in this growing area

Performance and Financial Reporting and Follow-up Information

A performance report that fully outlines the achievements and recommendation for follow-up activities is required for all activities within 30 days of the activity's completion. See reporting instructions below

Performance and Financial Reports will be written by: FAS Sofia, with FAS Bucharest and FAS Belgrade as contributors

EMP Report Instructions.

a. Performance Reports

1. Performance reports are required for all projects/activities.
2. Performance reports must be submitted no later than 30 days after completion of the project. The report must contain the following items:

The final report should contain the following information:

- (i) Introduction. Acknowledgement of the funding assistance received (usually from the Emerging Markets Program);
- (ii) Concise executive summary;
- (iii) Objectives of the project and description of the activities undertaken;
- (iv) Specific accomplishments, e.g., research results, impact on markets and/or exports, results of training, seminars, etc. and successes, failures, and lessons learned. Note: Successes are specific, measurable results that are a direct outcome of a project or activity, e.g., increases in existing U.S. agricultural exports (amounts of trade or actual and/or projected sales in dollars or tonnage); entry of U.S. products into new markets; elimination of specific market constraints/barriers; and adoption of U.S. regulations and standards, etc.;
- (v) Description of the difficulties encountered in implementing the project; in particular whether the project's objectives were achieved;
- (vi) Description of the cooperation received from participating parties (U.S. organizations, foreign governments, or entity);
- (vii) Principal persons and organizations involved in the project U.S. and foreign).

Note: All final performance reports will be made available to the public.

a. Financial Reports.

Final financial reports must be submitted no later than 90 days after completion of the project. Such reports must provide a final accounting of all project expenditures by cost category, and include the accounting of actual contributions made to the project by the Recipient and participating organization(s).