

## **EXPORTER ASSISTANT PROGRAM SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

### **SUMMARY**

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this submission includes a request for a revision and renewal of a currently approved information collection in support of exporter assistance programs.

These FAS Exporter Assistance Programs are intended to help U.S. exporters develop and maintain markets overseas for hundreds of food and agricultural products, from bulk commodities to brand-name products. Companies wanting to export can participate in some or all programs – each of which offers a variety of methods of developing an export business.

The Exporter Assistance section of the FAS online (<http://www.fas.usda.gov>) is a one-stop-shop for both experienced or novice exporter, offering information about export as well as providing easy access to register for these services. Customer evaluations will be sought in order to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of these services, which are intended to help U.S. companies to market and sell their products in overseas markets. Authority for this program falls under 7 U.S.C. 1761 and is voluntary for U.S. companies to participate.

#### **1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

The Office of Trade Programs (OTP) provides vital services within the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It facilitates trade contacts between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers seeking U.S. food and agricultural products. All of the assistance offered by the agency is designed to promote U.S. agricultural exports by helping American exporters make contact with export agents, trading companies, importers and foreign buyers, thus creating opportunities to sell their products in overseas markets. The specific programs covered by this request for OMB information collection authority are: U.S. Suppliers List, Trade Shows, Foreign Buyers List, Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies, and the Madigan Award.

Authority for these programs falls under 7 U.S.C. 1761, 7 U.S.C. 5693, 7 U.S.C. 1765b and is voluntary for U.S. companies to participate.

FAS collects data, from participants, on two specific measures for the purpose of measuring program performance: (1) direct sales reported by U.S. participants at Trade Shows; and (2) direct sales reported by U.S. participants based on Exporter Assistance programs (Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies and Foreign Buyers List).

In the case of the Madigan Award, an award to organizations that significantly contribute to the advancement of U.S. agricultural exports, FAS collects information relevant to the

nominations for this award. Authority for this award falls under 7 U.S.C. 5678 and is voluntary for entities to participate.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used.**

**Summary Table:**

Program	How	Whom	What Purpose
U.S. Suppliers List	Supplier listings is an online searchable database by product including full contact information, email, web address, size of firm, type of firm, products and regions of the world. The U.S. Suppliers online database is hosted and maintained by the National Association of State Department of Agriculture (NASDA) in cooperation with FAS.	Used by FAS overseas offices and cooperators to respond to inquiries from importers asking for assistance to find a U.S. exporter. Foreign importers and buyer can access the database with no access restrictions.	Facilitates contact between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers.
Foreign Buyers List	The Foreign Buyers List is a searchable database by country and product. Including full contact information and products. FAS overseas offices maintain and update their contacts in a consolidated database. Lists are made available to exporters at no cost.	Used by the OTP to provide lists to U.S. exporters when they are seeking a list of foreign buyers. Upon request, Trade Associations can obtain mailing lists for targeted mailings of events that USDA financially supports.	Facilitates contact between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers
Trade Shows	Through partnering with show organizers, U.S. companies are offered exhibit space in a U.S.A. Agricultural or Food pavilion. Companies who register for exhibit space are included in an exhibitor database.	Used by organizer to develop targeted mail efforts in the recruitment process for trade show events. After the event is completed, participants complete an on-site evaluation at close of event.	Opportunity for U.S. companies to present their products to the buyer face to face, and to get feedback on service.
American Café	The registration is made by U.S. companies and sent by e-mail to the show coordinator, who compiles the information in a spreadsheet or database format.	Information about the companies is also used to facilitate communication with the participant, prepare letters to the participant, and planning for demonstration of products. After the event is completed, participants are asked to complete two evaluations, first one at one month and the second at twelve months.	Opportunity for U.S. companies to have their products demonstrated to the buyer and to receive feedback on service.
Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies	Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies is an online searchable database containing full contact information, email and web addresses, size and type of firm, products and export regions of the world of U.S. suppliers capable of providing mixed containers of grocery and/or food service products to foreign buyers.	FAS overseas offices provides to buyers who are looking for mixed container loads of grocery products. Exporters can register free of charge by submitting registration form available on FAS online. Suppliers' complete evaluations.	Facilitate contacts between U.S. exporters and foreign buyers.
Madigan Award	Public solicitation for nominations, followed by a formal application.	Used by USDA and review board to make awards.	Recognize exporters who have made significant contributions to the export of agricultural products.

## **Detailed Response:**

### *U.S. Suppliers List:*

The main purpose of this program is to foster trade contacts in an effort to facilitate greater export of U.S. agriculture, food, forestry, and fishery products. The U.S. Suppliers List service is a searchable database containing U.S. firms, who are considered export ready and is used by FAS to specifically facilitate connecting U.S. exporters with overseas buyers. It contains 500 product categories with companies listed multiple times. Companies can register to be listed at no cost.

The database is primarily used by more than 80 USDA/FAS Overseas and Washington offices and is used to respond to inquiries from export agents, trading companies, importers and foreign buyers to locate U.S. exporters. The information is directly provided to importers, foreign buyers and interested parties in the U.S. for free via FAS online. It is also used by FAS to recruit U.S. exporters to participate in market development activities sponsored by USDA and federal export programs. The ultimate use of the information is determined by the recipient. In most cases, the information is used by importers and foreign buyers to contact U.S. exporters.

The U.S. Suppliers online database is hosted and maintained by the National Association of State Department of Agriculture (NASDA) in cooperation with FAS.

### *Foreign Buyers List*

The Foreign Buyers List is a service that allows foreign buyers to identify themselves to U.S. exporters and FAS Partners/Cooperators as potential buyers of particular products.

FAS overseas offices, using a variety of sources including trade shows, events and incoming inquiries, etc. collect basic contact information and products of interest from foreign buyers. Any collection method allows the FAS overseas office to verify the quality and reliability of the contact. This information is uploaded to an online database. U.S. exporters can order these lists from OTP for free. The order form may be downloaded from FAS online at:

[http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/buying\\_us/foreign\\_buyers\\_exporters.asp](http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/buying_us/foreign_buyers_exporters.asp). The company submits the form to OTP via fax or mail. The Foreign Buyers Lists are then sent to the exporter in an email or mailed as a hard copy list. U.S. exporters use these lists to promote their products to potential foreign buyers.

### *Trade Shows and Café*

#### **Evaluation Form**

Information is collected from each exhibitor at all FAS supported shows and is given to the trade show coordinator, the organizer and overseas office. Information used from the evaluation form is to measure the performance of shows.

### **Registration Form**

Information is collected from each potential exhibitor who attends a show. Information is given to the trade show coordinator, the organizer and overseas offices to be included in the show directory.

### *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies*

The *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* is a list of U.S. exporters capable of providing mixed containers of grocery and/or food service products to foreign buyers. This is particularly important for emerging markets that are unable to support large shipments of a single product. The exporters in the *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* handle thousands of products and its purpose is to provide opportunities for U.S. exporters in smaller emerging or niche markets.

OTP recruits for the directory via partners and cooperators, FAS online (where the registration form is available, and other events such as Trade Shows).

The *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* is available to the general public, specifically foreign buyers seeking U.S. products, via FAS online at:

<http://usdistributors.agexportservices.org/Apps/StoreFronts/search.asp>

### *Madigan Award*

The information is collected to be used by the Madigan Award Selection Committee to determine awardees.

The Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Award was established by Congress in the Federal Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act of 1996. The award commemorates Edward R. Madigan who, as a congressman from Illinois and later as Secretary of Agriculture, played a major role in reshaping U.S. agricultural policy to enable farmers and ranchers to respond more effectively to market signals and pursue export opportunities.

The Madigan Award is designed to help increase U.S. agricultural exports by:

- identifying efforts of U.S. entities to develop and expand markets through new products and services and innovative marketing techniques;
- recognizing achievements of those who have demonstrated or supported entrepreneurial efforts to expand and create new markets for, or increase the value or volume of, agricultural exports; and
- disseminating information on successful methods for developing and expanding markets for U.S. agricultural exports.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.**

## **Detailed Response:**

### *U.S. Suppliers List*

As mention in # 2, U.S. Suppliers List is a FAS online database available to the general public at: <http://fas1.agexportservices.org/Apps/StoreFronts/search.asp>.

U.S. Exporters of Agricultural products can register online to be included in the U.S. Suppliers List. The form is available from FAS online at: <http://fas1.agexportservices.org/apps/logon3.asp>

### *Foreign Buyers List*

As mentioned in #2, Foreign Buyers Lists are maintained via an online application by FAS overseas offices.

As mentioned in #2, U.S. exporters can order these lists from OTP at no cost. The order form may be downloaded from FAS online at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/fblists.pdf>. The exporter submits the form to OTP via fax or mail.

### *Trade Show and Café*

Automated or electronic means or other forms of information technology currently do not support the collection of information for the trade show evaluation form and the registration form.

### *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies*

As mentioned previously, the registration form for the *Export Directory of U.S. Food Distribution Companies* is available via FAS online and can be emailed or faxed for acceptance.

The Directory is also available on FAS online.

### *Madigan Award*

Applicants must submit their applications via fax or mail. The requirement of signatures prevents files from being e-mailed.

## **4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

Similar registration forms are needed for our services as U.S. exporters use Exporter Assistance Programs on an “a la carte” basis. In other words, users may participate in all, some or none of our services. By having separate forms for each, the burden is minimized. For example, the information collected from an exporter to register for the U.S. Suppliers List is less than what is required to register for the U.S. Export Directory. OTP has a cooperative agreement with the National Association of State Departments of

Agriculture (NASDA) which has consolidated data into one comprehensive database of exporters and importers. Basic information is entered once, thereby avoiding repetitive entries in separate forms.

**5. If the collection of information impacts small business or other small entities, describe any method used to minimize burden.**

The registration forms and performance measure evaluations are designed to be completed easily and quickly by respondents. The volume of information requested is minimal, and the forms can be completed without excessive research or review of company records.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

OTP would not be able to operate these programs if this information were not collected, as its sole purpose is to facilitate exchange of exporter/importer information. Without follow-up evaluations of these programs, there would be no information available to gauge whether U.S. exporters are negotiating sales with foreign buyers. Collecting information less frequently would negatively impact our trade expansion performance objectives.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner: requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

Proprietary information may be provided by U.S. exporters on a voluntary basis, and is only used for internal processing and analysis.

Because U.S. exporters are charged participation fees for certain services, it is necessary to facilitate payment by credit card. OTP has procedures in place to protect the confidentiality of the respondent's credit card information.

**8. Federal Register Notice and consultations with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the Information Collection.**

On November 6, 2007, OTP published (Federal Register, Vol. 72, No. 214 p. 62624) a notice soliciting comments on the "Request for Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection". No comments were received as a result of this notice. OTP subsequently solicited feedback from the participants in the Exporter Assistance programs (listed below), and incorporated their comments in the revision of this information collection.

American Trading International, Inc.  
11300 West Olympic Boulevard, Suite 780  
Los Angeles, CA - 90064-1151  
Contact: Seth Wilen  
Title: President  
Phone: 310-445-1415  
Fax: 310-445-1411  
Web: <http://www.american-trading.com>  
E-mail: [ati@american-trading.com](mailto:ati@american-trading.com)

Diversified Foods Inc.  
3115 6th Street  
Metairie, LA 70002  
Contact: Norman Romagosa

Jaspo, Inc.  
13622 NE 20th St, Suite B  
Bellevue, WA 98005  
Contact: Shige Ohara

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents of this information collection.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

The evaluation form used to solicit individual/company information for these programs include several questions aimed at determining program effectiveness and measuring performance. Prior to asking these questions, the evaluation form provides the respondent with an assurance of confidentiality and a guarantee that proprietary information will not be released or used for any other purpose. This assurance falls under regulations regarding release of information in 2 FASR 11.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

Across all of these export assistance programs, respondents to performance measure evaluations are asked questions pertaining to the race/ethnicity or size of ownership of the company. The inclusion of this information yields data so program managers can better understand participation in regards to race/ethnicity and company size.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

There are multiple burden components to this information collection. The burdens to U.S. companies completing the forms, used in the programs, are estimated to average from 0.33 hour per response to 1.5 hours depending upon the program. For each program, there are as few as 100 U.S. exporters using the service to as many as 25,000 with many

firms responding multiple times per year. Thus, the total annual burden across all participants is 3,632 hours. These estimates are detailed in Table 1.

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.**

There are no annual start up or maintenance costs to respondents for these programs.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government.**

The annualized cost to the Federal Government is estimated at \$206,449, as detailed by program in Table 2.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.**

Our previous OMB submission (March 2004) showed an overall annual burden of 8,463 hours. The current burden is now less than half that number, due to the restructuring of FAS in the autumn of 2006. A number of services and functions previously covered under this information collection are now being performed in the private sector. Under the new structure, FAS is supporting the private sector to move forward and engage only where there is value added with Government support as needed.

The following table summarizes changes resulting in reduced burden hours reported on OMB Form 83-I:

Service	Changes
U.S. Suppliers List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The U.S. Suppliers List (USL) is currently managed through a cooperative agreement between the FAS and a private cooperator, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA).</li> <li>□ All of the information collection and program evaluation is now conducted by NASDA, with oversight by FAS.</li> </ul>
Buyer Alerts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ This service has been discontinued.</li> </ul>
Trade Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ This service has been discontinued.</li> </ul>
Foreign Buyers List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ No changes from previous submission.</li> </ul>
Trade Shows/Missions/American Cafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Number of shows and recruitment efforts has been significantly reduced. All of the recruitment efforts and trade show management is performed by private show organizers. Therefore there are only 2 forms frequently used: evaluation form and recruitment forms for American Café.</li> <li>□ All Trade Missions have been discontinued</li> </ul>
Matchmaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ This service has been discontinued.</li> </ul>
Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Newsletters have been discontinued.</li> </ul>
Madigan Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ No changes from previous submission.</li> </ul>



**16. For Collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation, and publication.**

Publication of participant information for Trade Shows and American Café is done on a case by case basis as, needed. Generally, the U.S. exporters' information is aggregated for presentation (i.e. exhibitor directory, exporter profiles, etc.) to foreign buyers participating in the event.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

Approval is not being sought to not display the expiration date for OMB approval.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I.**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.