

Using Data to Support SUSTA's Services to Small Businesses

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In collaboration with World Perspectives, Inc.

In Fiscal Year 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Market Access Program (MAP), administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), provided approximately \$200 million to organizations representing farmers, ranchers, and small businesses engaged in exporting countless U.S. agricultural products all over the globe.

As you know, SUSTA's MAP dollars are allocated to a diverse set of programs that provide direct support to southern U.S. small businesses either interested in or engaged in exporting U.S. agricultural products. SUSTA's programs range from educational (export training seminars, webinars, market research) to direct, full-suite export assistance via trade missions and at world-renowned food and agricultural trade shows. Small businesses interested in exporting can test the waters and gain valuable experience via SUSTA's Global Events Program and present top-quality brands to foreign buyers via the 50% CostShare Program. Experienced, motivated SUSTA staff and affiliated state managers ensure that these programs are efficiently conducted.

SUSTA can function in this important role because of a crucial administrative cycle that plays out annually:

1. MAP funds are allocated to SUSTA;
2. SUSTA conducts expansive programming to assist small southern U.S. businesses;
3. ***SUSTA reports the aggregate results of its programs to FAS, justifying continued funding and providing credible return-on-investment data for this important program.***

The importance of number 3 cannot be overstated. Federal and state-level spending is increasingly constrained, while continued analysis shows that agricultural exports are a success story for the U.S. economy – and, uniquely, provide direct economic benefits to rural America. To ensure that this cycle continues unimpeded, SUSTA has leveraged cutting-edge technology and implemented an efficient survey system that captures the results of SUSTA's efforts. These results are aggregated, analyzed and ultimately submitted to FAS in support of the programs that so many southern U.S. small businesses take advantage of.

As we continue through the second quarter of 2019, SUSTA's program year is well underway. SUSTA would like to commend program participants for their timely submission of Global Events activity surveys, which are instrumental in helping SUSTA deliver credible program results to FAS as described above. SUSTA's investment into new technology was in large part a concerted effort to make reporting more user-friendly, intuitive, and efficient for the southern U.S. small businesses that utilize SUSTA's services. Meanwhile, 50% CostShare surveys meant to capture the final results of the 2018 program year are complete. This is because of the careful attention paid to them by SUSTA's participant companies, companies that understand how

critical it is to report their export results and enable SUSTA to spread “good news” back to USDA.

Going forward, SUSTA looks forward to providing continued export assistance to companies, relying on the timely submission of activity/program surveys to clearly show the value of programming and its returns to the small businesses and rural economies of the southern U.S. region.