

Your Regional Network of Support

The beginning of a new year is always a good time to reflect on where you find yourself and what lies ahead. That is particularly so at the dawn of a new decade. For businesses, it's a chance to take stock in what you've been doing against what you set out to do, and to make sure your year ahead is aligned with your company's vision and mission. It's the same for us here at SUSTA.

Our mission is to help small and medium-sized companies, like yours, located in the Southern United States to promote their value-added food and agricultural products in foreign markets. Our vision is to help you develop export sales, and, ultimately, to grow. That is what we've been working at since 1973, and that is what we are committed to in 2020.

There is another important piece to SUSTA's vision: to work on your behalf in partnership with your State Department of Agriculture.

Indeed, SUSTA was formed all those years ago by the Departments of Agriculture of 15 Southern States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This State regional group was established to partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in administering funds from the Market Access Program (MAP) by sharing in companies' costs from overseas marketing and promotional activities which help build commercial export markets for Southern U.S. food and agriculture.

Having a regional association like SUSTA creates a network of support among the international marketing staff in the State Departments of Agriculture throughout the South. Our meetings and communications provide a forum among the States to jointly tackle common challenges, identify and take advantage of opportunities and share best practices that most helps companies in the Southern region.

SUSTA's goal is to work seamlessly with the State marketing representatives, not only to assist you in making connections with foreign buyers and executing your in-market sales plans, but to help make sure your company is prepared and export ready. We work with our Member States to schedule market seminars and

educational events near you and to let you know SUSTA's schedule of export promotion activities in the coming year.

SUSTA's Member States, under the direction of our Board of Directors made up of the Commissioners and Secretaries of Agriculture, help set our strategies and manage our activities to help your company. Your input is critical. Are you interested in a certain market? Do you want to know what countries are right for your product? Do you want to know if you are ready for international sales? Check-in with your State Department of Agriculture and let them know of your interest or ask how SUSTA can help.

They are there to help you, and we are there to help them provide that help.

Happy New Year!

