

Big Picture Report: May 2019

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In collaboration with World Perspectives, Inc.

Product Focus: Southern Specialty Crops

One of the top performing, and the fastest growing, categories of SUSTA product exports is specialty crops – including everything from fresh produce to tree nuts and groundnuts. According to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) three of the top 10 specialty crop exporting states are in the SUSTA region: Texas, Florida and Georgia. Further, in 2017 export sales under SUSTA's Market Access Program (MAP) were logged from Alabama, Louisiana, Maryland and North Carolina. That's seven of the SUSTA region's states!

Last year, SUSTA companies' specialty crop exports totaled more than \$71 million. Global Events activities generated \$29.5 million in exports, more than 10-fold from the year before when sales were \$2.7 million. Companies in the 50% CostShare program booked \$42 million in export sales.

In its year-end summary on trade in specialty crops, FAS reports:

While our North American neighbors remain the United States' largest customers, increasing consumer purchasing power among the middle class in other markets around the world is spurring demand for high quality specialty crops grown in the United States.

To that end, SUSTA companies have found success in a dozen different countries, including Indonesia, Vietnam, Nicaragua and Panama. Additionally, we continue to support SUSTA export companies in Asia and the Middle East through the 50% CostShare program, and this last February five companies participated in the Fruit Logistica show in Germany. We are looking forward to our upcoming inbound trade mission this August, when international produce buyers will visit Maryland and North Carolina.

According USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), each dollar of U.S. food and agricultural exports generates another \$1.27 in broader economic impact in terms of employment, income and business activity. That impact is particularly significant for Southern-grown specialty crop products because this product spans the value chain from the farmer to the packer to the shipper – all within the SUSTA region.

SUSTA's role is to give small businesses the keys to unlock success in international markets, and we do that by helping set the world's table with the outstanding food and agricultural products offered by our Southern companies.