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Cochran FY 2012 Success Story

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Report Highlights:

In FY2012 FAS/Brasilia selected five Brazilian government officials to participate in the Food Safety and Inspection Service's 2012 Meat and Poultry Seminar for International Governmental Officials under the Cochran Fellowship Program. In November 2012, as a result of the knowledge gained and relationships established during the visit, FSIS and FAS Brasilia were able to work with the Government of Brazil to find an agreement about the document for the registration of animal origin product labels for export to Brazil that met Brazilian requirements. The successful agreement reached maintains U.S exports to Brazil of animal origin products whose value was US\$ 15.8 million in 2011.

1. Success: Cochran Fellowship Program Paves Way for Maintenance of U.S Exports

In order to register products in Brazil, companies need to present a series of documents, including a form to register the label for animal origin products, more precisely meat products signed by a governmental veterinary authority from the country of origin. After the Cochran program, FAS Brasilia worked with FSIS to try to find an agreement for this special requirement. In November 2012, after two years of technical talks, Brazil's Department for Inspection of Animal Origin Products (DIPOA) accepted the USDA proposal regarding label registrations for processed meat products exported to Brazil. The proposal allows U.S. companies to fill out the registration form and FSIS to certify only to items under their purview. The U.S. exported approximately \$15.8 million of processed meat products to Brazil in 2011. The Cochran program allowed the dialogue to develop between FSIS inspectors and DIPOA inspectors who then came to an agreement on this issue.

1. Cochran Fellowship Program

In 1984, Senator Thad Cochran (R-Ms) had a vision for a new exchange program to help developing countries improve their agricultural systems and enhance trade links with the United States. He worked with the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement this goal, culminating in the creation of the Cochran Fellowship Program (CFP).

Since 1984, the U.S. Congress has made funds available to the CFP for training agriculturalists from middle-income countries, emerging markets and emerging democracies. Training opportunities are for senior and mid-level specialists and administrators working in agricultural trade, agribusiness development, management, policy and marketing from the public and private sectors. Individuals selected for Cochran trainings come from both the public and private sectors. All training occurs in the United States. Training programs are designed and organized in conjunction with U.S. universities, USDA and other government agencies, agribusinesses, and consultants. The Cochran Fellowship Program is implemented by the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). Since its inception in 1984, the Cochran Fellowship Program has provided U.S.-based training for over 14,300 international participants from 123 countries worldwide.

2.1 Program Objectives

Program objectives are to provide high-quality training resulting in knowledge and skills that will:

2.1.1 Assist eligible countries to develop agricultural systems necessary to meet the food and fiber needs of their domestic populations; and

2.1.2 Strengthen and enhance trade linkages between eligible countries and agricultural interests in the United States.

2.2 Training Focus

The Cochran Fellowship Program (CFP) offers short-term training opportunities, most ranging from 2-3 weeks depending on the objectives of the program. Participants meet with professionals in their fields, participate in field observations and industry visits, experience on-the-job training, attend university courses and seminars, or participate in a combination of the above. CFP works closely with U.S. agricultural trade and market development associations to identify potential areas of training for countries participating in the Cochran Fellowship Program. Every effort is made to match U.S. agricultural interests with those of the recipient countries. Programs are specially designed in accordance with the training objectives discussed during interviews with candidates and the recommendations of the respective USDA/FAS Foreign Agricultural Affairs Officer.

1. General Information about 2012 Cochran Program for FAS Brasilia:

Food Safety and Inspection Service's 2012 Meat and Poultry Inspection Seminar for International Government Officials

Dates: September 9-29, 2012

Participants:

Ms. Andrea Moura, Ministry of Agriculture, Chief of Inspection Service and Agricultural Livestock, São Paulo, Brazil

Ms. Carla Suzana Rodrigues, Ministry of Agriculture, Official Veterinarian Inspector, Brasilia, Brazil

Mr. Rafael Filipputti, Ministry of Agriculture, Official Veterinarian Inspector, São Paulo, Brazil

Mr. Manoel Junior Soares, Ministry of Agriculture, Official Veterinarian Inspector, Brasilia, Brazil

Mr. Pedro Bueno, Ministry of Agriculture, Official Veterinarian Inspector, Brasilia, Brazil

1. Background:

On August 9, 2010 the Brazilian government notified the WTO (G/SPS/N/BRA/654 of Circular Letter # 14 issued by Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) on April 19, 2010 of established changes in the conditions for labeling registration of imported products of animal origin. These changes required that the U.S. exporter submit a 4-page form addressing 19 items. Although the majority of the items could be easily filled by the U.S. exporters, there were two items, however, that required the competent U.S. authority to certify that the U.S. establishment is in compliance with Brazilian legislation regarding food labeling.

On November 30, 2010, MAPA issued Circular Letter # 42 to amend the previously issued labeling requirements due to U.S. and Canadian interventions and comments in order to allow the required signature by competent authorities with the implementation of these amendments. The U.S. competent authorities – the Agricultural Marketing Service for dairy products and NOAA for fishery products began signing the modified form.

On February 8, 2012, a DVC was held between MAPA officials and USDA/FSIS to discuss proposals to further modify (i.e. remove the product number from the document) or eliminate the need for the form for U.S. products entering Brazil under the purview of FSIS. MAPA explained that it could not eliminate the form since this has a formal legislation applied to all countries. FSIS indicated it would

send a formal proposal in writing.

On February 27, 2012, the need to find a resolution to this issue was discussed as part of the U.S.-Brazil Consultative Committee on Agriculture – the highest agricultural dialogue between the two countries. On April 8, 2012, FAS Brasilia presented the formal FSIS proposal to MAPA officials. MAPA officials did not view it favorably and indicated they would respond officially and negatively in writing in the next few weeks. One alternative to solve this issue was to invite Brazilian inspectors to participate in the Cochran Program to meet and understand the FSIS inspection service.

1. **Outlook:**

Participant assessments were positive. Participants noted that the program increased substantially their overall knowledge of the U.S. meat inspection system, the difference between voluntary and mandatory standards, and the science-based process used to adopt food standards.

Participants expressed that the training was critically important in enabling them to perform their duties, providing them with up-to-date information on food standards and legislation. In addition, the FSIS meeting was crucial in providing understanding of the difference between federal and state legislation.

The information on food legislation, standards and inspections is being used to train other relevant staff at Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture.

1. **Feedback from Post and Participants:**

Only positive comments regarding organization, content of the program and technical staff from FSIS.

One additional comment is to have more visits to check establishments, but just as a suggestion.