

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire - At the 2026 National Restaurant Association Show - FAS Commercial Diplomacy Scores Lip Smacking Wins

Country: Ghana

Post: Accra, Abidjan

Report Category: Agriculture in the News, CSSF Activity Report, Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events and Shows, Export Accomplishments - Trade Leads, Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional, Retail Foods, Dairy and Products, Food Processing Ingredients, Snack Foods, Trade Show Evaluation

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Report Highlights:

FAS Accra, Abidjan (Post) turned up the heat at Chicago's 105th National Restaurant Association Show (NRA), orchestrating a high-impact commercial diplomacy win by escorting a Coastal West Africa Region (CWAR) buying delegation from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. This targeted matchmaking introduced regional buyers to the cornucopia of American food, beverage, and agricultural technology, sparking immediate demand for U.S. poultry, rice, vegetable oils, snacks, condiments, non-alcoholic beverages, and ice cream dairy bases.

DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by the U.S. Embassy/U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) Accra, Abidjan for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products. The information contained in this report is derived from multiple governmental and non-governmental sources. The U.S. Embassy/USDA/FAS OAA Accra, Abidjan, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and/or the U.S. Government make no claim of accuracy or authenticity. Neither the Government of Ghana or Côte d'Ivoire, nor any of those of the states mentioned herein, officially endorse this report. While every possible care has been taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers and partners, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY. [Note: Use Google Chrome to access the links that do not open in Microsoft Edge.]

GENERAL INFORMATION

Summary of the Activity – National Restaurant Association Tradeshow: The 2026 National Restaurant Association Show (NRA) took place from May 16-19, 2026, at McCormick Place in Chicago, Illinois. Celebrating its 105th year, this American tradeshow stands as the largest food service industry convention in the Western Hemisphere. The NRA show, a [USDA/FAS endorsed and sponsored trade show](#), drew 55,000 food professionals from 112 countries.¹ The show covered 720,000 square feet of exhibition space with 2,300 exhibitors; including 800 first time participants, showcasing the latest food, beverage, technology and equipment from 900 product categories. The show focused on discovering new global flavors, kitchen innovations, and cost-efficiency solutions. Attendees explored the Tech Pavilion, Organic & Natural Pavilion, and the Emerging Brands Pavilion. With the show grabber being the [National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's \(NASDA\)](#) hosted “[A Taste of the States: Chicago](#),” its largest-ever hookup for U.S. food and beverage suppliers with international buyers.²

USDA Leadership's Engagement with America's Agriculture – Opening, Maintaining, and Expanding Markets for U.S. Food and Agricultural Products: At the 2026 NRA Show, USDA Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Luke J. Lindberg met with leaders from the NASDA, Food Export-Midwest, and Food Export-Northeast to map out global expansion pathways for American food manufacturers. With FAS Administrator Daniel Whitley, joining Under Secretary Lindberg, to discuss the targeting of export financing and market access. Discussions emphasized connecting smaller U.S. agricultural companies with verified international buyers to secure space on overseas restaurant menus and retail shelves.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/ Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), “Trade Shows,” located at: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/topics/trade-shows>.

² See, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), located at: <https://www.nasda.org/> and “A Taste of the States: Chicago” pavilion located at: <https://www.nasda.org/federal-partnerships/international-trade-programs/tradeshows/chicago/>.

Purpose of the Activity – FAS Accra, Abidjan Strategy: Not relying on outbound foreign assistance, FAS Accra and Abidjan (Post) participation in this activity utilizes reciprocal, market-driven commerce to expand overseas demand for products made by American workers, using American-grown commodities.

Post targeted the 2026 NRA Show, to provide the select five Coastal West Africa Region (CWAR) buyers from Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, with greater awareness of the American hotel, restaurant, and food service industry.³ The delegation included qualified foodservice and food retail buyers representing leading importers, distributors, foodservice suppliers, and retailers. Buyers explored opportunities across a wide range of product categories including poultry, vegetable oils, sauces, condiments, non-alcoholic beverages, rice, and snacks. Participation with foreign buyers at the 2026 NRA Show advances the “America First” agenda by driving foreign capital into the U.S. economy, boosting domestic agricultural manufacturing, and lowering the agricultural trade deficit. All in all, the NRA Show provided a valuable opportunity for Ghanaian and Ivorian buyers to experience new U.S. foodservice trends, while identifying new suppliers capable of supporting long-term distribution and market development in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire.

Sustaining the Sweet Tooth: U.S. Manufacturing and the West African Cocoa Trade: In calendar year (CY) (January-December) 2025, the United States ran a food and agricultural products trade deficit (combined) of \$2.2 billion with Côte d’Ivoire (\$1.6 billion) and Ghana (\$625 million) due to cocoa and cocoa derivatives (i.e., paste and butter). This CY 2026 (January-June), the agricultural trade deficit (combined) at \$1.5 billion, is down 8 percent from 2025, due to the sharp dropoff in Ghanaian exports of cocoa beans (down 59 percent); whereas Ivorian exports to the United States of cocoa beans and cocoa paste and butter combined at \$1.24 billion are now up 10 percent compared to 2025 levels. Following the recent historic highs, cocoa prices are on a significant downward trend due to improved weather conditions and recovering supply; in 2026, cocoa bean prices are expected to range between \$3,800 and \$6,400 per metric ton (MT), as supply from West Africa recovers. While prices are dropping from the record highs of 2024-2025 (+\$12,000), they will remain higher than historical averages.

The Value-Addition Multiplier: While the United States imports \$2.2 billion from West African cocoa superpowers Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, America’s domestic food manufacturing flips the script. With virtually no local crop production, imports of cocoa beans and derivatives are critical. They provide affordable ingredient input that satisfy immense domestic hunger while driving \$3.05 billion in global American exports. Based on the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) agricultural trade multiplier data (updated in mid-2026), this massive \$3.05 billion export value of cocoa-containing products represents 17,855 America-based jobs.⁴ The top-5 states most impacted by these processed agricultural exports are Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Jersey, California, and Wisconsin.

³ See, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), “Trade Shows,” located at: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/topics/trade-shows>.

⁴ The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/ Economic Research Service (ERS) utilizes an economic trade multiplier to measure how agricultural exports ripple through farm and non-farm employment sectors. According to the USDA/ERS Agricultural Trade Multipliers, every \$1 billion in U.S. food and agricultural exports supports 5,854 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Unlike bulk commodities (like soybeans or corn) which heavily favor on-farm employment, highly processed food mixtures primarily drive job growth in the non-farm sector; specifically within manufacturing, domestic trade, data processing, and transportation.

USDA FAS Partners: The USDA FAS Cooperators and State Regional Trade Groups included: 1) Food Export Midwest and Food Export Northeast; 2) National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA); and 3) Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA). The State Departments of Agriculture included: 1) Colorado Department of Agriculture; 2) Illinois Department of Agriculture; 3) Indiana State Department of Agriculture; 4) Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development; 5) Minnesota Department of Agriculture; 6) Missouri Department of Agriculture; 7) Montana Department of Agriculture; 8) New Mexico Department of Agriculture; 9) New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; 10) North Dakota Department of Agriculture; 11) Ohio Department of Agriculture; 12) Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Food and Forestry; 13) Oregon Department of Agriculture; 14) South Carolina Department of Agriculture; and 15) Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

1) Social Media Generated:

- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/usda-foreign-agricultural-service_2026restaurantshow-activity-7462554799817994240-q80D

2) Attachments/Photos



Note: McCall Farms (est. 1838) of Effingham (Florence County), South Carolina, and employs over 1,000 people. A canning and freezing operation, it has acquired national brands Margaret Holmes, Peanut Patch Boiled Peanuts, Glory Foods and Bruce's Yams (<http://www.mccallfarms.com/>).

Source: FAS Accra, Abidjan office research.

Attachments:

No Attachments.