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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Announcement of the Emerging Markets Program

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation is inviting private sector proposals for the 2003 Emerging Markets Program.

DATES: All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 10, 2003. Announcements of funding decisions for the EMP are anticipated in early July 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932 South, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: emo@fas.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that proposals are being accepted for participation in the 2003 Emerging Markets Program (EMP). The purpose of the EMP is to assist U.S. organizations, public and private, to improve market access and to develop and promote U.S. agricultural products and/or processes in low to middle income countries that offer promise of emerging market opportunities. This is to be accomplished by providing, or paying the costs of, approved technical assistance activities in those emerging markets. The EMP is administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

The Act defines an emerging market as any country that the Secretary of Agriculture determines:

(1) Is taking steps toward a market-oriented economy through the food,

agriculture, or rural business sectors of the economy of the country; and

(2) Has the potential to provide a viable and significant market for United States agricultural commodities or products of United States agricultural commodities.

Because funds are limited and the range of potential emerging market countries is worldwide, proposals for technical assistance activities will be considered which target those countries with: (1) Per capita income less than \$9,265 (the current ceiling on upper middle income economies as determined by the World Bank [World Development Indicators]); and (2) population greater than 1 million. Proposals may address suitable regional groupings, e.g., the islands of the Caribbean Basin.

Authority

The EMP is authorized by section 1542 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990, as amended.

Eligible Applicants, Commodities, and Activities

Any United States agricultural or agribusiness organization, university, or state department of agriculture is eligible to participate in the EMP. Proposals from research and consulting organizations will be considered if they provide evidence of substantial participation by the U.S. industry. U.S. market development cooperators may seek funding to address priority, market specific issues and to undertake activities not suitable for funding under other FAS marketing programs, e.g., the Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program and the Market Access Program (MAP).

All agricultural products, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration. Proposals which include multiple commodities are also eligible.

Only technical assistance activities are eligible for reimbursement. Following are examples of the types of activities that may be funded:

—Projects designed specifically to improve market access in emerging foreign markets. Examples: activities intended to mitigate the impact of sudden political events or economic and currency crises in order to maintain U.S. market share; responses to time-sensitive market opportunities;

—Marketing and distribution of value-added products, including new products or uses. Examples: food service development; market research on potential for consumer-ready foods or new uses of a product;

—Studies of food distribution channels in emerging markets, including infrastructural impediments to U.S. exports; such studies should be specific in their focus and may include cross-commodity activities which address specific problems. Examples: grain storage handling and inventory systems development; distribution infrastructure development;

—Projects that specifically address various constraints to U.S. exports, including sanitary and phytosanitary issues and other non-tariff barriers. Examples: seminars on U.S. food safety standards and regulations; assessing and addressing pest and disease problems that inhibit U.S. exports;

—Assessments and follow up activities designed to improve country-wide food and business systems, to reduce trade barriers, to increase prospects for U.S. trade and investment in emerging markets, and to determine the potential use for general export credit guarantees for commodities, facilities and services. Examples: product needs assessments and market analysis; assessments for using facilities credits to address infrastructural impediments;

—Projects that help foreign governments collect and use market information and develop free trade policies that benefit American exporters as well as the target country or countries. Examples: agricultural statistical analysis; development of market information systems; policy analysis; and,

—Short-term training in broad aspects of agriculture and agribusiness trade that will benefit U.S. exporters, including seminars and training at trade shows designed to expand the potential for U.S. agricultural exports by focusing on the trading system. Examples: retail training; marketing seminars; transportation seminars; training on opening new or expanding existing markets.

The program funds technical assistance activities on a project-by-project basis. EMP funds may not be