

FAS Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information. The Internet-based application, including step-by-step instructions for its use, may be found at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html>.

Applicants who choose to submit applications on diskette can obtain an application format by contacting the Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720-4327.

All MAP applicants, whether applying via the Internet or diskette, also must submit by March 10, 2003, via hand delivery or U.S. mail, an original signed certification statement as specified in 7 CFR 1485.13(a)(2)(i)(G).

Any organization that is not interested in applying for the MAP but would like to request assistance through one of the other programs mentioned should contact the Marketing Operations Staff on (202) 720-4327.

Review Process and Allocation Criteria

The FAS allocates funds in a manner which effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 and the USDA's Food and Agricultural Policy (FAP). In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets, the FAS seeks to identify a clear, long-term agricultural trade strategy and a program effectiveness time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. The FAS also considers the extent to which a proposed project targets markets with the greatest growth potential. These factors are part of the FAS resource allocation strategy to fund applicants who can demonstrate performance and address the objectives of the GPRA and FAP.

Following is a description of the FAS process for reviewing applications and the criteria for allocating available MAP funds.

(1) Phase 1—Sufficiency Review and FAS Divisional Review

Applications received by the closing date will be reviewed by the FAS to determine the eligibility of the applicants and the completeness of the applications. These requirements appear at § 1485.12 and § 1485.13 of the MAP regulations. Applications which meet the requirements then will be further evaluated by the proper FAS Commodity Division. The Divisions will review each application against the criteria listed in § 1485.14 of the MAP regulations. The purpose of this review

is to identify meritorious proposals and to recommend an appropriate funding level for each application based upon these criteria.

(2) Phase 2—Competitive Review

Meritorious applications then will be passed on to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Commodity and Marketing Programs, for the purpose of allocating available funds among the applicants. Applications will compete for funds on the basis of the following allocation criteria (the number in parentheses represents a percentage weight factor):

(a) Applicant's Contribution Level (40)

- The applicant's 4-year average share (2000–2003) of all contributions (cash and goods and services provided by U.S. entities in support of overseas marketing and promotion activities) compared to
- The applicant's 4-year average share (2000–2003) of the funding level for all MAP participants.

(b) Past Performance (30)

- The 3-year average share (2000–2002) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to
- The applicant's 2-year average share (2001–2002) of the funding level for all MAP applicants plus, for those groups participating in the Cooperator program, the 2-year average share (2002–2003) of Cooperator marketing plan budgets, and the 2-year average share (2001–2002) of foreign overhead provided for co-location within a U.S. agricultural office;

(c) Projected Export Goals (15)

- The total dollar value of projected exports promoted by the applicant for 2003 compared to
- The applicant's requested funding level;

(d) Accuracy of Past Projections (15)

- Actual exports for 2001 as reported in the 2003 MAP application compared to
- Past projections of exports for 2001 as specified in the 2001 MAP application.

The Commodity Divisions' recommended funding levels for each applicant are converted to percentages of the total MAP funds available then multiplied by the total weight factor as described above to determine the amount of funds allocated to each applicant.

Closing Date for Applications

All Internet-based applications must be properly submitted by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 10, 2003. Signed certification statements also must be received by that time at one of the addresses listed below.

All applications on diskette (with two accompanying paper copies and a signed certification statement) and any other applications must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 10, 2003, at one of the following addresses:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, UPS, etc.): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, Room 4932–S, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042.

U.S. Postal Delivery: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042.

Signed in Washington, DC on January 8, 2003.

Kenneth J. Roberts,

Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, and Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 03–1116 Filed 1–16–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–10–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Announcement of the Quality Samples Program

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Commodity Credit Corporation is inviting proposals for the Quality Samples Program.

DATES: All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 10, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932–S, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042, (202) 720–4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that proposals may be submitted for participation in the Quality Samples Program (QSP). The QSP is designed to encourage the development and expansion of export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities by assisting U.S. entities in providing commodity samples to potential foreign importers to promote a better understanding and appreciation for the high quality of U.S. agricultural commodities. All proposals will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria