

EXPORTER MANUAL

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO MANAGING THE 2019 BRANDED PROGRAM



MARKET PROMOTION

Market Your Products Internationally and
Receive 50% Reimbursement While You Do It!

Eligible Activities Include:

- Advertisements
- Marketing and Promotions
- International Tradeshows
- Public Relations
- Foreign Market Compliant Packaging/Labeling
- and More!



During the 2017 Branded Program year, Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export–Midwest) and Food Export USA–Northeast (Food Export–Northeast) assisted 403 companies. This included 48 new companies.

Participants promoted their food and agricultural products in over 65 countries and we would like to share some of their successes throughout the year.

The results of the program, as reported by the companies who participated, are as follows:

- Over USD \$573 million in actual export sales
- Over USD \$760 million in projected export sales



Dear U.S. Exporter:

Your company's decision to market your products internationally through Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast's Branded Program benefits your small business by growing your export marketing budget, helping to engage greater export growth. On a grander scale, your participation helps offset the American trade deficit and supports over 800,000 American jobs. To assist you in this endeavor, we are proud to offer the 2019 Branded Program.

Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast are non-profit organizations comprised of state agricultural promotion agencies that use federal, state, and industry resources to promote the export of Midwestern and Northeastern food and agricultural products. We are dedicated to supporting U.S. suppliers whose business strategy includes promoting their branded food and agricultural products in overseas markets.

Through Exporter Education, Market Entry, and Market Promotion strategies, Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast can help your company understand and discover new exporting opportunities by providing 50% reimbursement for costs incurred to execute eligible marketing and promotional activities. These services are made possible through funding from the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA.

We provide this manual in an effort to make your participation in the Branded Program as easy as possible. It is important that you review the policies, procedures, and guidelines of the program in order to take full advantage of all its benefits. See pages 46 and 47 for a complete list of state departments of agriculture and contacts. Additionally, should you need further assistance, contact the Food Export Liaison team at 312.334.9200 in the Midwest and 215.829.9111 in the Northeast.

You can easily manage your entire 2019 Branded Program participation using My Food Export Portal at www.foodexport.org. Login (or register for a new account) today!

We appreciate your interest in the 2019 Branded Program. We look forward to working with you throughout the year to help you promote and sell your products abroad!

Molly Burns

Branded Program Manager
Food Export–Midwest

Howard Gordon

Branded Program Manager
Food Export–Northeast



SYMBOL KEY



The symbol noted here indicates **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**.



The symbol noted here indicates **REQUIRED INFORMATION** necessary to process, complete, or approve your request.



The symbol noted here indicates a new **REGULATION**.

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IS YOUR COMPANY ELIGIBLE FOR THE BRANDED PROGRAM?

-  **Company Must Be Small in Size or a Cooperative**

Only companies defined as “Small” by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are eligible to participate. Agricultural producer cooperatives are also eligible and exempt from size restrictions. The SBA utilizes the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to determine company size status. Generally, your total number of employees determines your size. Total number of employees includes all subsidiary employees, all parent company employees, and employees of all subsidiaries of the parent company. For more information, go to www.sba.gov.
-  **Participating Companies Must Be Based in the United States**

Each participating company must be a registered business entity in the United States.
-  **Participants Must Have Adequate Resources and Product Supply for Export Market Development**

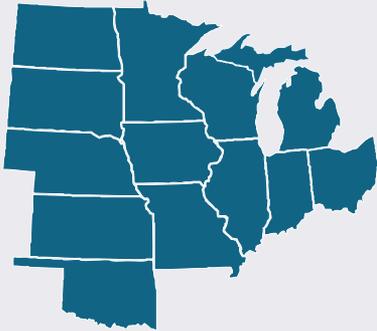
Each eligible company must provide adequate management and financial resources for export market development. Likewise, companies must furnish adequate product quantities necessary to ensure continuous supplies to the markets for which funding is requested.
-  **Participants Must Have Sufficient Gross Sales and Resources**

Each participant must have at least \$100,000 in gross sales during the previous year and adequate management and financial resources for export market development.
-  **Companies Must Be Headquartered in the Midwest or Northeast Regions**

Companies must be headquartered in one or more of the following states in the Midwest (Food Export–Midwest) and/or Northeast (Food Export–Northeast) regions and can document a positive economic impact to the states listed on the following page. A company’s headquarters is defined as the physical location of the business’ main management/ operations office.

IS YOUR COMPANY ELIGIBLE FOR THE BRANDED PROGRAM?

MIDWEST REGION



Illinois	Missouri
Indiana	Nebraska
Iowa	North Dakota
Kansas	Ohio
Michigan	Oklahoma
Minnesota	South Dakota
	Wisconsin

NORTHEAST REGION



Connecticut	New Hampshire
Delaware	New York
Maine	Pennsylvania
Massachusetts	Rhode Island
New Jersey	Vermont

If You Are Outside the Midwest and Northeast Regions

If you are not headquartered in the Midwest or Northeast, you can still apply for the Branded Program through other State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs). Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast are two of four SRTGs in the United States. Companies located in or impacting the Southern region can contact the Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA) at www.susta.org or by phone 504.568.5986. For companies located in or impacting the Western region, contact the Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) at www.wusata.org or 360.693.3373.

ARE YOUR PRODUCTS ELIGIBLE FOR THE BRANDED PROGRAM?

Products Must Be Value-Added Agricultural Products Including But Not Limited To:

- Food ingredients
- Specific wood products
- Consumer food products
- Other Agricultural Products**
- Foodservice products
- Seafood*
- Feed ingredients

* Eligible seafood products must be of 100% U.S. origin unless they are processed or used as an ingredient. Please contact us for more information about seafood products.

** If your product does not fall into one of the categories above but still meets the 50% agricultural content standard you may still be eligible. Contact us to see if your product qualifies.



If you do not see your product category listed here, please contact us to verify if your product does qualify.

Products Must Contain at Least 50% U.S. Agricultural Content/Ingredients

The U.S. content of food and agricultural products is determined by the percentage of finished product (measured by weight) that originates in the United States, excluding water and packaging.

Please bear in mind, ingredients grown in a foreign country are not U.S. agricultural products even if they are purchased from a U.S. company. Minerals (including salt) are not considered an agricultural product.

Products Must Have a Clearly Visible Statement Indicating U.S. Origin

Brand names with U.S. or America in the title do not fulfill the origin statement requirement. Identifying the origin of your brand as a product of the USA, America, New Jersey, Minnesota, Connecticut, etc. meets this requirement. *Note, if you opt to use your state name as your origin statement, you must use the full state name (e.g. Vermont, not VT). See page 18 for examples of eligible USA origin statements. This requirement does not apply in countries included on the "U.S. Origin Exemption List" located on page 18.*

Products Cannot Be Covered By Another Commodity Group

Companies can participate in the Food Export Branded Program ONLY if funding assistance is not available for their product(s) through another commodity group.

Product(s) affected might include chocolate, confections, and meat. If a company has multiple product lines, (for example, roasted almonds and snack chips) that company can apply for Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast’s Branded Program.

Other cooperators who have Branded Programs are:

- Blue Diamond Growers/Almond Board of California
- California Pistachio Export Council/Cal Pure
- National Confectioners Association
- Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc./Cranberry Marketing Committee
- Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA)
- Sunkist Growers, Inc.
- Sunsweet Growers/California Dried Plum Board
- Sun-Maid Growers of California/Raisin Administrative Committee
- U.S. Livestock Genetics
- U.S. Meat Export Federation
- Welch Foods, Inc./National Grape Growers Cooperative
- Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA)

Important Fraud Information

All Branded Program participants are expected to comply with the laws of the countries they are doing business with, as are the agents representing them. Failure to obey these laws is grounds for being dropped from the program. If participants knowingly commit an act of fraud we are authorized to inform the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA and they will be dropped from the program. Additional legal action may be taken.

Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast have a zero tolerance policy regarding fraud. Participants will not engage in fraud which, for the purposes of this program is defined as: the taking or obtaining by deception, of money or any other benefit from—when not entitled to the benefit or the attempt to do so; the intentional misrepresentation of—financial position; the intentional misrepresentation of information leading to financial loss; the alteration of claim documentation. All suspected fraud and allegations of fraud will be reported to the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA, which could result in being dropped from the program and legal action being taken.

BRANDED PROGRAM CHECKLIST: UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAM STEP BY STEP

Step 1 – Pre-Qualification worksheet submission and review

(up to 72 hours for approval)

Applications can not be started until the pre-qualification has been approved. We will drop an approved pre-qualification if no application is started within 90 days of pre-qualification approval.

Step 2 – Application form submission and review

- Application Summary
- Country Marketing Plan
 - U.S. tradeshow eligible for reimbursement to be included in U.S. Country Marketing Plan
- Electronic Certification Page
- Application Fee (\$250), nonrefundable

Spending that occurs before you submit your application will not be reimbursable (with the exception of certain tradeshow booth and travel expenses). Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast rate applications based upon allocation criteria and then allocate appropriate available funding to applicant companies that meet those criteria. Approvals are based on the quality of the application and the overall level of funding available. Accordingly, both organizations reserve the right to accept or reject any application or limit allocations to any applicant.

There is a non-refundable fee of USD \$250 that must be paid upon submission of the application online. Your application cannot be processed until this fee is paid.

First-Time Applicants: First-time applicants who do not have previous export experience will be limited to a maximum initial allocation of USD \$25,000. First-time applicants with export experience will be limited to an initial maximum allocation of USD \$50,000. Requests for additional funds, if available, will be considered if initial funding is fully utilized.

Step 3 – Application Approval

Application approval can take up to four weeks

When your application is approved you will be notified via email. You will then receive an approval letter indicating your contract effective date, contract agreement(s) for signature, an invoice for the 6% administrative fee, a "Product of USA" sign, and W9 tax form.

BRANDED PROGRAM CHECKLIST: UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAM STEP BY STEP

Step 4 – Remittance of the program fees and signed agreements

within 30 days after receipt of the approval confirmation letter

All program participants are charged a non-refundable administrative fee equal to 6% of the approved funding request. All items (completed W-9, signed agreement(s), and payment of the administrative fee) **MUST** be returned with in 30 days. Applications that have not fully contracted after 60 days will be dropped for the program year.



You cannot file for reimbursement until your Program Agreements are signed and returned to our office, the administrative fee has been paid, and we receive your completed W9 Tax Form.



Contracts and changes to your agreement now require executive level signatures. Regardless of who fills out the application (or contract change request), we will not accept any agreements not signed by an owner, President, CEO, or executive level individual.

Step 5 – Changing Country Marketing Plans

Deadline: December 31, 2019

Changes to Country Marketing Plans and Domestic Tradeshow Plans can be made online. All changes must be submitted prior to December 31, 2019. This includes changes such as adding activities, brands, increasing funding levels or new country marketing plans. Allocations cannot be lowered via a contract change. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast review and approve contract changes on a case-by-case basis.

Step 6 – Reimbursements submission

Deadline: within 60 days after the activity, final deadline: February 28, 2020

Step 7 – Reimbursements disbursement

30 day turnaround time upon submission of all required documents

Step 8 – Submission of the end of year program evaluation

Deadline: February 28, 2020

Program evaluations are vital to the success and improvement of the Branded Program and are mandatory for all participating companies. Evaluation forms are available online. All information is regarded as strictly “business confidential” and only reported in aggregate with other program participants.



Reimbursements and future allocations will be withheld for companies failing to complete evaluation forms.

Step 9 – Get ready to apply for the 2020 program year

Application submission deadline: October 1, 2019

All steps are covered in detail further in the manual. Please read ahead to learn more about the Branded Program—a great way to offset eligible marketing and promotional expenses worldwide.



Note: A Branded Program representative is available to answer your questions or provide assistance at any time during the application process at 312.334.9200 for Food Export–Midwest or 215.829.9111 for Food Export–Northeast.

FIRST STEP TO APPLYING: PRE-QUALIFICATION

The application process begins with the pre-qualification which can be accessed at www.foodexport.org. For returning participants, log in and proceed directly to your Branded Program Portal. If you do not have an account on our website, you will first need to complete the New Visitor Registration.

For instructions on the use of www.foodexport.org, go to: www.foodexport.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/userguide.pdf

My Food Export Portal: Need Help?

Before logging into your account, you should have the following materials ready:

- Total number of full-time employees, including the parent company and all its subsidiaries combined
- Total sales
- Dunn & Bradstreet number (if you have one)
- North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code. Determine your NAICS code here: <https://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>
- Your Federal Tax ID number



Even companies who have previously participated in the Program must submit a pre-qualification and application to re-apply for each new program year.



All companies will be cross checked with the System for Award Management (SAM) database online to ensure participants can receive federal funding. We reserve the right to independently verify the accuracy of all information provided through the pre-qualification.



The pre-qualification is a self-certifying form which we use to determine whether or not your company and products are eligible for the program. If, through our research, we are not satisfied with your company's or your product's eligibility, Food Export, Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast reserve the right to deny your pre-qualification.



Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast may reject any application from a past participant if we deem that they have not complied with previous Branded Program Agreements, MAP or FAS regulations, or any other laws of the United States, Food Export Association policy, or if there is an outstanding question regarding the validity of their claims, applications, or evaluations.

Follow these instructions to access the foodexport.org Branded Program Portal:

- You must have an existing user ID and password to register for Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast programs and services. Your account must be authorized for Branded Program access. If it is not, please contact our office. If you have any questions or encounter any problems, contact your Food Export Liaison for assistance:
 - In the Northeast, call 215.829.9111
 - In the Midwest, call 312.334.9200
- If you are a previous participant, upon login click on “My Food Export Portal.” To enter Your Branded Program Home Page click on the tab labeled “Branded Program.”
- Upon arriving to your Branded Program tab, you will need to submit the pre-qualification application via the link “Submit a Pre-Qualification” that appears under the appropriate program year.
- If you are unsure whether you are registered in the system and already have a user ID and password, click on the link “Forgot User name”. You will be asked to enter your email address. If the system recognizes your email address, you will be prompted to login by clicking on “Login Now”. If you have forgotten your password, you will be able to obtain it by clicking “Forgot Password.”
- If the system does not recognize your email address, and you would like to submit a pre-qualification application, you need to complete the new user registration process to proceed.

Once your pre-qualification is approved, you will receive an email confirmation which will provide you with essential instructions for submitting your application. The approval of your pre-qualification will automatically open your access to the formal application process. You can access the application by clicking on “Submit Application” which will appear directly under your approved pre-qualification for the program year. Remember, you will only gain access to the formal application process once your pre-qualification is approved.

If you were in the program in past years, you can perform a search to view records from previous years. You can search for your pre-qualifications, program applications, reimbursements, evaluations, Pre-travel Notifications, and previously requested changes to your contract. All of this is available to you via the Branded Program tab on My Food Export Portal.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION



Applicants without Internet access may request hard copies of the necessary application forms.

Upon approval of your pre-qualification, you can complete the application on our website. Before starting the application, please be sure to collect the following:

- **Sales Figures**
Confirms total sales and gross export sales for 4 individual calendar years. We require your actual sales for 2 years prior to the application, projected sales for the year of the application, and projected sales for the following year.
- **Brand Name Products**
Includes all products to be promoted. Include the contact information of the brand owner for any branded products promoted but not owned by the applicant.
- **Country Information**
Refer to list of eligible activities on pages 19-22 to develop a marketing plan for each country. Obtain details for each activity you will conduct (names, dates, and costs). Determine the amount of matching funds you will request per country.

The application includes the following sections:

- **Application Summary**
Basic company contact information, any previous use of funds through other groups, and your company's sales information.
- **Country Marketing Plan**
Be prepared to provide cost estimates for all of your promotional plans. For international tradeshows, you must submit a plan for the country in which the show takes place. If you have an importer in place, you must include the full contact information of your importer/distributor in that country. You can receive reimbursement for Branded funding for up to five years for any one country; the five years in the country do not have to be consecutive.

Note: Since June 5, 2018, Federal regulations prohibit funding Branded Program activities in the following countries: Crimea Region of Ukraine, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria. Certain restrictions apply when exporting to Sudan; please contact us for more information.

- **Tradeshows Held in the U.S.**
Expenses associated with select USDA approved tradeshows in the United States are eligible for reimbursement.



Five year graduation rule applies. For more information on graduation, please see page 55.



Companies who only submit a plan for a tradeshow held in the U.S. may receive Branded funding for two years. At that time, they must demonstrate international activity by also applying for an international market to continue receiving funding for U.S. activities for three more years.

Note: The minimum amount of reimbursements a company can request is USD \$2,500, and the maximum amount is USD \$300,000. Producer-owned agricultural cooperatives may request up to a maximum of \$350,000. This maximum includes any Branded Program (MAP) funding a participant may receive from other cooperators in addition to the Branded Program.

- **Product**
Originals or photos of product labels/packaging for all products listed on your application summary must be submitted with your application. This is required before we can begin the review of your application.
- **Certification Page**
The certification page is the last page of the application summary. This page must be digitally signed and submitted online.
- **Application Fee**
A non-refundable application fee of \$250 must be paid online via credit card or, in certain circumstances, a check can be mailed to the appropriate Midwest or Northeast office.
- **Exclusivity Agreement**
If you are promoting a brand your company does not own because you are an export trading company or you are supplying product for a private label, you must submit an Exclusivity Agreement.



Please note that certification of exclusivity is used for Branded Program purposes only and provides exclusive rights for the company to obtain Branded Program funding to promote the products in the countries listed in the exclusivity agreement.

Companies often have to make changes to their budget and allocation after signing the Program Agreement and paying the administrative fee. The examples below include the most commonly requested changes to existing Program Agreements.

It is the responsibility of your company to alert Food Export-Midwest or Food Export-Northeast of any changes to your product during the program year which may change your eligibility for Branded Program Promotion. This includes changes to the ownership of the Brand, changes to exclusivity agreement, changes to private label agreement or changes to the product itself which would decrease its U.S. Agricultural content below the minimal acceptable content as outlined by Market Access Program guidelines.

Adding a New Country

A new country marketing plan must be submitted. Additional funds maybe requested, or existing funds can be shifted from another country in your approved application.

Moving Funds Between Existing Approved Countries

No change requests need to be submitted.

Requesting Additional Funds

Spending beyond your original allocation may be reimbursed only after the request has been approved. Thus it is important to track your expected utilization and request additional funding before December 31 of the program year.

- Requests for additional allocation will be accompanied by a 6% administrative fee on any additional funding approved.
- The deadline to submit contract change requests is December 31 of the program year.
- Total allocations may not exceed USD \$300,000 per company in a single program year or \$350,000 for a producer-owned agricultural cooperative.
- If requesting additional allocation, please contact the Midwest or Northeast offices to check on fund availability.

Adding a New Overseas Agent

Whenever a new overseas agent is appointed, a participant company must add it to the appropriate Country Marketing Plan, including the company name, address, and other contact information of that importer.

Adding One or More New Products to a Country Marketing Plan

Promotions of products not in your application will result in denial of your reimbursement. Request new products to be added as their marketing plans are developed.

Changing Plans Online

- Log into “My Food Export Portal” at www.foodexport.org and select the Branded Program tab.
- Select the appropriate program year.
Note: If you are active in only one program year, this step is not required.
- Click on “Change Contract” beneath the application data.
- Complete all the relevant fields and submit.
- Allow 2 to 3 weeks for your change request to be processed.

You can also contact your Food Export representative if you need assistance with the contract change submission process.



Approval of Program Agreement Changes must be granted prior to beginning the related new activity. It is advised that participants submit requests for additional funds as early in the year as possible. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast cannot guarantee approval of additional funding requests. No changes of any type will be approved if submitted after the end of the program year.



Need help navigating our website? Find detailed instructions on using our website to manage all of your activities by clicking on the “User Guide PDF” in the upper right corner of www.foodexport.org.

ELIGIBILITY OF YOUR EXPENSES

Reimbursements Are 50% of Invoiced Cost

Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast pay 50 cents per dollar of eligible expenses (with the exception of giveaway items priced above \$4 each and certain travel expenses). Participating companies are paid on a reimbursement basis only.

Dates of Expenses Must Be Eligible

All program activities and related expenses must occur and be paid for between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019. However, no reimbursements will be made for expenses incurred before you submit your application (with the exception of certain tradeshow booth and travel expenses which must be paid in advance). This rule applies to Reimbursement Claims and Amendments. Your Approval Date is clearly stated in the Approval Letter and Program Agreements.

USA Origin Statement Must Be Present

All activities and materials (including product labels, promotional materials, advertising, booth signage, etc.) must identify the origin of the agricultural commodity as being of U.S. origin. Some examples of this are:

- “Product of USA”
- “Grown in the USA”
- “Made in America”
- Full name of a U.S. state, no abbreviations, can substitute for “U.S.,” “USA,” or “America” in the above statement.

Note: Brand names that include “USA” or “American” do not qualify as the U.S. origin statement.

The print size of the origin identifications must conform to the U.S. standard of 1/6th inch (.42 cm) in height based on the lowercase letter “o”. For large format promotional signage, the USA origin identification must be visible at standard viewing distance.

Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast cannot, under any circumstances, reimburse your expenses if you do not comply with the USA origin identification requirement.

Note: U.S. companies are granted exemption from the U.S. origin labeling requirement for activities conducted in countries listed on the U.S. Origin Exemption List. These countries are currently on that list: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and the United States..

Note: The UAE is no longer exempt from the U.S. origin labeling requirement as of January 1, 2017.

Country Must Be Eligible

The Branded Program will fund the same participant company for a specific country for no more than five program years. The five years do not have to be consecutive. Agricultural producer cooperatives are exempt from this rule.

Note: Since June 5, 2018, Federal regulations prohibit funding Branded Program activities in the following countries: Crimea Region of Ukraine, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria. Certain restrictions apply when exporting to Sudan; please contact us for more information.



The graduation five year period is applied across the entire program and any MAP funds from any source. Certain international tradeshows are exempt from counting against graduation. A list of these shows is available on page 41.

Marketing and Point-of-Sale Materials

The Branded Program reimburses for these marketing materials within the USA only if they are created in conjunction with and pertain to your approved tradeshow(s) held in the U.S.

Give-away Items

 At this time, give-away items such as pens, key rings, t-shirts, and caps are limited to a maximum reimbursement of USD \$2 per individual item. Moving forward this amount can change. The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA will notify us through written MAP notices on their website. A statement identifying the U.S. origin of your product must be visible. Give-away items must be free and not tied to a sale.

Public Relations and Advertisement

We will only reimburse for marketing materials and advertisements within the USA if they are created in conjunction with and pertain to your approved tradeshow(s) held in the U.S.

Note: All of the PR materials and advertisements must promote your presence at the approved tradeshow held in the U.S.; the exhibition dates; your booth number; the brand name and the product to be eligible.

Related Expenses for Tradeshows Held in the U.S.

A list of approved tradeshows held in the U.S. is available on pages 42 and 43.

- Exhibit fees, freight charges to and from the show, equipment and furnishings rented at the show (i.e., booth furnishings, utilities, badge scanners, etc.) setup charges, and electricity rental are examples of eligible expenses for tradeshows held in the U.S.
- The cost of design and construction of a booth for the purposes of temporary exhibition.
- Travel and lodging expenses are not eligible for U.S. tradeshows.
- Product showcases at the tradeshow are eligible for reimbursement.

Part-time Contractors

Costs for part-time contractors that assist with product demonstrations at approved tradeshows held in the U.S. are eligible. The maximum reimbursement amount for part-time contractors is determined by the U.S. government. The maximum eligible expense for 2018 is USD \$65.48 per hour or USD \$523.84 per day. 2019 contractor fees will be set by the U.S. government and will be announced at a later date.

Note: Employee wages and those of your overseas agent are not eligible.

Freight Costs

Costs for shipping samples and tradeshow materials to and from approved tradeshows held in the U.S. are eligible.

Note: The actual cost of the samples is not eligible.

Seminars and Educational Training

Non-travel related expenses related to the production of seminars and educational training for international audiences are also eligible for reimbursement. Please be aware that in addition to the standard proof of activity for this event, you will be required to provide a list of attendees which would include both the name of the individual as well as his/her firm.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES: INTERNATIONAL

Provided below is a description of the promotional activities eligible for reimbursement in the Branded Program. If you have questions about the eligibility of certain expenses, do not hesitate to contact Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast.

All forms of marketing must promote the brand name and have the U.S. origin statement visible to be eligible for reimbursement.

Marketing and Point-of-Sale Materials

Production and distribution costs of sell sheets, brochures, catalogs, shelf-talkers, banners, posters, recipe cards, and related materials, including the cost of translation, are eligible for all overseas marketing activities.

Public Relations

Production and distribution of press releases, press kits, and other materials and information directed at the media, trade, and consumers are eligible.

Advertising

The cost of production and placement of advertisements in magazines, newspapers, posters, billboards, direct mail, transit, and on TV, radio, and international websites is eligible. Requirements for the U.S. origin statement also apply to all digital marketing, including websites.

Online Marketing



Online marketing such as advertisements on Facebook, Google, WeChat, etc. and search engine optimization (SEO) are now eligible for reimbursement. We will require proof of activity in the form of a screenshot of the advertisement clearly showing it targets a foreign audience. A U.S. origin statement must be visible.

Website Development



Costs associated with developing, servicing, and updating websites that clearly target a foreign audience are eligible for reimbursement.

Demonstrations/Merchandising

In-store and Food service promotions, consumer and trade demonstrations, shipment of promotional samples (but not the cost of the actual product samples), temporary displays and rental of temporary space for displays, such as end-of-aisle and gondola displays, are eligible.

You must provide pictures, evaluations, or demo reports with your request for reimbursement.

Foreign Market Compliant Packaging/Labeling

Costs associated with design, production, and printing foreign market compliant labels to be used within the program year and any labor costs to attach or sticker (if outsourced) are eligible for reimbursement.

Participants must demonstrate:

- Packaging must clearly have been produced to create compliance with laws of the importing country.
- The company intends to use the new package/label(s) during the activity plan year.
- All reimbursable packaging and labeling must include an eligible U.S. origin statement unless the packaging and labeling are for countries listed on the U.S. Origin Exemption List on page 18.



Note: Sample and promotional labels/packaging as well as gift boxes are not eligible for reimbursement. See pages 27-29 for more details on what has to be submitted for proof of activity.

International Tradeshow Related Expenses

Most international tradeshows are eligible including those supported or sponsored by Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast. If a tradeshow has a USDA-sponsored USA pavilion you must exhibit in that pavilion (see pages 44-45 for more details) or contact us to request exemption from the U.S. Pavilion before the show begins.

- Exhibit fees, freight charges to and from the show, equipment and furnishings rented at the show (e.g., booth furnishings, utilities, badge scanners, etc.), setup charges, electricity rental, and limited travel expenses are eligible. Find more travel information on pages 32-40.
- Design, creation, and construction costs for a temporary booth for trade-only exhibits and shows are eligible.
- Booth must display the U.S. origin statement. The U.S. Origin Statement must be imprinted on the booth and be clearly visible.

Note: We recognize that some tradeshow related expenses must be paid for prior to the start of the Program Year. To help cover those expenses, keep records of payments for booth deposits, airline tickets, and hotel reservations to be eligible for reimbursement even if payments were made prior to the start of the Program Year or your documented application approval date.

Travel Expenses:

International travel expenses (flight, hotel, meals and incidentals) are eligible for reimbursement ONLY WHEN:

- Flying on an eligible airline
- Travel is associated with exhibiting at approved, eligible tradeshows or trade missions
- Travelers have issued their pre-travel notification prior to the event

See pages 32-35 for specifics on eligible international travel expenses.

Certain restrictions apply.

International Trade Seminars Related Expenses

Eligible seminars are those designed to inform industry representatives about U.S. brand names and products. Site rentals, interpreters, translation, and duplication of seminar materials are eligible.

Part-time Contractors

- Costs for demonstrators, interpreters, and translators that assist with eligible promotional activities such as in-store demonstrations, tradeshows, and seminars are eligible.
- The maximum reimbursement amount for part-time contractors is determined by the U.S. government. The maximum eligible expense for 2018 is USD \$65.48 per hour or USD \$523.84 per day. 2019 contractor fees will be set by the U.S. government and will be announced at a later date.
- Employee wages and those of your overseas agent are not eligible.

Freight Costs

Costs for shipping samples to overseas agents, consumer and trade demonstrations, and for shipping tradeshow materials and samples to eligible tradeshows and seminars are eligible.

Note: The actual cost of the samples is not eligible.

Trade Missions

If a trade mission is pre-approved by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA and the State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs), participants may qualify for reimbursements on travel expenses (i.e., hotel, meals, and airfare). Please check with us in advance. Participation fees for trade missions are not eligible for reimbursement.



Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast reserve the right to contact vendors, Foreign Third Parties, and your financial institutions to verify transactions and payments. If we are unable to verify payments or participants are unwilling to assist us in the verification we are under no obligation to provide reimbursement.



INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Many marketing-related expenses are considered “costs of doing business” or, for other reasons, fall outside the regulations of the Branded Program and therefore are not eligible for reimbursement. This list should not be considered complete. If you have questions concerning your company’s specific marketing plans and eligible reimbursements, contact Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast before incurring the expense.

General Ineligible Expenses

- Expenditures for activities and materials that do not carry U.S. origin statements
- Any activity or product not specifically included or approved as part of the participant company’s Program Agreement or Approved Amendment
- Travel expenses, catering, and attendance fees related to international trade seminars are not eligible
- Travel and lodging expenses related to tradeshows held in the U.S. are never eligible for reimbursement
- In-store demonstrations and merchandising in the U.S. are not eligible
- Expenses incurred for an activity prior to submission of the application or after December 31st of the program year.
- Any activities and functions held within the United States (not including certain costs for approved tradeshows held in the U.S.), its possessions, and in ineligible countries as listed on page 18
- Vehicle rental and fuel to transport tradeshow materials and samples is not reimbursable

Business Related Ineligible Expenses

- Salaries, living expenses, office costs, allowances, office parking fees
- Administrative expenses including communications costs (phone, fax, internet) including those related to travel (hotel and cellphone charges)
- Expenses paid to a vendor or foreign third party if we determine that a relationship exists between your company and the vendor/foreign third party in which one or more company employees, owners, partners or associates are also employees, owners, partners or associates of said vendor/foreign third party
- Capital expenditures including purchases of anything with usable shelf-life of one year or more
- Rental, lease, or purchase of warehouse space
- Purchase, construction, or lease of space for permanent displays (i.e., displays lasting beyond a one year activity plan)
- Meals, reception refreshments, entertainment, or gifts
- Business cards, seasonal greeting cards
- Membership and Program fees

Business Related Ineligible Expenses (continued)

- General company literature that does not include product promotion information
- Routine translation and interpretation services not related to eligible promotional materials
- All international travel costs not associated with exhibition at an international tradeshow or not pre-approved for a trade mission
- Management consultant fees
- Product-related ineligible expenses
- Product research and development
- Package and label design/production and origin identification stickers not specifically required by importing country (see page 21 for details)
- Shelf trays
- Product samples

Marketing-Related Ineligible Expenses

- Slotting and shelf-space fees, licensing fees, product registration, and similar sales expenses
- Coupons, redemptions, price discounts, and any other activity to reduce the selling prices of an agricultural product. Printing, distribution, and promotion of coupons are not eligible.
- Advertisements or any other marketing and promotional items that feature a coupon that reduces the cost of the product
- Fees for participating in Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast programs and services (Including Food Show PLUS!™, Buyers Missions, Market Builder, Focused Trade Missions, etc.)
- Sexual enhancement products and products of a sexual nature
- Promotions or products that are deemed offensive



A company's promotions and advertisements can not disparage any other company or product either directly or indirectly.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR REIMBURSEMENT

To protect against fraud and other improper activities, we require specific documentation to be submitted for all reimbursement claims. If your company submits reimbursement claims with incomplete documentation, you will be contacted for additional materials. At that point you will have 60 days from notification to provide the requested documents or the reimbursement claims will be denied. Additional documentation is required for travel reimbursement, see page 36.



All foreign language documentation must be translated into English before we are able to process the request for reimbursement.



Required Materials

All reimbursement requests require the following four documents:



1. Invoice

- Document from the vendor stating charges and details of the services rendered.



2. Proof of Payment

- Reimbursement is based on your payment, so we must have the proper documentation.
- Accepted proofs of payment include:
 - Cash Receipt – Must be marked “paid”, and show a zero balance (only acceptable for payments under USD \$1,000).
 - Check – We must see the cancelled version of the check (a copy of the front and back of check), or a copy of the check accompanied by a bank statement showing it was posted.
 - Bank/Credit Card Statement – Credit card statement must show the charge. Signature slips are not acceptable. We do not need to see payment to the credit card company. Ensure the company and/or individual name of the account owner appears on the statement.
 - Wire Transfer – We must see the wire transfer confirmation or the bank statement showing the posted transaction. The request alone is not sufficient.
 - Credit Memo – If you are paying an overseas agent in product, you must provide the invoice for the product, the shipping documents for that invoice (Bill of Lading), and a copy of the credit memo applied to the invoice. If there is a remaining balance after applying the credit to the invoice, we must see that the vendor/overseas agent paid the balance.
- Overseas Agent expenses are eligible if they are submitted through the U.S. participant. We need to see all invoices that the Overseas Agent incurred and their corresponding proof of payment. We then need to see the U.S. participant reimburse the Overseas Agent for at least 50% of the total invoiced amount.

Note: When sending sensitive financial documents, it is recommended that you redact account numbers (except the last four digits) and line items irrelevant to the claim. Please do not send originals—only photocopies.



If the payment is made in a foreign currency, we will determine the U.S. Dollar equivalent by checking the exchange rate on the date of payment according to historical rates provided by www.oanda.com. If your proof of payment includes an applied exchange rate (e.g. a credit card statement or wire transfer), we will use the effective rate provided by the third party financial institution.



3. Proof of Activity

- This form of documentation is dependent upon the activity. This document should be an example of the promotional activity that was conducted.
- **Marketing and Point-of-Sale Materials**
You must submit samples of the materials, either originals or photographs of the originals, and the U.S. origin statement must be clearly visible. Give-away items such as key chains, pens, and shirts must have the origin statement. The give-away item does not have to be manufactured in the U.S. However, it must have the U.S. origin statement and the brand name listed on the item.
- **International Tradeshows**
Expenses related to exhibiting at an international tradeshow require a photo of your booth. If the expense is for photos, banners, signage, or other graphics used to decorate your booth, we will need photos of each item that clearly show the U.S. origin statement on each. If you seek reimbursement of a product showcase, please submit a separate photo of your product showcase with a visible U.S. origin statement.



All tradeshow - related expenses require booth photos as proof of activity (as opposed to tradeshow guide listing). Photos must show detail of products on display in addition to U.S. origin statement.

- **Demonstrations/Merchandising**
For in-store demonstrations, foodservice promotions, and temporary displays, we require a list of stores/locations and dates as well as representative photos of the events or displays. We recognize that some stores do not allow photography; in these cases we will accept demonstration reports.
- **International Trade Seminars**
We require photos from the events and any literature printed for distribution at the seminar.
- **Part-time Contractors**
When part-time contractors are utilized at tradeshows, seminars, or in-store tasting and demonstrations, a photograph from these events must be provided as proof of activity. In addition, the invoice must include the dates and hours worked as well as the hourly or daily rate.
- **Freight Costs**
A freight or airway bill must be submitted and must clearly show the origin and destination address of the shipment as well as indication that promotional samples are being shipped.

3. Proof of Activity (continued)

- ✳ Foreign Market Compliant Packaging/Labeling
For all charges related to creating of foreign market compliant packaging/labeling (translation, design, compliance consulting, and production of a one-year supply), we require images of the compliant packaging clearly showing the elements in the design which were done to create compliance with the importing regulations of the foreign market and the eligible U.S. origin statement. PDF/design proofs are acceptable proof of activity for design/translation/compliance consulting expenses, but costs for production of the packaging/labeling requires a photograph of the packaging.

! Proof of activity for any printed materials (sell sheets, foreign market compliant packaging, advertisements, etc.) cannot be in the form of a PDF proof. Images of the item produced (e.g. photographs) or original copies must be submitted.

- ✳ Advertising
An English translation or transcript must be submitted with all foreign language advertising. U.S. origin statement must be visible or audible on all advertising.
 - ✳ Print Ads – Original publication or page from the publication clearly showing the date and name of the publication, as well as materials with the U.S. origin statement on the ad itself. A circulation statement needs to be submitted as well to show country subscriptions.
 - o Billboards – A clear photo of the billboard(s), as well as a list with the billboard’s locations and the dates of the promotion.
 - o Radio/TV ads – A video or audio recording of the commercial. An English transcript must be submitted with all foreign language ads. If the expense is for broadcasting of the ads and not just the production, we must also receive a broadcast schedule showing dates, times, and the station(s) on which the spot(s) aired.
- ✳ Website development
 - ✳ Screen shots or a link to of the website are required.
 - ✳ Screen shots must clearly demonstrate the the pages are targeting a foreign audience. For example, the webpage could be in a foreign language, or be associated with a foreign market extension (e.g. “.co.uk” for the United Kingdom or “.ca” for a Canadian website).

 **Public Relations**

-  Samples or copies of ALL materials created (i.e., press kits, press releases, etc.)

Note: If a press release is created for an eligible tradeshow held in the U.S., the press release must promote your exhibit at the show. No other domestic press releases are eligible.

-  Copy of at least a partial mailing list and what was mailed for your mass mailings.



Whenever exhibiting at an international tradeshow or one held in the U.S., program participants are required to exhibit in the show's USA pavilion when available. Under certain circumstances exemptions can be granted.

4. Proof of USA

The activity must promote the product as "Made in the USA"; therefore, a USA origin statement must be visible. Eligible USA origin statements are listed on page 18. Some markets are exempt from this requirement; see page 18 for a list of these markets.



You are required to maintain your Branded Program files for five years following the end of the Program Year. These files are subject to audit by Food Export–Midwest, Food Export–Northeast and the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA.

COVER SHEET FOR PROMOTIONAL CLAIMS

If you do not have internet access please copy the page below and fill out for each of your reimbursement submissions. Otherwise, when submitting your claims online, you can print a similar cover page directly from our website.

EXPENSE ITEM #: (OFFICE USE ONLY) _____

COMPANY: _____

COUNTRY (WHERE ACTIVITY TOOK PLACE): _____

ACTIVITY TYPE (CHECK ONE):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADVERTISEMENTS | <input type="checkbox"/> DEMONSTRATIONS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT MAIL | <input type="checkbox"/> FREIGHT FOR SAMPLES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GIVE AWAY ITEMS | <input type="checkbox"/> IN STORE PROMOTIONS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FOREIGN-COMPLIANT PACKAGING/LABELING | <input type="checkbox"/> MISC. TRADE SHOW EXPENSES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER | <input type="checkbox"/> PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TECHNICAL SEMINARS | <input type="checkbox"/> TRADE SHOW BOOTH EXPENSES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TRAVEL | <input type="checkbox"/> WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT |

INVOICE AMOUNT PAID IN FOREIGN CURRENCY (A): _____

EXCHANGE RATE AT TIME OF PAYMENT (B): _____

(EXCHANGE RATES FOUND AT WWW.OANDA.COM)

INVOICE AMOUNT PAID IN U.S. DOLLARS (A X B): _____

AMOUNT PAID BY COMPANY: _____

AMOUNT PAID BY OVERSEAS AGENT: _____

REIMBURSEMENT RATE: 50%

REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTED IN U.S. DOLLARS: _____

COVER SHEET FOR PROMOTIONAL CLAIMS

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If you do not have internet access please copy the page below and fill out for each of your reimbursement submissions. Otherwise, when submitting your claims online, you can print a similar cover page directly from our website.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

ALL MUST HAVE ACCOMPANYING TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH, IF APPLICABLE.

1. INVOICE

INVOICE DATE: _____

INVOICE NUMBER: _____

PAYMENT DATE: _____

2. PROOF OF PAYMENT (CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CANCELLED CHECK | <input type="checkbox"/> COPY OF CHECK AND COPY OF BANK STATEMENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CREDIT MEMO | <input type="checkbox"/> WIRE TRANSFER AND COPY OF BANK STATEMENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BANK STATEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> CASH RECEIPT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CREDIT CARD STATEMENT | |

NOTE: IF THIS EXPENSE WAS PAID FOR BY AN OVERSEAS AGENT, YOU MUST SUBMIT YOUR PROOF OF PAYMENT TO THEM.

3. PROOF OF ACTIVITY* (MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE FOR EACH CLAIM):

- SAMPLE OF PRINTED MATERIAL (WITH U.S. ORIGIN STATEMENT VISIBLE)
- PHOTO (OF BOOTH, DEMO, BILLBOARD, DISPLAY, ADVERTISEMENT, ETC.)
- SAMPLE OF PROMOTIONAL ITEM (I.E., GIVEAWAYS)
- VIDEO/AUDIO/CD (MUST BE IN STANDARD U.S. FORMAT)
- COPY OF FREIGHT INVOICE FOR SAMPLE SHIPMENTS
- ORIGINAL VERSION OR PHOTOS OF FOREIGN COMPLIANT PACKAGING
- EXHIBITOR LISTING FROM TRADESHOW CATALOG

* MAKE SURE APPROVED FORM OF U.S. ORIGIN STATEMENT IS VISIBLE.

I CERTIFY THAT THE AMOUNTS STATED AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THIS CLAIM ARE TRUE AND CORRECT. I UNDERSTAND THAT FOOD EXPORT-MIDWEST AND FOOD EXPORT-NORTHEAST RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST ORIGINAL AND/OR ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION WHEN NECESSARY. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL CLAIMS ARE SUBJECT TO AUDIT, AND THAT MY RECORDS OF THIS TRANSACTION MUST BE KEPT AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW FOR FIVE YEARS.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

ELIGIBLE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPENSES

The Branded Program allows for the reimbursement of some travel expenses related to international tradeshows and approved trade missions. Branded Program participants are subject to U.S. federal travel regulations for international travel.



Please call the Branded Program staff to discuss your travel plans and any questions. We are happy to help!

- **Exhibiting at an International Tradeshow/USA Pavilion**

Branded Program participants are required to exhibit inside the USDA-sponsored USA Pavilion (when there is one) to qualify for travel reimbursement. See pages 44 and 45 for a list of tradeshows with USA Pavilions. If a USA Pavilion does not exist, participants may arrange for booth space anywhere.

- Participants may request exemption from the “USA Pavilion” rule if exhibiting in a product-specific pavilion or in their distributor’s booth. This request for exemption must be submitted in writing in advance of the show to Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast. Requests for exemption will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- **Advance Approval of Country Marketing Plan**

Company must have an approved Country Marketing Plan for the country where the international tradeshow physically takes place prior to exhibiting at the show.

- **Attending an Approved Trade Mission**

Travel on trade missions that meet specific criteria are eligible for reimbursement. If you would like travel reimbursement for a trade mission, please contact us in advance to ensure the trade mission is eligible for reimbursement.

For travel expenses to be eligible, you must issue a pre-travel notification prior to the start of the foreign tradeshow or trade mission. To do this, make sure you have included the event in your Branded Program Application or Contract Change Request. Only shows in your application will be available in our online system. This is designed to help you submit this notification with as much ease as possible.



Once you have confirmed that the show is in your application, you need to use our automated notification system located on the Branded Program tab of the Food Export Portal. Simply select “Submit Pre-Travel Notification” and follow the on screen prompts.

Need help or need to change the names on your previously submitted notification? Call our office and ask for a member of the Branded Program team.

- **Must Fly on an Eligible Carrier**

- o Flights on U.S. carriers are eligible for reimbursement.
- o Flights on EU carriers are eligible if you are traveling to, traveling from, or stopping in the EU.
- o Flights on Japanese, Australian, and Swiss carriers are eligible if you are traveling to or from those markets and there is no City Pair Rate. See page 34 for further information on City Pair Rates.
- o See page 34 for a guide to further help you determine if the airlines you are using are eligible for reimbursement by the Branded Program.

- **Eligible days of travel are two days before the start of the show and one day after.**

- **Must Have Same Origin and Destination**

All additional stops in the itinerary must be for eligible, approved tradeshow and/or trade missions. If not, see directions below on providing a quote.

Note: A stop is a chosen destination, not a layover.



Extending your trip? When you book your flight, pull and save a comparable quote showing the cost of your trip without side trips (e.g. flying in and out of the show cities on the eligible travel dates). Include this quote with your claim submission for travel reimbursement. We will reimburse the lesser of the actual ticket flown or the quote for the eligible travel.



Flying Business/First Class? When you book your flight, pull and save a quote showing the cost of your trip (same dates, same itinerary) in Economy class. Include this quote with your claim submission for travel reimbursement. We will reimburse the lesser of the actual ticket flown or the quote for the eligible travel.



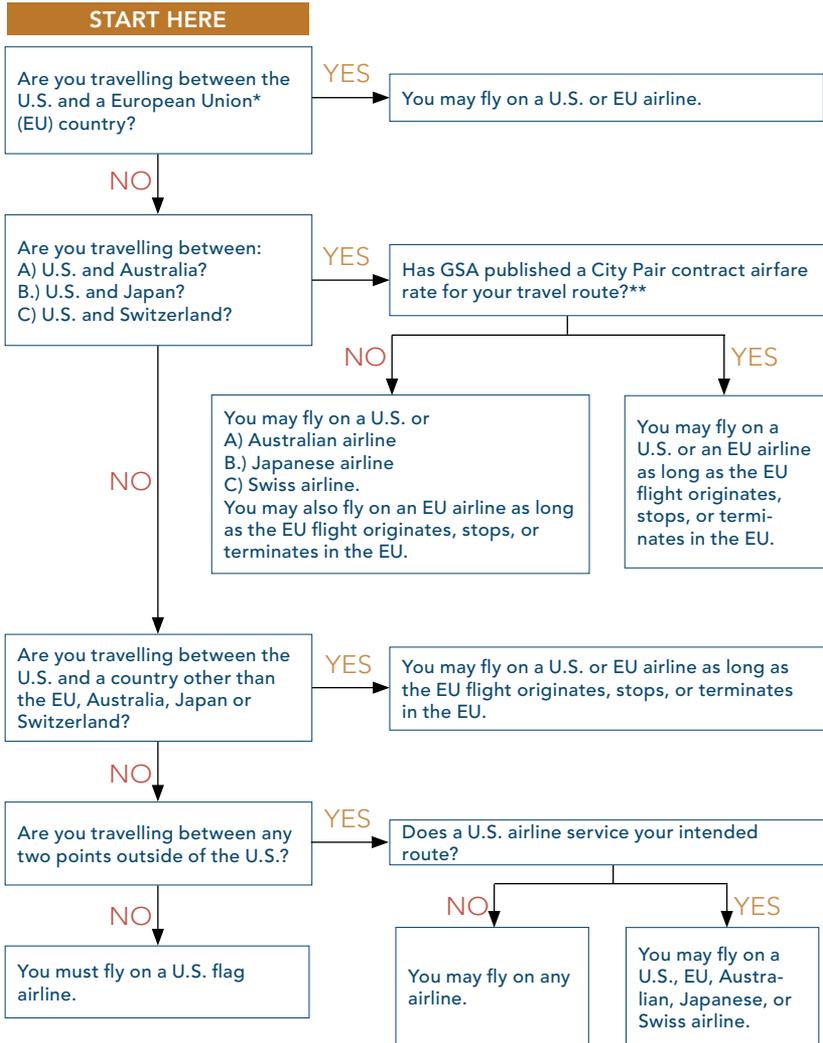
The cost of "Economy Plus", "Economy Comfort", and other upgraded seating are not eligible for reimbursement.



It can be difficult to be reimbursed for travel. Please call the Branded Program team to discuss your trip before you book! We are happy to review your proposed itinerary and answer any questions.

ELIGIBLE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPENSES

Eligible Flight Decision Matrix



*Iceland and Norway are considered part of the EU for the purposes of the EU Open Skies Agreement. Croatia, however, is excluded from the Agreement.

**To determine if your route has an established GSA City Pair contract airfare, search your route here: <https://cpsearch.fas.gsa.gov/>

- **Travel Reimbursement**

We can now reimburse for visas, passport expenses and required inoculations.

- **The Program Reimburses for Travel of Two People**

Travel reimbursements will be made for no more than two company representatives per event. A "Company Representative" can be a full-time employee or any agent hired by the participant company. Please be advised that additional documentation for non-employees may be required, such as a copy of their contract or agreement with you.

- **Per Diem Expenses for Meals and Lodging**

Per diem rates are published for both "lodging" costs and "meals and incidentals" (M&IE) and are based on the local city and country. Federal per diem rates are updated monthly and are available at http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp.

- o **Lodging:** Travelers are reimbursed 50% for eligible lodging costs. Reimbursements are based on the actual lodging costs up to the maximum per diem allowance. Dates must correspond with tradeshow exhibit or trade mission dates. The per diem rate for the location of lodging, not the location of the tradeshow or trade mission, is utilized to calculate reimbursement.
- o **Days of travel:** The eligible travel days include two days prior to the tradeshow and one day after.
- o **Meals and Incidentals Expenses (M&IE):** Meals and incidentals expenses are reimbursed based on the Federal per diem rate only, no receipts need to be submitted. Based on check in/out dates, meals will be calculated on the hotel bill provided. On the first and last eligible days (travel days), the reimbursement is based on 75% of the per diem rate. For the remaining days, the reimbursement is based on the full per diem rate. The per diem rate for the location of lodging, not the location of the tradeshow or trade mission, is utilized to calculate reimbursement.



On-the-side vacations and/or business meetings are not eligible for reimbursement when traveling and exhibiting at shows. When booking travel, make sure to obtain an itinerary that states the cost of the flight without side trips. Submit both the invoice and itineraries for reimbursement.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS



Travel claims require ALL of the documentation below. It is also recommended that you retain boarding passes and a passenger receipt in case they are requested.



Pre-Travel Notification

You must notify the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA office in the country you will be traveling to at least 30 days in advance of your travel. You may do this through our website. Log into the Branded Program Portal and click the link "Submit Pre-Travel Notification". A sample can be found on page 40.



Trip Report

Following your exhibition at the tradeshow, you must fill out a trip report detailing the experience. This may be done through our website as you are completing your travel reimbursement worksheet, or you can request the form from Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast. A sample can be found on page 39.



Airline Itinerary/Invoice

We must have a detailed itinerary/invoice from either a travel agent or airline. We are specifically looking for the ticket number, origin of travel, destination of travel, travel dates, fare class for each flight, and the total ticket cost. It is advised that all participants retain copies of their boarding passes in case further documentation is needed.



Itemized Hotel Bill

We must receive a document from the hotel that shows your check in/ out dates as well as the nightly room rate. If you were charged by a travel agency, travel website, or similar service provider, we require that you still obtain documentation from the hotel itself that verifies your check in/ out dates, name of guest, and nightly room rate with tax.



Proof of Payment

You must provide a copy of your proof of payment for hotel and airfare. Any of the previously mentioned approved forms of payment are acceptable (see page 26 for more information).



Proof of Activity

For a tradeshow, we require a booth photo (see pages 27-28) and a list of contacts made. For a trade mission, please include your schedule and a list of contacts made.



Booking through a third-party booking site? Your reservation email is not enough to receive reimbursement. Please obtain a folio/receipt from the hotel upon checkout, indicating that your stay matches the reservation information.



Booking through Airbnb or similar site? Please obtain a certification that your stay matches your reservation from the apartment owner. The apartment owner's review of your stay suffices as well. This document must be dated after your stay.



If any of the above documentation is in a foreign language, please translate the details of the document into English (i.e., what services are being charged)

HOW TO CALCULATE TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS

THIS TABLE IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOU CALCULATE YOUR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT.

- USE THE WEBSITE LISTED BELOW TO FIND THE PER DIEM RATES FOR THE CITY AND COUNTRY OF THE TRADESHOW IN THE MONTH YOU EXHIBITED.
- ELIGIBLE DATES OF TRAVEL INCLUDE TWO DAYS PRIOR TO THE SHOW, AND ONE DAY AFTER (NO EXCEPTIONS).
- TO CALCULATE THE ELIGIBLE HOTEL EXPENSES, ENTER YOUR ACTUAL NIGHTLY RATE IN U.S. DOLLARS OR THE FEDERAL PER DIEM RATE (WHICHEVER IS LOWER).
- FOR M&IE, ENTER 75% OF THE PER DIEM RATE ON THE FIRST AND LAST ELIGIBLE DAYS, AND THE FULL RATE FOR THE MIDDLE DAYS.
- ENTER YOUR ECONOMY CLASS AIRFARE AMOUNT.
- ADD YOUR HOTEL, M&IE, AND AIRFARE TOTALS TOGETHER TO GET THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENSE.
- YOUR REIMBURSEMENT WILL BE 50% OF THIS AMOUNT.

NAME OF SHOW/MISSION: _____

SHOW START DATE: _____ END DATE: _____

SHOW START DATE: _____ END DATE: _____

ELIGIBLE DAYS: _____

EXCHANGE RATE: FOREIGN CURRENCY _____ EQUALS USD \$ _____ (EX: 1 EURO=1.20 USD\$)
PER DIEM: (PER DIEM RATES CAN BE FOUND AT [HTTP://AOPRALS.STATE.GOV/WEB920/PER_DIEM.ASP](http://AOPRALS.STATE.GOV/WEB920/PER_DIEM.ASP))

CITY: _____

COUNTRY: _____

M&IE: _____

LODGING: _____

TOTAL: _____

EXPENSES:			
DATE:	LODGING:	M&IE:	AIRFARE:
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

TOTALS:

_____	_____	_____	_____
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COVER SHEET FOR TRAVEL CLAIMS

If you do not have internet access please copy the page below and fill out for each of your reimbursement submissions. Otherwise, when submitting your claims online, you can print a similar cover page directly from our website.

COMPANY: _____

TRAVEL ITEM #: (OFFICE USE ONLY) _____

NAME OF FOREIGN TRADESHOW/TRADE MISSION: _____

CITY: _____ COUNTRY: _____

NAME OF TRAVELER: _____

DATES OF SHOW: _____ DATES OF TRAVEL: _____

TOTAL ELIGIBLE DAYS (MAX. ELIGIBLE INCLUDES 2 DAYS PRIOR AND 1 DAY AFTER): _____

1. AIRFARE* (COACH ONLY): _____

* IF NOT A U.S. FLAG CARRIER, AIRFARE MAY NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT.

2. LODGING NIGHTLY RATE X ELIGIBLE DAYS*: _____

* OR PER DIEM RATE, WHICHEVER IS LOWER

(VISIT [HTTP://AOPRALS.STATE.GOV/WEB920/PER_DIEM.ASP](http://AOPRALS.STATE.GOV/WEB920/PER_DIEM.ASP) FOR CURRENT RATE)

3. MEALS AND INCIDENTALS AT PER DIEM RATE: _____

A. FIRST AND LAST DAYS AT 75% OF PER DIEM RATE: _____

B. REMAINING DAYS AT FULL PER DIEM RATE: _____

C. TOTAL ELIGIBLE M&IE (A + B): _____

TOTAL ELIGIBLE TRAVEL EXPENSES (ADD ITEMS 1, 2, AND 3): _____

REIMBURSEMENT RATE: 50%

TOTAL REIMBURSEMENTS REQUESTED: _____

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE (FAS) OF THE USDA:

- PRE-TRAVEL NOTIFICATION
- TRIP REPORT INCLUDING A LIST OF CONTACTS MADE

LODGING:

- HOTEL BILL
- PROOF OF PAYMENT

AIRFARE:

- ITINERARY FOR FLIGHT
- PROOF OF PAYMENT

PROOF OF ACTIVITY:

- PHOTO OF BOOTH
- LISTING IN TRADESHOW GUIDE

If you do not have internet access please copy the page below and fill out for each of your reimbursement submissions. Otherwise, when submitting your claims online, you can print a similar cover page directly from our website.

COMPANY PARTICIPANT

YOU MAY SUBMIT A SINGLE TRIP REPORT COMBINING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF TWO TRAVELERS. SECTIONS MARKED WITH AN * ARE REQUIRED. PLEASE ATTACH A LIST OF CONTACTS MADE DURING TRIP.

COMPANY NAME*: _____

SUBMITTED BY*: _____

NAME OF TRAVELER #1*: _____

TITLE OF TRAVELER #1*: _____

NAME OF TRAVELER #2: _____

TITLE OF TRAVELER #2: _____

TRADESHOW ATTENDED: _____

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL*: (SUMMARIZE THE PURPOSE/GOALS OF THE TRIP) _____

DATES OF TRAVEL*: (INCLUDE TO/FROM INFORMATION AND SUMMARIZE THE ITINERARY) _____

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS*: (INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT MARKET SITUATION)

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS*: (OUTLINE RECOMMENDATIONS OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS RELATIVE TO THE GOALS/PURPOSE OF THE TRIP) _____

LIST OF CONTACTS MADE *: (OR PLEASE ATTACH BUSINESS CARDS OBTAINED DURING YOUR TRIP) _____

PRE-TRAVEL NOTIFICATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TO EXHIBIT AT A TRADESHOW

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE INTERNET ACCESS, PLEASE COMPLETE AND FAX OR MAIL TO THE FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE OFFICE. THIS FORM MUST BE SENT TO THE FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE (FAS) OF THE USDA OFFICE IN THE DESTINATION COUNTRY AT LEAST 30 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF TRAVEL. EMAIL ADDRESSES AND FAX NUMBERS CAN BE FOUND ON THE FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE (FAS) OF THE USDA WEBSITE AT WWW.FAS.USDA.GOV/OFSO/OVERSEAS_POST_DIRECTORY/OVS_DIRECTORY_SEARCH.ASP AND SELECTING THE APPROPRIATE COUNTRY.

THIS FORM WILL SERVE AS NOTICE OF BRANDED COMPANY PARTICIPANT PLANS TO VISIT YOUR MARKET TO EXHIBIT AT AN INTERNATIONAL TRADESHOW.

PLEASE RETAIN YOUR PRE-TRAVEL NOTIFICATION SO YOU CAN SUBMIT IT WITH YOUR CLAIMS. WE CAN NOT REIMBURSE YOUR TRAVEL EXPENSES WITHOUT A COPY OF THIS NOTIFICATION.

COUNTRY OF TRADESHOW: _____

NAME OF INTERNATIONAL TRADESHOW: _____

NAME OF TRAVELER: _____

TITLE OF TRAVELER: _____

COMPANY NAME: _____

DATES OF TRADESHOW: _____

PRODUCTS TO BE PROMOTED: _____

COMMENTS: _____

SPECIAL REQUESTS: _____



If your Pre-Travel Notification is not submitted using our online system, you will be unable to submit your travel reimbursement worksheet. Please contact our office for assistance.

INTERNATIONAL TRADESHOWS EXEMPTED FROM THE BRANDED PROGRAM GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA has determined that certain approved international tradeshow activities in foreign countries may be exempt from the Branded Program graduation. These shows include:

- AgraMe
- A1 Fares
- ANUGA Cologne*
- Asia Fruit Logistica*
- Asia Pacific Leather Fair
- BETA International (equestrian)
- BioFach*
- China Fisheries & Seafood Expo*
- Seafood Expo Global*
- Fiera Cavelli (equestrian)
- Fish International
- Food and Hotel Asia*
- Food Ingredients Asia*
- Food Ingredients Europe*
- Food Ingredients South America*
- FOODEX Japan*
- Fruit Logistica (Berlin)*
- Gulfood*
- HOFEX*
- Interzoo*
- IPM (horticultural)
- ISM Cologne
- Prowein
- Seafood Expo Asia*
- SIAL Brazil
- SIAL Paris*
- Vinexpo Asia
- Vinexpo Bordeaux
- VinItaly
- Zoomark

** Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast will offer Food Show PLUS!™ services at these events. To learn about our Food Show PLUS!™ activities please see page 59 of the Branded Program Exporter Manual. Visit our website to register for these activities.*

U.S. TRADESHOWS ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Recognizing that there is great potential to access foreign buyers at large tradeshows which happen inside the United States, the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service has authorized certain U.S. based shows as “eligible for reimbursement.” Exhibitors may be eligible for 50% reimbursement of costs incurred to exhibit at the following international shows which take place in the U.S. market. To request approval for these shows, be certain to submit a United States marketing plan when completing your Branded Program application. Graduation policies (five years of eligibility) apply to reimbursement of expenses for these shows.

Note: The list of approved international shows in the United States may be subject to change without notice.

Travel and per diem expenditures for tradeshows held in the U.S. are not eligible. The following list and dates may be subject to change. Please check show websites for exact dates.

Specialty Food Association's Winter Fancy Food Show fancyfoodshows.com	Jan. 13-15, 2019	San Francisco, California
VMX: Veterinary Meeting & Expo navc.com	Jan. 20-23, 2019	Orlando, Florida
Surfaces tisewest.com	Jan 23-25, 2019	Las Vegas, Nevada
International Production and Processing Expo ippexpo.com	Feb. 12-14, 2019	Atlanta, Georgia
International Builders' Show buildersshow.com	Feb. 19-21, 2019	Las Vegas, Nevada
World Floral Expo hpxhibitions.com/wfe/	March 2019	Chicago, Illinois
International Home and Housewares Show housewares.org	Mar. 2-5, 2019	Chicago, Illinois
Natural Products Expo West expowest.com	Mar. 5-9, 2019	Anaheim, California
Seafood Expo North America seafoodexpo.com/north-america	Mar. 17-19, 2019	Boston, Massachusetts
American Pet Products Association, Global Pet Expo americanpetproducts.org	Mar. 20-22, 2019	Orlando, Florida
Duty Free Show of the Americas iaadfs.org	Mar. 24-27, 2019	Orlando, Florida
Nightclub & Bar Convention & Tradeshow ncbshow.com	Mar. 25-27, 2019	Las Vegas, Nevada
Snack Food Association (SNAXPO) sfa.org	Mar. 31- Apr. 2, 2019	Orlando, Florida
BrewExpo America	Apr. 8-11, 2019	Denver, Colorado

** Travel expenses are not eligible for reimbursement*

U.S. TRADESHOWS ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Specialty Coffee Association of America Global Specialty Coffee Expo coffeexpo.org	Apr. 11-14, 2019	Boston, Massachusetts
Petfood Forum petfoodforumevents.com	Apr. 29- May 1, 2019	Kansas City, Missouri
American Food Fair (U.S. Pavilion) at the National Restaurant Association Show nasdatradeshow.com	May 18-21, 2019	Chicago, Illinois
NCA Sweets & Snacks Expo sweetsandsnacks.com	May 21-23, 2019	Chicago, Illinois
World Nut and Dried Fruit Congress nutfruit.org	May 23-25, 2019	Boca Raton, Florida
International Floriculture Expo floriexpo.com	June 2019	TBD
Dairy-Deli-Bakery Seminar and Expo idda.org	Jun. 2-4, 2019	Orlando, Florida
Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Expo ift.org	Jun. 2-5, 2019	New Orleans, Louisiana
Specialty Food Association's Summer Fancy Food Show fancyfoodshows.com	Jun. 30- Jul. 2, 2019	New York, New York
MAGIC International Sourcing Show magiconline.com	August 2019	Las Vegas, Nevada
Southern Nursery Association SEGreen sna.org	August/ September 2019	Athens, Georgia
International Flight Services Association Expo ifsanet.com	September 2019	TBD
Natural Products Expo East expoeast.com	September 2019	Baltimore, Maryland
Organic Trade Association's All Things Organic Show co-located with Natural Products Expo East	September 2019	Baltimore, Maryland
International Baking Industry Exposition	Sep. 8-11, 2019	Las Vegas, Nevada
U.S.A. Pavilion at the Americas Food & Beverage Show nasdatradeshow.com	October 2019	Miami, Florida
National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) Show nacsonline.com	Oct. 2-4, 2019	Atlanta, Georgia
Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit Convention & Expo pma.com	Oct. 17-19, 2019	Anaheim, California
Kosherfest kosherfest.com	November 2019	Secaucus, New Jersey
Private Label Manufacturers Association (PLMA) Show plma.com	November 2019	Rosemont, Illinois

TRADESHOWS WITH USA PAVILIONS

Companies must exhibit within the USA Pavilion at the eligible tradeshows listed below in order to receive reimbursement for tradeshows*. This includes your distributor representing your products at shows. Below is a list of major tradeshows with U.S. Pavilions taking place in the 2019 Program Year (list and dates are subject to change.) If you are exhibiting at a show that includes a USA Pavilion but wish to exhibit in a different location, please send this request to us in writing. Exemptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**If no USA pavilion exists at a tradeshow, THIS RULE DOES NOT APPLY and companies may exhibit anywhere at the show and still receive reimbursement.*

Note: This is not a complete list of shows. USA Pavilions are continuously added throughout the year. To verify whether a USA Pavilion exists for any other shows, please visit <http://www.fas.usda.gov/topics/trade-shows>.

NORTH & SOUTH AMERICA

SIAL Canada	Apr. 30 - May 2, 2019	Toronto, Canada
American Food Fair (USA Pavilion) at the National Restaurant Association Show	May 18-21, 2019	Chicago, Illinois
USA Pavilion at the Americas Food & Beverage	Oct. 2019	Miami, Florida

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Gulfood	Feb. 17-21, 2019	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Gulfood Manufacturing	Oct. 2019	Dubai, United Arab Emirates

AUSTRALIA

Fine Food Australia	Sep. 9-12, 2019	Sydney, Australia
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EUROPE & RUSSIA

Fruit Logistica	Feb. 6-8, 2019	Berlin, Germany
BioFach (organics)	Feb. 13-16, 2019	Nuremberg, Germany
Zoomark	May 6-9, 2019	Bologna, Italy
Seafood Expo Global	May 7-9, 2019	Brussels, Belgium
ANUGA	Oct. 5-9, 2019	Cologne, Germany
Food Ingredients Europe	Dec. 3-5, 2019	Paris, France

ASIA

Supermarket Trade Show	Feb. 13-15, 2019	Tokyo, Japan
FOODEX JAPAN	Mar. 5-8, 2019	Tokyo, Japan
VIV Asia	Mar. 13-15, 2019	Bangkok, Thailand
Food Ingredients China	Mar. 18-20, 2019	Shanghai, China
Food & Hotel Vietnam	Apr. 24-26, 2019	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
HOFEX	May 7-10, 2019	Hong Kong
SIAL China	May 14-16, 2019	Shanghai, China
Seoul Food & Hotel	May 21-24, 2019	Seoul, Korea
Asian Fruit Logistica	Sep. 3-5, 2019	Hong Kong
Food Ingredients Asia (FI Asia)	Sep. 11-13, 2019	Bangkok, Thailand
Food and Hotel China—Shanghai	Nov. 2019	Shanghai, China

WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE: FOOD EXPORT–MIDWEST

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**WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE:
FOOD EXPORT–NORTHEAST**

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**Delaware Department
of Agriculture**

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**Maine Department of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Resources**

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**Massachusetts Department
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**New Hampshire
Department of Agriculture, Markets
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**Vermont Agency of Agriculture,
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원도고기

원도고기
백화점

알밤어내
식당

T. 969-6517

PTI

This section contains a collection of the most frequently asked questions by program participants, and the answers to those questions. If you have a question that is not answered in this section, do not hesitate to contact Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast.

Q: Should I submit all of my original reimbursement documentation to Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast?

A: No. Always keep original documents for your files and submit copies of all documentation to Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast. We may require original documentation at our discretion. Also, you are required to maintain your Branded Program files for five years following the end of the Program Year. These files are subject to audit by Food Export–Midwest, Food Export–Northeast, or the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA.

Q: How long does it take to get reimbursed?

A: Once a request for reimbursement is received, we process it in the order received. If no other additional information/documentation is needed, we strive to reimburse all approved expenses within 30 business days. This takes into account the time it takes to request and receive your company's funding from the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA. If additional documentation is needed, you will be notified and given 10 business days to acknowledge our request. All claims will be denied if they are still missing the requested information 60 days after the request has been made. The reimbursement time is solely dependent on your ability to provide us with the information/documentation that we require. Your reimbursement request can be processed more quickly if you:

- Submit all documents in a complete and orderly package, including proof of activity and claim cover sheets as generated by our online system.
- Provide English translations for all foreign language documents.
- Submit claims within 60 days after the expense is incurred.

Q: Do I have to wait until February to submit claims?

A: You don't! February is the deadline to submit claims. It is advised that you submit your claims as soon as you have completed the activity and have all of the documentation in hand. Remember, Food Export is under no obligation to reimburse claims that are submitted after 60 days of completion of your activity.

Q: Why didn't I get paid my full reimbursement?

A: Here are the most common reasons why claims are denied:

- U.S. origin statement is missing from the proof of activity documentation
- Insufficient or missing documentation
- Expenses were for ineligible activities
- Expenses were incurred for an ineligible or non-approved country
- Transactions were not documented by cancelled check, wire transfer, bank statement or credit card statement (Invoices paid with off-invoicing are not reimbursable)
- Payment was made before your program approval date

Q: Why do I have to submit an evaluation?

A: The evaluation is a requirement of your participation in the Branded Program and help us continue to offer this program year after year. This form compares results with stated goals and allows you to make comments about the impact of the Branded Program. The form is required, kept strictly confidential, and used to determine the effectiveness of the Branded Program in raising the level of U.S. exports. This form is available via the Internet: just log-in using your User ID and password, then click on the tab marked, "Evaluation." Once you have completed the entire form, click "Submit." Reimbursements and future allocations may be withheld until complete evaluations are submitted.

Q: Can my overseas agent be reimbursed for expenses?

A: Yes, but not directly. The overseas agent must be paid by the U.S. company by check, wire transfer, bank transfer, credit card, or credit memo for at least 50% of the total invoiced amount. After paying the agent, the U.S. company can submit the agent's expenses for Branded Program reimbursement. Also, all agent expenses are subject to the same eligibility requirements as the U.S. company.

Q: Can I exhibit at a show in my overseas agent booth?

A: You may exhibit in your distributor's booth, but if there is a USA pavilion at the show, you must request an exemption, in writing, in advance of the show.

Q: Will my overseas agent travel cost be reimbursed?

A: Yes, but you are only eligible for travel reimbursements for the cost of two travelers.

Q: Our company decided to change its logo. Will the program reimburse us for a new label?

A: No, only foreign compliant packaging is eligible for reimbursement. We cannot reimburse you for any packaging used intended for use in the United States. You are eligible for only a ONE YEAR SUPPLY of foreign complaint packaging/labeling (per market) per SKU. If you have already received reimbursement for a foreign compliant SKU you are not eligible to another year supply unless the importing laws changed and you need to adapt your packaging to regain compliance with the importing laws. Foreign compliant packaging/labeling must be used in the program year it is reimbursed.

Q: If we hire a taxi or rental car to take product samples or booth decorations from our hotel to the tradeshow convention center, is this eligible?

A: No, travel costs are not eligible for tradeshow held in the U.S. In this case, your packages are traveling with you, so it is seen as transport of you. For overseas shows, the meals and incidentals allowance covers your daily show transportation. A freight cost for shipping samples or booth materials via a common carrier (UPS, USPS, etc.) is eligible for tradeshow overseas and ones held in the U.S.

Q: Are product samples, costs of labels, or packaging for samples eligible for reimbursement?

A: No, none of these are eligible.

Q: Our importer conducted in-store tastings but did not provide any photos as proof of activity. We know the tastings took place—what else can we provide?

A: Most demonstration companies have their demo assistants fill out a demo report for each tasting. We will accept copies of the demo reports, along with detailed information on the location, dates, and times of the tasting as proof of activity.

Q: Will I only be reimbursed for Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast sponsored international tradeshows? For a maximum of three years?

A: No and no. All international tradeshows are eligible for reimbursement. Please make sure you exhibit in the USA pavilion if one exists at the show. Branded Program participants may receive reimbursement in a given country for a total of five years. However, as of 2009 there are some tradeshows that are exempt from graduation. Please see page 41 for a list of these shows. We do not track graduation by activity but rather by country.

Q: What if a show does not have a USA pavilion? How do I find out?

A: You should always contact the show organizers. We have also provided a tentative list of tradeshows that have a USA pavilion on pages 44 and 45. Dates and locations are subject to change throughout the year, please log onto the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA website for a current list of tradeshows.

Q: My booth posters didn't carry a USA origin statement but I displayed a "Made in the USA" sign. Why didn't I get reimbursed for the design and printing of the posters?

A: One of the main points of the program is to help promote U.S. made products in foreign markets. The sign provided serves as an identifier for your booth if you have no other signage. The U.S. origin statement must be incorporated into the design of all graphic and printed materials to be eligible for reimbursement.

Q: We created our promotional literature in-house. Why can't we get reimbursed for the cost of the design software, ink cartridges, and the paper? It is cheaper than using an outside vendor.

A: We can never reimburse for office supplies since there is no way to document that paper, ink cartridges, etc., were used only for the creation of eligible literature and graphics.

Q: Does the statement of origin have to be printed on give-aways to be eligible for reimbursement?

A: Yes, and your company name/brand name must be printed on the item.

Q: Can I be reimbursed for advertising and similar promotions in the USA?

A: No. The only reimbursable expenses in the U.S. or its possessions are those related to exhibiting at an approved tradeshow held in the U.S.

Q: When the trade show or trade mission activity is over, can I extend my trip and stay a little longer than the actual dates of the activity?

A: 1) Eligible days of travel are 2 days before the start of the show or mission (international only) and 1 day after.

2) If you wish to deviate from the eligible travel dates of the activity, when you book a flight, kindly save a comparable flight quote showing the cost of your trip without side travel. Submit the comparable quote with your claim submission of travel reimbursement. Food Export will reimburse the lesser of the actual ticket flown or the quote for eligible travel.

3) When in doubt of travel claims, please contact the Branded Program team to discuss your trip before you book. We are happy to review your proposed travel itinerary and answer any questions you may have.

Contract Changes

Changes to your plans can be made throughout the course of the year. In some cases (adding funds, adding new countries, adding new brands) the changes will result in the need to amend your contract. If that occurs an agreement outlining the changes to your existing contract will be mailed to you. Like the contract it will require an Executive Level signature (President, CEO, Owner, etc.).

Approval Date(s)

The approved date of the application and/or contract change request, as stated in your approval letter(s), Program Agreement, and any Program Contract Changes. Expenses incurred before the approval date will not be reimbursed. All requests to add countries must be submitted before activities in those countries are conducted. Remember the February 28th deadline is for reimbursements requests and evaluations. Any changes to your original Country Marketing Plans (Program Agreement Changes) must be submitted before the program year ends on December 31.

Branded Funds

This term refers to the amount of reimbursements received by the participating company. Example: If a company submits a claim for \$100, the \$50 reimbursement the company receives is considered Branded Funds.

Business Confidentiality

The information in this application may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Only information that would likely impair the government's ability to obtain necessary information or cause substantial competitive harm may be withheld under exception 4 of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552, 7CFR, Part 1, Subpart A. If this application is requested from the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA under FOIA, the participant will be notified and may fully explain, in writing, any objections to the disclosure of any specified portion of the information requested.

Exclusivity Agreement

The U.S. applicant must own the brand name of the products to be promoted or have the brand owner sign the exclusivity agreement page of the application form. This certifies that the brand owner gives the applicant the exclusive right to seek Branded Program funds to promote the specified product(s) in the specified market(s). This must be done for all products where the applicant does not own the brand name.

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA

The Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is the government agency that provides Market Access Program funding to Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast for their Branded Program.

Graduation

Since 1994, MAP regulations state that Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast will not provide assistance to a single company for brand promotion in a single country for more than five years. After the five-year period has been reached, the company is considered a “graduate” from the country and, thus, no longer eligible to be reimbursed for its market development expenses in that country. Companies applying for the Branded Program are required to provide complete graduation information by country if applicable at the time of the application submission. In 2009, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA determined that certain approved international tradeshow activities in international countries may be exempt from the Branded Program graduation. Please see page 41 for a list of those shows.



The five years do not have to be consecutive but they are inclusive of any Branded Program funds received for that country from organizations other than Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast. Additionally we are barred from allocating beyond five years per country to entities that have reorganized or reincorporated under the same or different name if the reorganized or reincorporated entity is substantially similar to the original entity.

Incurred Expense

An expense is incurred on the date that the check, wire transfer, credit card, or other bank transaction occurs, not the date on which the goods or services are provided by the vendor. The only exception: tradeshow booth expenses are considered to be incurred when the show takes place, not when the payment is made.

Market Access Program (MAP)

This is a federally funded program that provides financial assistance to U.S. exporters for the promotion of U.S. agricultural products in international markets. Participating Trade Associations and non-profit organizations representing producers and other sectors of agriculture are provided funds from a joint program under the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA which is aimed at developing international markets. Today, there are approximately 80 of these groups working with the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA on a continuing basis in a variety of programs.

Overseas Agent

These can be distributors, agents, brokers, importers, and representatives in international markets where Branded Program funds are being used. Typically, the overseas agents are conducting Branded Program activities on behalf of the U.S. supplier.

Overseas Agent Funds

The portion of the expense that is paid by the overseas agent. For example, if a distributor in Canada pays for an advertisement in full, the U.S. company must reimburse them at least 50% of that expense. The portion they are not reimbursed by the U.S. company is the overseas agent funds.

Participant Funds

The 50% contribution the company makes each time an expense is reimbursed. Example: When a company submits a reimbursement for \$100, the company has actually contributed \$50 into their own overseas marketing budget. The \$50 is considered participant funds.

Small Company

A company that meets the Small Business Administration's (SBA) definition of a small company. This is according to their North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes as published at 13CFR, part 121 (based on the number of employees or annual sales, depending on the SIC industry category).

SRTGs (State Regional Trade Groups)

Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast are two of the four State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs) that assist companies with export promotions. Two other regional groups, SUSTA and WUSATA, provide similar services for companies based in or sourcing product from the Southern and Western U.S. regions, respectively. See page 7 for SUSTA and WUSATA contact information.

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EXPORTER EDUCATION

Food Export Helpline™

This free service provides Midwestern and Northeastern companies with customized, one-on-one assistance on a wide variety of export-related topics including a product's top Product/Market Evaluation.

Export Essentials Online

This service is an educational introduction to the fundamentals and logistics of exporting. Each section tackles an important subject and provides detailed information to assist in answering your questions about exporting.

Educational Seminars and Webinars

Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast staff, in conjunction with their Member States, as well as their network of international marketing representatives and Food Export Helpline™ Counselor, share their extensive experience and expertise in seminars held throughout the year in various locations. Webinars are designed to help companies learn about the export process and the resources available to assist with expanding their business.

MARKET PROMOTION

Branded Program

This cost-share funding program provides financial assistance to help U.S. food and agricultural exporters promote their products in international markets. Participants in this program receive 50 percent cost reimbursement for a variety of approved overseas marketing and promotional expenses.

In-Market Promotions

Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast sponsor in-store or on-site promotions around the world that promote Midwestern and Northeastern food and agricultural products.

MARKET ENTRY

Buyers Missions

Buyers Missions bring qualified, international buyers to the U.S. to meet with U.S. suppliers. Participating companies meet one-on-one with these buyers to make potential business connections and gain important feedback about their product's exporting potential.

Food Show PLUS!™

Food Show PLUS!™ is a tradeshow enhancement service that provides assistance to U.S. suppliers to be a more prepared and effective exhibitor. The program is customized per tradeshow but may include introductions to qualified buyers, an in-market briefing, local retailer tours, on-site assistance by Food Export's In-Market Representative and post-show lead qualifications. Additional services available include competitive product research, interpreter and translation of up to two pages of marketing materials.

Focused Trade Missions

Focused Trade Missions bring a group of U.S. suppliers to a country to learn firsthand about the market and meet face-to-face with local buyers. It's an organized trip with services that help navigate a different culture and assist with business meetings.

Online Product Catalog

This web-based catalog is an effective way to promote your products to international buyers from around the world. By including your products in this virtual directory, buyers will easily be able to locate your company when searching by product, company name, or other criteria.

Market Builder

This customized package of services helps U.S. suppliers find the right market and international buyer for their products through importer feedback on their products, competitive market research and importation analysis, distributor referrals and importer lists, and assistance with in-market meetings.

Export Advisor Program

The Export Advisor Program is a year-long service which provides custom assistance from an experienced advisor to help your company kick start or improve your exporting efforts. It's a customized approach, unique to your business whether you're just starting out or need to refresh your strategy.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

As a participant in any Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast program or activity, I agree to abide by the following terms and conditions:

Non-Discrimination:

Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast do not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, national origin or ancestry, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation or military status. Persons with disabilities or who otherwise require alternate means for communication of program information can contact us.

Participation Eligibility

Ensuring broad company participation and access to Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast programs and services is an important component in achieving our mission. Food Export programs are open to those appropriate entities that have expressed interest in exporting and exhibit potential of increasing exports of food and agricultural products, and therefore impacting our regions' agriculture, improving the regions' prosperity and creating jobs. Participation is open to those entities that can demonstrate such impact, either through the presence of corporate headquarters, facilities or significant sourcing from documented suppliers within our regions, and to all otherwise-qualified individuals and entities on an equal basis and without regard to any non-merit factors.

Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast recognize that other export-focused organizations may also offer resources that are appropriate for entities considering participation in our programs. We view collaboration as an essential component to success, (as evidenced by our own strategic alliance) and strongly advocate any such effective complementary resources, while at the same time avoiding duplication. Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast make it a priority to inform current or potential participants about other relevant export service providers, including providing them with specific contact information. These include our member state agencies, other State Regional Trade Groups, other Cooperator agricultural groups, U.S. Department of Commerce Export Assistance Centers, Small Business Administration or Small Business Development Centers or other similar organizations.

Maintaining the integrity and public support for Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast's mission is one of our highest priorities. Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast reserve the right to approve participation in any of our programs based upon the participant's prospects to help us in our mission of increasing U.S. exports, positively impacting U.S. agriculture and creating prosperity and U.S. jobs.

We reserve the right to deny participation, including Branded Program reimbursement, to any company or for any product which, in Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast's sole opinion, may cast a negative or controversial light on Food Export–Midwest, Food Export–Northeast, our member state agencies, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA, the Market Access Program (MAP) or taxpayer support for any of the above; to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast does not comply with FAS, MAP or Food Export–Midwest or Food Export–Northeast regulations or policies, or otherwise offer the best opportunity to achieve our mission of increasing food and agricultural exports; or for any failure to comply with our Code of Ethics. (www.foodexport.org/ethicspoint).

Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast reserve the right to deny services. Submission of any false or misleading information may be grounds for rejection or subsequent revocation of any application or participation.

This Code of Ethics (“Code”) of Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast is a statement of the Organizations’ common values and of our common commitment to promote the highest possible standards of professional business conduct for the mutual benefit of the industry and for the ultimate benefit of the consumer.

Ethics Goal

Food Export–Midwest & Food Export–Northeast, by adopting and enforcing this Code, seek to maintain and enhance the reputation of our Organizations and of our Participants within the industry.

Code of Ethics

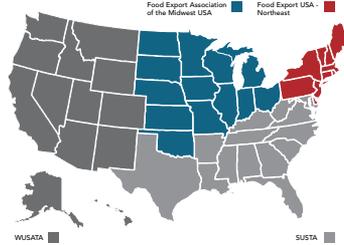
It is expected that Food Export–Midwest & Food Export–Northeast Staff, Members, Contractors, and Participants in our activities:

- Strive to maintain the highest standards of business conduct by using only legal and ethical means in all business activity.
- Actively promote and encourage the highest level of integrity within the trade.
- Cooperate in every reasonable and proper way with other related organizations, as appropriate, and work with them toward the advancement of the food and agricultural exporting industry.
- Be fair, equitable and respectful to employer(s), employees, associates, competitors, customers, the public, and all business or professional relationships arising through contact with Food Export–Midwest & Food Export–Northeast.
- Adhere to honesty in advertising and in representations to the public, including in any application or reimbursement claim to Food Export–Midwest & Food Export–Northeast.
- Treat customers and suppliers honestly, fairly and objectively.
- Observe all applicable state, federal, foreign or international laws and regulations.
- Provide a safe working environment.
- Avoid any unfair or deceptive practice and always present our products, programs, or services in an honest and forthright manner.
- Refrain from discriminatory practices in dealing with employees, contractors, participants, customers and vendors.
- Respect the rights of others concerning their intellectual property such as patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, or any other proprietary business information and, if any innocent breach occurs, promptly address and rectify any such breach.
- Recognize that other participants will compete for business within lawful, reasonable and customary practice.
- Comply in good faith with contractual obligations.
- Never pay any bribe, kickback or other corrupt payment in any form directly or indirectly to or for anyone for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business or obtaining any other favorable action, nor offer or extend any gift or entertainment that is illegal, known to be in violation of the rules of the recipient’s organization, or likely to result in a feeling or expectation of personal obligation on the part of the recipient.
- Act in a manner consistent with, and make every effort to uphold this Code of Ethics.
- This Code of Ethics does not set forth all aspects of good conduct and ethical behavior. Acceptance of, and adherence to this Code is a condition of participation with or employment by Food Export–Midwest & Food Export–Northeast.

Food Export–Midwest & Food Export USA–Northeast do not tolerate fraud in the operation of its programs. Any incident of suspected fraud can be reported (anonymously) by:

- Calling 1-855-727-6715 (Domestic toll-free, international calling rates apply)
- Filing a report online at www.foodexport.ethicspoint.com.

STATE AFFILIATIONS AND INFORMATION



Food Export Association of the Midwest USA®

Illinois Department of Agriculture
Indiana State Department of Agriculture
Iowa Economic Development Authority
Kansas Department of Agriculture
Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Missouri Department of Agriculture
Nebraska Department of Agriculture
North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Ohio Development Services Agency
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
South Dakota Department of Agriculture
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

Food Export USA®-Northeast

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
Delaware Department of Agriculture
Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food
New Jersey Department of Agriculture
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

ABOUT US

Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast are non-profit organizations composed of 23 Midwestern and Northeastern state agricultural promotion agencies that use federal, state, and industry resources to help companies increase product sales overseas. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast administer many services through Market Access Program (MAP) funding from the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA.

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Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast do not tolerate fraud and are vigilant in preventing fraud in any of our programs. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication of program information should contact us. Food Export does not discriminate, and we reserve the sole right to accept or deny companies into our programs. For complete participation policies and our code of ethics, visit www.foodexport.org/termsandconditions.

Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. To file a program discrimination complaint, go to <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer>. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast are equal opportunity employers and providers.