Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Sheep Industry Improvement Center; Solicitation of Nominations of Board Members

AGENCY: National Sheep Industry Improvement Center.

ACTION: Notice: Invitation to submit nominations.

SUMMARY: The National Sheep Industry Improvement Center announces that it is accepting nominations for the Board of Directors of the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center for two voting directors' positions whose terms expire on February 14, 2005. Both positions are for members who are active producers of sheep or goats. Board members manage and oversee the Center's activities. Nominations may only be submitted by National organizations that consist primarily of active sheep or goat producers in the United States and who have as their primary interest the production of sheep or goats in the United States. Nominating organizations should submit: (1) Substantiation that the nominating organization is national in scope; (2) The number and percent of members that are active sheep or goat producers; (3) Substantiation of the primary interests of the organization, and (4) An Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form (Form AD–755) for each nominee.

This action is taken in accordance with 7 U.S.C. 2008j(f) which establishes the powers and composition of the Board of Directors for the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center.

DATES: Completed nominations must be received no later than February 28, 2005. Nominations received after that date will not be considered.

ADDRESSES: Submit nominations and statements of qualifications to Jay B. Wilson, Executive Director/CEO, National Sheep Industry Improvement Center, USDA, PO Box 23483, Washington, DC 20026–3483 if using the U.S. Postal Service; or Room 2117, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250 if using other carriers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jay B. Wilson, Executive Director/CEO, National Sheep Industry Improvement Center, USDA, PO Box 23483, Washington, DC 20026–3483 if using the U.S. Postal Service; or Room 2117, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250 if using other carriers. Telephone (202) 690–0632, (This is not a toll free number.) FAX 202–720–1053. Forms and other information can be found at *http://www.nsiic.org.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Sheep Industry Improvement Center (NSIIC), or Sheep Center (Center), is authorized under 7 U.S.C. 2008j. The Center shall: (1) Promote strategic development activities and collaborative efforts by private and State entities to maximize the impact of Federal assistance to strengthen and enhance production and marketing of sheep or goat products in the United States; (2) optimize the use of available human capital and resources within the sheep or goat industries; (3) provide assistance to meet the needs of the sheep or goat industry for infrastructure development, business development, production, resource development, and market and environmental research; (4) advance activities that empower and build the capacity of the United States sheep or goat industry to design unique responses to special needs of the sheep or goat industries on both a regional and national basis; and (5) adopt flexible and innovative approaches to solving the long-term needs of the United States sheep or goat industry.

The management of NSIIC is vested in a Board of Directors that is appointed by, and reports to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Board of Directors is composed of seven voting members of whom four are active producers of sheep or goats in the United States, two have expertise in finance and management, and one has expertise in lamb, wool, goat or goat product marketing. Of the two open positions, both are for active producers of sheep or goats. The Board also includes two non-voting members, the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics. The Executive Director serves as the CEO.

The Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint the voting members from the submitted nominations. Member's term of office shall be three years. Voting members are limited to two terms. The two positions for which nominees are sought are currently held by one member who is completing a first term and is eligible for reappointment and one member who is serving a second term and is therefore not eligible to be re-nominated.

The Board shall meet not less than once each fiscal year, but is likely to meet at least quarterly. Board members will not receive compensation for serving on the Board of Directors, but shall be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses.

The statement of qualifications of the individual nominees is being obtained by using Form AD–755, ''Advisory Committee Membership Background Information'' which can be accessed at *http://www.nsiic.org.* The requirements of this form are incorporated under OMB number 0570–0048.

Dated: December 14, 2004.

Jay B. Wilson,

Executive Director/CEO, National Sheep Industry Improvement Center.

[FR Doc. 05–685 Filed 1–12–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 1351–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability: Inviting Applications for Emerging Markets Program

Announcement Type: New.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.603.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces the availability of approximately $8 million in funding for the Emerging Markets Program (EMP) for fiscal year (FY) 2005. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from the private sector and from government agencies for FY 2005 and awards funds in early July 2005. The EMP is administered by

personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 14, 2005. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932 South, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042, phone: (202) 720–4327, fax: (202) 720–9361, e-mail: *emo@fas.usda.gov.* Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at *http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/em-markets/em-markets/html.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: The EMP is authorized by section 1542(d)(1)(D) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (The Act), as amended. EMP regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1486.

1. *Purpose:* The EMP provides funding for technical assistance to assist U.S. organizations, public and private, to improve market access through generic, rather than branded, activities that can develop and promote U.S. agricultural products and/or processes in low- to middle-income countries that offer promise of emerging market opportunities.

Activities funded are those that primarily benefit U.S. industry as a whole. All agricultural products, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration. Proposals which include multiple commodities are also eligible. Only technical assistance activities are eligible for reimbursement.

2. *Appropriate Activities:* Following are types of project activities that may be funded:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The program funds technical assistance activities on a project-by-project basis. EMP funds may not be used to support normal operating costs of individual organizations, nor as a source by which to recover pre-award costs or prior expenses from previous or ongoing projects.

Ineligible activities include restaurant promotions; branded product promotions (including labeling and supplementing normal company sales activities intended to increase awareness and stimulate sales of branded products); advertising; administrative and operational expenses for trade shows; and the preparation and printing of brochures, flyers, posters, etc., except in connection with specific technical assistance activities such as training seminars. Other items excluded from funding are contained in the EMP Regulations.

3. *Eligible Markets:* The Act defines an emerging market as any country that the Secretary of Agriculture determines:

(a) Is taking steps toward a market-oriented economy through the food, agriculture, or rural business sectors of the economy of the country; and

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

Because funds are limited and the range of potential emerging market countries is worldwide, proposals for technical assistance activities will be considered which target those countries or regional groups with per capita income less than $9,076 (the current ceiling on upper middle income economies as determined by the World Bank [World Development Indicators]) and populations of greater than 1 million.

Income limits and their calculation can change from year to year, with the result that a given country may qualify under the legislative and administrative criteria one year but not the next. Therefore, CCC has not established a fixed list of ‘‘emerging market’’ countries. For FY 2005, however, the following guidance is provided regarding country eligibility for the EMP:

—Eligible. All of the countries of Central and South America; most in the Caribbean; all of sub-Saharan Africa; some countries in the Middle East; and the developing economies of Asia.

—Ineligible. Canada; Japan; Taiwan; Hong Kong; South Korea; Australia; New Zealand; all countries of Western Europe; Slovenia; Israel; Barbados, Aruba, and Antigua and Barbuda in the Caribbean; and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar in the Middle East.

Some markets can be more difficult to develop and sustain over a period of time; proposed activities in such markets should be considered in terms of whether they provide ‘‘viable and significant markets’’ for U.S. agricultural exports.

In the case of some oil-rich countries in the Middle East, *e.g.,* Saudi Arabia, targeted activities may be considered on a case-by-case basis, for example, addressing technical barriers to exporting U.S. commodities.

A few countries technically qualify as emerging markets, but because of political sensitivities may require a separate determination before funding can be considered.

II. Award Information

In general, all qualified proposals received before the application deadline will compete for EMP funding. Priority consideration will be given to proposals that identify and seek to address specific problems or constraints to agricultural exports in emerging markets through technical assistance activities that are intended to expand or maintain U.S. agricultural exports. Priority will also be given to those proposals that include the willingness of the applicant to commit its own funds, or those of the U.S. industry, to seek export opportunities in an emerging market. The percentage of private funding proposed for a project will, therefore, be a critical factor in determining which proposals are funded under the EMP. Proposals will also be judged on their ability to provide benefits to the organization receiving EMP funds and to the broader industry which that organization represents.

The limited funds and the range of emerging markets worldwide in which the funds may be used preclude CCC from approving large budgets for individual projects. While there is no minimum or maximum amount set for EMP-funded projects, most are funded at a level of less than $250,000 and for a duration of one year or less. Multi-year proposals, and at higher cost, may be considered in the context of a strategic detailed plan of implementation. Funding in such cases is normally provided one year at a time, with commitments beyond the first year subject to interim evaluations.

Funding for successful proposals will be provided through specific agreements. The CCC, through FAS, will be kept informed of the implementation of approved projects through the requirement to provide quarterly progress reports and final performance reports. Changes in the original project time lines and adjustments within project budgets beyond a certain amount must be approved by FAS.

III. Eligibility and Qualification Information

1. *Eligible Applicants.* Any United States private or Government entity with a demonstrated role or interest in exports of U.S. agricultural commodities or products may apply to the program. Government organizations consist of Federal, State, and local agencies. Private organizations include non-profit trade associations, universities, agricultural cooperatives, state regional trade groups, and profit-making entities and consulting businesses. Proposals from research and consulting organizations will be considered if they provide evidence of substantial participation in and financial support by the U.S. industry. For-profit entities are also eligible, but may not use program funds to conduct private business, promote private self-interests, supplement the costs of normal sales activities, or promote their own products or services beyond specific uses approved by CCC in a given project.

U.S. market development cooperators and state regional trade groups (SRTGs) may seek funding to address priority, market specific issues and to undertake activities not suitable for funding under other marketing programs, *e.g.,* the Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program and the Market Access Program (MAP). Foreign organizations, whether government or private, may participate as third parties in activities carried out by U.S. organizations, but are not eligible for funding assistance from the program.

2. *Cost Sharing.* No private sector proposal will be considered without the element of cost-share from the participant and/or U.S. partners. The EMP is intended to complement, not supplant, the efforts of the U.S. private sector. There is no minimum or maximum amount of cost share, though the range in recent successful proposals has been between 35 and 75 percent. The degree of commitment to a proposed project represented by the amount and type of private funding are both used in determining which proposals will be approved for funding. Cost-share may be actual cash invested or professional time of staff assigned to the project. Proposals in which private industry is willing to commit cash, rather than in-kind contributions such as staff resources, will be given priority consideration.

Cost-sharing is not required for proposals from U.S. Government agencies, but is mandatory for all other eligible entities, even when they may be party to a joint proposal with a U.S. Government agency. Contributions from USDA or other U.S. Government agencies or programs may not be counted toward the stated cost share requirement. Similarly, contributions from foreign (non-U.S.) organizations may not be counted toward the cost share requirement, but may be counted in the total cost of the project.

3. *Other.* Proposals should include a justification for funding assistance from the program—an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without Federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance. Applicants may submit more than one proposal.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package.* For 2005, EMP applicants have the opportunity to utilize the Unified Export Strategy (UES) application process, an online system which provides a means for interested applicants to submit a consolidated and strategically coordinated single proposal that incorporates funding requests for any or all of the market development programs administered by FAS.

Applicants are not required to use the UES, but are strongly encouraged to do so because it reduces paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle. Applicants planning to use the on-line system must contact the Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720–4327 to obtain site access information including a user of id and password. The Internet-based application, including step-by-step instructions for its use, is located at the following URL address: *http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html.* A Help file is available to assist applicants with the process. Applicants using the online system should also provide, promptly after the deadline for submitting the on-line application, a printed or e-mailed version of each proposal (using Word or compatible format) to one of the following address:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, UPS, etc.): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, Room 4932–South, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042;

U.S. Postal Delivery: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042. E-mail address: *emo@fas.usda.gov.*

Applicants electing not to use the online system must submit a printed copy of their application to one of the above addresses:

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission.* It is highly recommended that any organization considering applying to the program first obtain a copy of the EMP Regulations. The regulations contain information on requirements that a proposal must include in order to be considered for funding under the program, along with other important information. EMP regulations and additional information may be obtained from the Marketing

Operations Staff at the address above. The regulations are also available at the following URL address: *http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/em-markets/em-markets.html.*

In addition, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's policy directive regarding the use of a universal identifier for all Federal grants or cooperative agreements, all applicants must submit a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number prior to submitting applications. An applicant may request a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line on 1–866–705–5711.

Applications should be no longer than ten (10) pages and include the following information:

(a) Date of proposal;

(b) Name of organization submitting proposal;

(c) Organization address, telephone and fax numbers;

(d) Tax ID number;

(e) DUNS number;

(f) Primary contact person;

(g) Full title of proposal;

(h) Target market(s);

(i) Current conditions in the target market(s) affecting the intended commodity or product;

(j) Description of problem(s), *i.e.*, constraint(s), to be addressed by the project, such as: Inadequate knowledge of the market, insufficient trade contacts, lack of awareness by foreign officials of U.S. products and business practices, impediments: infrastructure, financing, regulatory or other non-tariff barriers, etc.;

(k) Project objectives;

(l) Performance measures: benchmarks for quantifying progress in meeting the objectives;

(m) Rationale: Explanation of the underlying reasons for the project proposal and its approach, the anticipated benefits, and any additional pertinent analysis;

(n) Clear demonstration that successful implementation will benefit a particular industry as a whole, not just the applicant(s);

(o) Explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without Federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance;

(p) Specific description of activity/activities to be undertaken;

(q) Time line(s) for implementation of activity, including start and end dates (start date should be no earlier than 15 July 2005);

(r) Information on whether similar activities are or have previously been funded with USDA sources in target country/countries (*e.g.,* under MAP and/or FMD programs); and

(s) Detailed line item activity budget. Cost items should be allocated separately to each participating organization. Expense items constituting a proposed activity's overall budget (*e.g.,* salaries, travel expenses, consultant fees, administrative costs, etc.), with a line item costs for each, should be listed, clearly indicating:

(1) Which items are to be covered by EMP funding;

(2) Which by the participating U.S. organization(s); and

(3) Which by foreign third parties (if applicable). Cost items for individual consultant fees should show calculation of daily rate and number of days. Cost items for travel expenses should show number of trips, destinations, cost, and objective for each trip.

Qualifications of applicant(s) should be included as an attachment.

3. *Submission Dates and Times.* All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time on March 14, 2005, in the MOS office, either electronically, hand delivered, or by mail. Proposals received after this date and time will not be reviewed nor considered for program funding.

4. *Funding Restrictions.* Certain types of expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by the program, and there are limits on other categories of expenses such as indirect overhead charges, travel expenses and consulting fees. CCC will not reimburse expenditures made prior to approval of a proposal or unreasonable expenditures. Full details are available in the EMP regulations.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Criteria.* Key criteria used in judging proposals include:

—The appropriateness of the activities for the targeted market(s), and the extent to which the project identifies market barriers, *e.g.,* a fundamental deficiency in the market, and/or a recent change in market conditions;

—Potential of the project to expand U.S. market share, increase U.S. exports or sales, and/or improve awareness of U.S. agricultural commodities and products;

—Quality of the project's performance measures, and the degrees to which they relate to the objectives, proposed approach and activities, and deliverables;

—Justification for Federal funding;

—Budget: overall cost and the amount of funding provided by applications, the U.S. private sector and partners, if any; and

—Evidence that the organization has the knowledge, expertise, ability, and resources to successfully implement the project.

2. *Review and Selection Process.* All applications undergo a multi-phase review within FAS, by appropriate FAS field offices, and by the private sector Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets to determine qualifications, quality and appropriateness of projects, and reasonableness of project budgets prior to making recommendations to the deciding official.

3. *Anticipated Announcement Date.* Announcements of funding decisions for the EMP are anticipated on or about July 1, 2005.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices.* FAS will notify each applicant in writing of the final disposition of its application. FAS will send an approval letter and project agreement to each approved applicant. The approval letter and agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the levels of EMP funding and cost-share contribution requirements.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements.* Interested parties should review the EMP regulations which are available at the following URL address: *http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/em-markets/em-markets.html.* Printed copies may be obtained by contacting MOS at (202) 720–4327.

3. *Reporting.* Quarterly progress reports for all programs one year or longer in duration are required. Projects of less than one year generally require a mid-term progress report. Final performance reports are due 90 days after completion of each project. Content for both types of reports is contained in the Project Agreement. Final financial reports are also due 90 days after completion of each project, as attachments to the final reports.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

For additional information and assistance, contact the Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932 South, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042, phone: (202) 720–4327, fax: (202) 720–9361, e-mail: *emo@fas.usda.gov.*

Signed at Washington, DC, on January 4, 2005.

A. Ellen Terpstrd,

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

[FR Doc. 05–722 Filed 1–12–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–10–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability: Inviting Applications for the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program

Announcement Type: New.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.600.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2006 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from eligible applicants and award funds in June 2005. The Cooperator Program is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 14, 2005. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932–South, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042, phone: (202) 720–4327, fax: (202) 720–9361, e-mail: *mosadmin@fas.usda.gov.* Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service, Web site at *http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/fmd.html.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: The Cooperator Program is authorized by title VII of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended. Cooperator Program regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1484.

Purpose: The Cooperator Program is designed to create, expand, and maintain foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products through cost-share assistance. Financial assistance under the Cooperator Program will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein. All agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration.

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

II. Award Information

Under the Cooperator Program, the FAS enters into agreements with nonprofit U.S. trade organizations which have the broadest possible producer representation of the commodity being promoted and gives priority to those organizations which are nationwide in membership and scope. Cooperators may receive assistance only for the promotion of generic activities that do not involve promotions targeted directly to consumers. The program generally operates on a reimbursement basis.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants.* To participate in the Cooperator Program an applicant must be a nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization.

2. *Cost Sharing.* To participate in the Cooperator Program, an applicant must agree contribute resources to its proposed promotional activities. The Cooperator Program is intended to supplement, not supplant, the efforts of the U.S. private sector. The contribution must be stated in dollars and be at least 50 percent of the value of resources provided by CCC for activities conducted under the project agreement.

The degree of commitment of an applicant to the promotional strategies contained in its application, as represented by the agreed cost share contributions specified therein, is considered by the FAS when determining which applications will be approved for funding. Cost-share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions, such as professional staff time spent on design and execution of activities. The Cooperator Program regulations, in sections 1484.50 and 1484.51, provide detailed discussion of eligible and ineligible cost-share contributions.

3. *Other.* Applications should include a justification for funding assistance from the program—an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package.* Organizations that are interested in applying for Cooperator Program funds are encouraged to submit their requests using the Unified Export Strategy (UES) format. The UES allows interested entities to submit a consolidated and strategically coordinated single proposal that incorporates requests for funding and recommendations for virtually all the FAS marketing programs, financial assistance programs, and market access programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade that the face, identify activities, which would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals. Applicants are not required, however, to use the UES format. Organizations can submit applications in the EUS format by two methods. The first allows an applicant to submit information directly to the FAS through the Unified Export Strategy (UES) application Internet website. The FAS highly recommends applying via the Internet, as this format virtually eliminates paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle. Applicants also have the option of submitting electronic versions (along with two paper copies) of their applications to the FAS on diskette.

Applicants planning to use the Internet-based system must contact the FAS Marketing Operations Staff on (202) 720–4327 to obtain site access information. The Internet-based application, including a Help file containing step-by-step instructions for its use, may be found at the following URL address: *http://www.fas.usda./gov/cooperators.html.*

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