

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Voluntary Internal
Distribution

Date: 12/3/2010

GAIN Report Number:

Iraq

Post: Baghdad

FAS Supports Iraqi Seed Trade Association Visit to U.S.

Report Categories:

EXPORT PROMOTION PROGRAMS

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Report Highlights:

In an effort to improve seed quality and availability in Iraq and to support U.S. commercial exports, USDA FAS- Baghdad facilitated the travel of 11 businessmen from the Iraqi Seed Traders Association to participate in the 49th Vegetable and Flower seeds conference, Las Vegas, 23-26th January 2010.

General Information:

The Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture's seed registration process precludes most legal imports. This is a strategic loss to the Iraqi agricultural sector and a commercial barrier to the U.S. seed industry. To improve seed quality and availability in Iraq and to support U.S. commercial exports, USDA FAS-Baghdad facilitated the travel of 11 businessmen from the Iraqi Seed Traders Association to participate in the 49th Vegetable and Flower seeds conference, Las Vegas, 23-26th January 2010. This annual event was organized by the American Seeds Traders Association (ASTA).

During the 3-day conference, the Iraqis met with over 20 U.S. planting seed companies and the trip is believed to have resulted in \$1.25 million in new seed sales (see Attachment 1). The group also met with USDA officials and industry associations in Washington, DC. Roughly \$4,000 in CSSF funds were used to pay for registration at the ASTA show and related costs. The Iraqi participants paid for their own travel expenses.

This exposure to U.S. seed companies and a functioning seed trade system are important to development of Iraqi agriculture, where farmers often lack even basic hybrids. This visit provided a unique opportunity for exposure to state-of-the-art companies and seed technology. Perhaps more importantly, the Iraqi seed industry is learning how to be a more effective lobby from ASTA.



ISTA meeting with ASTA Board of Directors

ISTA also met with the Chairman and Executive Manager of ASTA. Their discussions included:

- ASTA review of the draft Iraqi seed law to help the Iraqi importers understand its compatibility with international trade practices within the industry.
- ISTA has asked ASTA to help train and develop capacity of ISTA as a trade association (civil society).
- ASTA will invite ISTA to the International Seeds Conference, Canada, and other events.

Recommendations

1. Continue to receive ASTA advice on organizational structure and development of the nascent Iraqi Association

2. Updating the U.S. seeds companies on the Iraqi market sharing with them USDA's activities.
3. Providing the resources to develop ISTA as a lobby for changing Iraqi seed registration policy.

Follow-up note (October 2010): Working with the Iraqi seed traders and a number of other partners (USDA/AMS, USDA/FAS, USAID, FAO and the French) AgBaghdad is urging the Iraqi to accept the OECD seed schemes an alternative to the current seed registration system. There have been numerous high-level engagements with the Iraqi government officials as well as organizing a policy visit by an OECD seed policy expert. ISTA is a more effective lobby than it was in January and we believe that the visit raised expectations for what a functioning seed system should look like as well as the lobbying ability of ISTA. We remain hopeful that our continued work with these groups will help Iraqi see the need to liberalize the trade in planting seeds.

U.S. Vegetable Seeds supplied to Iraq post-ASTA's 49th Vegetable and Flower Seeds Conference

Iraqi Buyers	Shipment of Vegetable Seeds	Quantity (MT)	Value(USD)	US Supplier
Jinana Al-Zeatoun Co.	Mixed Vegetable Seeds	22	120,000	Various suppliers
House of Agriculture Co.	Dry Beans (Lobia)	55	130,000	Golden valley Seed. Co.
House of Agriculture	Mixed Vegetable Seeds and Bermuda Grass	60	250,000	Emerald Seed Co. (EDENA)
Al Reef Alkadra Co.	Mixed Vegetable Seeds	50	200,000	Emerald Seed Co. (EDENA)
AlAwrad Co.	Mixed Vegetable Seeds	100	300,000	US Agriseeds and Monsanto
Mahdi Al Dahlaki Co.	Mixed Vegetable Seeds	100	250,000	Modesto Co. Inc.
Total		387	1,250,000	

Meetings with U.S. Companies at ASTA- 49th Vegetable and Flower Seeds Show

1. Emeral Seed Company, J. Michael Dessert (President), Ph.D. WWW.emeradseed.com
2. Monsanto Seeds.
3. Seeds by Design, Ken Flgor. California
4. Us Agriseeds, Larry Fernandez President & CEO. WWW.usagriseeds.com
5. Champion Seeds Company, Dan Marshburn. Brea CA.
6. Corona seeds, INC. Michael D. Newman (President) Camarillo, California.
7. Golden Valley Seeds. Nassif Y. Burkhuich (President) WWW.goldenvalleysseed.com
8. Agro gene Seeds, INC. Maurice H. Smith. Modesto, CA
9. Agro Tip Seeds, George T Humes (Product Development Manager),info@agro-Tip.com
10. Guettler Enterprises, Raymond R. Guettler Complete Agriculture supplies, seeds
11. Specialty Seeds of Oregon, Inc. Robert Griffin (President) WWW. Specialtyseed.net

12. Condor Seed Production, Inc. Thomas W. Tolman (General Manager) www.condorseed.com
13. Johnnys Selected Seeds. Robert L. Johnston (Chairman) WWW.johnnyseeds.com
14. Lark Seeds. Vassilis Aivazis (President/CEO) WWW.larkseeds.com.
15. Smith, Summers & Associates LLC.
16. Omega Seed, INC, Donyelle M. Mello. WWW.Omegaseed.com
17. Keithly – Williams Seeds. Kelly G. Keithly. Arizona
18. Orca Seed Production. Ed Galazzo. From Oregon & California
19. The Seed Den, INC. Dennis Kromer (President). WWW.theseedden.com
20. D&D Seed Co. INC. David M. Christianson (President)
21. Warner Seeds, INC. Jerry Monk. Texas

Attendees at the Meeting with ASTA Officials

ASTA, Jerry Monk (Chairman), Andrew W. Lavigne (President And Executive Officer), Pat T. Miller (Director, State Affairs) Lisa M. Nichols (Director, International Programs), Bernice Slutsky (Vice President, Science & International Affairs), Leslie C. Cahill (Vice President Government Affairs)

ISTA, Kamil Al-hakim (Chairman & President), Hussein Awad (Vice President), Amer Al Bayyaa (Director of Public Relations), Shaker Al Sahlanee (Legal Adviser) Ali Al Dahlaki (President of Al Reef Alkadra Co. ISTA member) Ali Al-Hakim (Ali Hussein Co. ISTA member) Ali Al Abadi (President of House of Agriculture Co. member in ISTA), Ahmed Al-Tameemi (President of Al-Tameemi Co. ISTA member), Yasir Jwad Ahmed (Yasir co. ISTA member), Thulfiqar Aghaee (President of Thulfaqar Co. ISTA member), Muayad Dawood (President of Abdul-Hakeem & sons INC.)

USDA/FAS Baghdad, Walid Sharif (Marketing Specialist, USDA/FAS Baghdad)

Key Meetings in Washington:

Consultation visit to USDA/FAS, 20–21, January -Washington DC.

- Rush, Charles (International Relations advisor USDA/FAS) taking over the role as attaché soon in Iraq. He has extensive experience in agricultural credit facilitation, an important factor in agricultural development.

Office of Trade Program (OTP) – Cooperator Division, their contacts at WWW.fas.usda.gov_contacts.asp

- Bonnie Borris (Division Director) & Lisa Anderson (Deputy Director)
- William Bomersheim Branch Chief , Field Crops and Forest Products)
- Valerie Bowles (Branch Chief, Processed Products)
- Kevin Sage-El (Branch Chief, Horticultural)
 - Upshaw, Darrell (Public/Private Sector Advisor) logistic support to the June 2010 trade mission.