



THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 10/8/2015

GAIN Report Number: CB1513

Caribbean Basin

Post: Miami ATO

Ice Cream Supplier Finds Sweet Tooth in the Caribbean

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events
and Shows

Approved By:

Michael Henney, Director

Prepared By:

Omar Gonzalez, Agricultural Marketing Specialist

Report Highlights:

The Food Marketing Consultants, Inc., a small U.S. ice cream supplier, with the help of FAS and its partner commodity organizations, penetrated seven Caribbean markets and tripled its exports sales to near the \$1 million mark over a three year period applying a combination of export development programs and services that include: the Market Access Program, Foreign Buyer Lists, In-Bound Buying Missions, Out-Going Trade Missions, and USDA-endorsed Trade Shows.

Executive Summary:

Food Marketing Consultants, Inc., a U.S. ice cream supplier, has seen its exports expand threefold in a mere three years after attending an export readiness workshop organized in 2012 by the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA). As a result of its participation in this workshop, not only did the company devise a sound international marketing plan, seek help where needed, and identify key government programs that could provide advantageous, but the supplier stayed true to his developed plan of action. The company understood that sales, particularly to overseas customers, often take time to develop. In April 2014 the supplier succeeded in making its first sale to a customer in Aruba originally introduced by the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office (CBATO). Other orders began coming in soon afterwards. The fact that the supplier has been systematically meeting and interacting with buyers at Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) partner activities over the past two years is paying dividends. Just recently the supplier entered into an agreement with a Trinidad and Tobago company for brokerage services there, after having met the company at the Americas Food and Beverage (AFB) Show in Miami. The supplier's U.S.-made ice cream products currently can be found in The Bahamas, Aruba, Curacao, British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis, Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda, Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica.

FAS' Global Based Initiative (GBI) program can be credited for generating this success story by providing the funding for the SUSTA export readiness program. The U.S. company was also able to use the FAS Market Access Program (MAP) to support its international marketing effort. The CBATO also provided lists of potential foreign buyers and export counseling. SUSTA is credited with executing an excellent outreach program, enrolling the U.S. supplier in FAS' MAP, and (in conjunction with Food Export USA Northeast/Midwest) providing ample opportunities for the company to meet face to face with qualified buyers via multiple sales/buying missions. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's (NASDA) organization of USA Pavilions at the AFB and the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) Shows with MAP resources, where the U.S. supplier exhibited, is also creditworthy. The supplier's recent success contracting with a buyer in Trinidad and Tobago can be traced back to the link made through NASDA's one-on-one meeting program at the 2014 AFB show.

General Information:

SMALL U.S. EXPORTER GETS INTRODUCED TO EXPORTING BY FAS AND ITS PARTNERS

In July of 2012 SUSTA invited the CBATO to participate in an Export Readiness Workshop entitled "Explore Exporting-The World is Waiting" in Miami. This workshop was part of a broader FAS GBI aimed at having SUSTA and its fellow State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs) expand their export readiness training programs throughout the country. This particular workshop was hosted by Miami Dade College and included presentations from SUSTA, the U.S. Commercial Service, the Export Import Bank of the United States (EXIMBANK), the Small Business Administration (SBA), and FAS' CBATO.

At the workshop, the CBATO met with Food Marketing Consultants, Inc., a U.S. ice cream supplier with manufacturing facilities in Michigan and a distribution warehouse in South Florida. The supplier's exports at the time consisted of shipments to nearby The Bahamas and to one small account in Jamaica, accounting for approximately four percent of the company's total sales. However, upon learning at the workshop of the potential for its products in the broader Caribbean Basin and about the different programs and services available

to U.S. exporters, the supplier gained a keen interest in exporting to our region. After receiving export guidance from the CBATO and making use of the CBATO's foreign buyer lists (FBL), the supplier began to target other Caribbean islands and explore export throughout the region.

Less than a year later, with SUSTA's help, the supplier signed up for FAS' MAP and initiated efforts to target potential foreign customers (particularly in the Caribbean) by participating in SUSTA/Food Export Buying Missions & Sales Missions, exhibiting at USA Pavilions at USDA/FAS endorsed trade shows (the FMI Show in Chicago and the AFB Show in Miami), and participating in NASDA-organized one-on-one meetings with buyers at these shows.

U.S. SUPPLIER LEVERAGES U.S. EXPORT ASSISTANCE TO BOOST ITS BUSINESS

In April 2014, the supplier succeeded in making his first sale in Aruba to a customer originally introduced by the CBATO. Since then, the results have been truly astounding. In the three years since participating in SUSTA's export readiness workshop (2012), the supplier reports having tripled its export sales and expanded its presence in the Caribbean from two countries to nine. Just recently the supplier has entered into an agreement with a Trinidad and Tobago company for brokerage services there, after having met the company at the AFB Show in Miami. The supplier's U.S.-made ice cream products can currently be found in The Bahamas, Jamaica, Aruba, Curacao, British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis, Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda, and Trinidad & Tobago.

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

In one word, the secret to this particular supplier's export success is *persistence*. Not only did the supplier do its homework by devising a sound international marketing plan, seeking help where it needed, and identifying key government programs that it could use to its advantage, but it stuck to its plan and followed through with it. The company understood that sales, particularly to overseas customers, often take time to develop. The orders began coming in about a year after initial meetings and often happened following a second, third or fourth meeting. The fact that the supplier has been systematically meeting and interacting with buyers at FAS partner activities over the past two years is paying dividends. This is an important lesson for any and all U.S. exporters.

Following is the timeline of how the exporter leveraged a wide array of programs and services of FAS and its partners beginning in 2012. In addition to the timeline below, the CBATO maintained regular contact with the exporter providing guidance as to potential markets and foreign buyer lists in the Caribbean.

2012

- July – Attended SUSTA Export Readiness Workshop “Explore Exporting-The World is Waiting” (Miami)

2013

- May – Signed-up for MAP program through SUSTA
- June – Participated in SUSTA/ Food Export Caribbean & Central America Retail & Food Service Buyers' Mission (Miami)

- October – Exhibited at Americas Food & Beverage Show (Miami)
- November – Participated in SUSTA Mission to 2013 Food Hotel China (Shanghai, China)

2014

- June – Participated in SUSTA/Food Export Caribbean & Central America Retail & Food Service Buyers' Mission (Miami)
- June – Exhibited at FMI Show (Chicago)
- October – Exhibited at Americas Food & Beverage Show (Miami)
- September – Participated in U.S. Trade Mission to the Caribbean (Kingston, Jamaica & Nassau, The Bahamas)

2015

- June – Participated in SUSTA/Food Export Caribbean & Central America Retail & Food Service Buyers' Mission (Miami)
- June – Exhibited at FMI Show (Chicago)
- October – Will be exhibiting at the USA Pavilion at the Americas Food & Beverage Show (Miami)

TEAM USA SCORES

The ability of FAS and its partners to bring a suite of market development programs and services to the table that U.S. exporters can easily access cannot be overstated. In this particular case, credit should go to:

FAS: FAS' GBI program can be credited with having generated this success story by providing the funding for SUSTA export readiness program. The U.S. supplier was also able to use FAS' MAP to cut his international marketing expenses. The CBATO also provided foreign buyers lists and export counseling.

SRTG's: SUSTA can be credited with executing an excellent outreach program, enrolling the U.S. supplier in FAS' MAP, and (in conjunction with Food Export USA Northeast/Midwest) providing ample opportunities for the supplier to meet face to face with qualified buyers via multiple sales/buying missions.

NASDA/The World Trade Center Miami/FMI: NASDA's efforts in organizing USA Pavilions at the AFB and FMI Shows where the U.S. supplier exhibited are also noteworthy. The supplier's recent success in finding a buyer in Trinidad and Tobago can be traced back to NASDA's one-on-one meeting program at the 2014 AFB show.

