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**Date:** 10/29/2014

**GAIN Report Number:** RO1412

## Romania

**Post:** Bucharest

### Tasting event successfully conducted in Romania

**Report Categories:**

CSSF Activity Report

Export Accomplishments - Other

Trade Policy Monitoring

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**Report Highlights:**

This is an evaluation report on the beef, distilled spirits, dried fruits and nuts tasting event organized in Bucharest on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

**General Information:**

**Event name:** Taste of America – Tasting event

**Beginning/Ending Dates:** September 10, 2014

**City/Country:** Bucharest/Romania

**Purpose of the activity:**

The purpose of the activity conducted in Bucharest was to raise the visibility of the featured products with an emphasis on the availability and the variety of the US beef, spirits, dried fruits and nuts on the Romanian market. Some of these products have entered the Romanian market a few years ago and since then, their presence has grown constantly, but consistent marketing efforts are required in order to maintain or enlarge their market shares. Through this activity FAS Bucharest intended to consolidate the positive outcomes achieved in the past and preserve the interests and preferences of the local buyers for US origin products.

High-quality beef consumption has been increasing in Romania, the number of restaurants and retailers interested in offering/carrying beef being on rise. Romania's total beef imports grew in 2013 in volume by 23 percent compared to the previous year and 3 percent in value. The Netherlands and Italy remain the major beef suppliers, the trade data showing no direct US exports to Romania. Nevertheless, Intra-stat data reveals that the value of US beef exports to Romania has constantly increased from \$78,000 in 2010 to \$170,000 in 2011 and to \$550,000 in 2013. Trade figures pertaining to the first 6 months of 2014 indicate the likelihood of an expansion in 2014.

The value of Romanian distilled spirits import from the United States expanded by 7 percent in 2013 compared to the previous year, reaching \$11.2 million, which may be an indication of consumers' return to good quality products. According to the GTA trade data available for the first 6 months of 2014, the import value of spirits expanded by 60 percent. The United States remains a significant whiskey supplier on the Romanian market, being the leading provider of Bourbon whiskey.

In 2013 imports of nuts grew by 150 percent in terms of value, from \$2.36 million in 2012 to \$3.74 million in 2013. The United States remains a major supplier on almonds market, enjoying a rising market share in Romania. US almonds exports grew from \$ 2.2 million exports in 2012 to \$2.8 million in 2013. Walnut is another product supplied by the United States on the Romanian market at a record value of almost \$800,000 in 2013 from zero exports two years before. The 6 month trade data indicates a sharp increase in both almonds and walnuts exports, with percentages between 50-100 percent increases in value.

Market information about cranberries has been virtually non-existent on the market several years ago. Marketing efforts from the FAS Bucharest side as well as specific cooperators contributed to educating the traders and consumers about high-quality cranberries. The results are visible on the retail shelves where a wide array of cranberry-based products is present. Importers sell the cranberries either directly through retail chains in individual packages, solely or mixed with other fruits and nuts, or through food processors, such as dairy or chocolate factories, for further processing. This progress strengthens our

belief that the past years' marketing joint efforts have had a valuable contribution into recording these positive results.

### **Activity Description**

FAS Bucharest in partnership with several US marketing organizations introduced the audience to the world of high-quality and tasty beef, distilled spirits, tree nuts and cranberries. The venue selected for this year's promotion was JW Marriott Hotel, which has proven to be an excellent fit for the purpose of the event. Targeted participants were restaurant chefs, food and beverage managers from high-end hotels and restaurants, retailers, bar managers and gourmet food reporters, general and food media. Overall, a total of 150 participants responded to our invitation.

The tasting event was opened by the Charge D'Affairs (CDA) of the US Embassy, Mr. Dean Thompson. In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Thompson noted the dedication and passion needed for ensuring the wonderful variety flavors of American whiskey, and the long tradition in raising cattle in the United States. Further, Mr. Thompson highlighted the delicious taste and health attributes that dried fruits and tree nuts are known for, encouraging guests to sample the food items promoted.

A well-known whisky-writer, Tudor Balteanu, introduced the audience in the history of manufacturing Bourbon and Tennessee Whiskey. He emphasized the great importance of each phase the process of maturation and the importance of the quality of ingredients. Participants were invited then to savor American whiskey and sophisticated cocktails prepared by skilful bartenders.

The beef cutting demonstration and culinary session was opened by John Brook, Europe Director of US Meat Export Federation. In his remarks, Mr. Brook highlighted the unique flavor of the US beef, obtained from cattle raised in modern farms. Background information on U.S. beef's production, quality attributes for each beef cut displayed on the counter, and market trends were all well received by the audience. Further on, the Executive Chef of JW Marriott Hotel, Nicolae Lica, captivated the audience with detailed description of the beef cuts. Chef's broad knowledge and experience in using US beef helped him speak with confidence and charm in front of the guests. The chef provided the attendees an overview of the numerous ways beef may be prepared along with spirits and cranberries to create delicious dishes. Beef was paired with mashed sweet potatoes and grilled corn. Participants' knowledge about US beef was enhanced by the USMEF brochures in Romanian language, as they were able to read about cattle production in the US, basic nutrition facts and food safety.

US beef and distilled spirits were accompanied by the savory of cranberries and almonds. Two Romanian importers and packers displayed a large array of almonds, pistachios, cranberries, and pecans imported from the United States, including derived products, such as muesli and biscuits. The desserts prepared by the Executive Chef and his team featured cranberries, almonds and pistachios.



*U.S. Embassy, Charge D 'Affairs,  
Dean Thompson, opening the  
tasting*



*U.S. Meat Export Federation Director for  
Europe, John Brook, delivering remarks*



*U.S. beef cuts display*



*The beef cutting demonstration performed by Executive Chef, Nicolae Lica*



*Whiskey tasting*



*Whisky writer, Tudor Balteanu*





*Overview on the invitees*



*Charge D'Affairs, Dean Thompson, and  
Minister of Agriculture, Daniel Constantin*



*US origin tree nuts and cranberries tasting booths, provided by local  
importers*



*Displays with promotional materials and give-away samples distributed to participants*

## **Results and Outcomes**

Activity was organized by FAS Bucharest under CSSF funds. The tasting event was intended to raise visibility of U.S. products on the local market by directly reaching out to business owners and end-user operations. Several quantitative indicators may be taken into consideration when assessing the effectiveness of the event: number of participating cooperators/companies, number of attendees and contacts, media coverage, forecast sales.

In terms of participating cooperators, Post was supported by US Meat Export Federation which apart from supplying the beef, provided brochures and flyers, by U.S. Distilled Spirits Council, which offered few types of brochures for distribution, and Cranberry Marketing Committee represented in Europe by *MK<sup>2</sup> Marketing & Kommunikation GmbH*, which provided the recipe books and roll-ups.

Apart from the above-mentioned US cooperators, Post could not have organized a successful event if it were not the generosity of the local companies, Brown-Forman (local representative), Cristalex, Intertrade Distributie Produse Alimentare, Depal and SanoVita, who donated food and spirits for tasting, give-away items, brochures and flyers. The list of event partners and their contact details has been provided to the participants (Appendix 1).

The number of guests exceeded our expectations, about 150 participants attending the tasting event, consisting of food distributors, hotel and restaurant managers, bar managers, key retailers, government officials and media. Local companies participating as exhibitors initiated and strengthen a significant number of quality contacts with retail representatives and bar /restaurant managers. Representative of U.S. Meat Export Federation exchanged views with retail representatives and chefs from high-end hotels about US beef quality attributes and opportunities for beef cuts export.

Media was very well represented at this event. Three TV channels with nation-wide distribution, three

radio stations, more than a dozen of national coverage newspapers reps and four news press agencies attended the tasting event. In addition, six representatives of specialty food and spirits magazines and three food bloggers attended the promotion. The national television channel “TVR 1” and “Antena 1” broadcasted the tasting event in the following days. The event was widely featured by on-line and written media. Food specialized bloggers presented the event and delivered excellent feed-back on their blogs. Appendix 2 provides links to a selection of media articles generated by the event. Several photos were posted the US Embassy Facebook account garnering positive comments and calls for tasting events in other Romanian cities. Background information about the volumes and values of the US products imported helped the journalists build relevant articles.

In terms of the sales expectations, FAS Bucharest forecasts that exports of U.S. beef, distilled spirits, dried fruits and tree nuts to Romania will expand by \$400-550,000 in the following 12 months. Considering the fear competition among food suppliers on the Romanian market, it is important to continue efforts in order to preserve the interests of the importers for US origin products and organize activities which keep the interested parties (chefs, retailers etc.) abreast of the culinary trends in the USA. FAS Bucharest will continue to stay in touch with the cooperators, current and potential local buyers in designing marketing activities which will contribute to enhancing the exchanges between US exporters and local importers, ultimately leading to growing exports.

**Appendix 1 – List of contacts**

	<p><b>U.S. DISTILLED SPIRITS COUNCIL</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.distilledspirits.org">www.distilledspirits.org</a></p>
	<p><b>BROWN-FORMAN</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.brown-forman.com">www.brown-forman.com</a></p> <p><b>Importer:</b> BDG Import SRL <a href="http://www.bdg.ro">www.bdg.ro</a></p>
	<p><b>JIM BEAM BRANDS CO.</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.jimbeam.com">www.jimbeam.com</a></p> <p><b>Importer:</b> CRISTALEX <a href="http://www.cristalex.ro">www.cristalex.ro</a></p>



	<p><b>AMERICAN BEEF</b></p> <p><b>For imports please contact:</b>  <b>U.S. MEAT EXPORT FEDERATION</b>  <b>John Brook</b>  Regional Director, Europe Russia &amp; the Middle East  <a href="http://www.usmef.org">www.usmef.org</a></p>
	<p><b>J.W. MARRIOTT BUCHAREST GRAND HOTEL</b>  <a href="http://www.marriott.com">www.marriott.com</a></p> <p><b>Nicolae Lica</b>  Executive Chef</p>
	<p><b>INTERTRADE Distributie Produse Alimentare</b>  <a href="http://www.intertraderomania.ro">www.intertraderomania.ro</a></p> <p>Food products importer and distributor</p>
	<p><b>CRANBERRY MARKETING COMMITTEE</b>  <a href="http://www.uscranberries.com">http://www.uscranberries.com</a></p> <p><b>EU representative</b>  <i>MK<sup>2</sup> Marketing &amp; Kommunikation GmbH</i>  Email: <a href="mailto:Maria.Kraus@mk-2.com">Maria.Kraus@mk-2.com</a></p>
	<p><b>DEPAL</b>  <a href="http://www.driedfruits.ro">www.driedfruits.ro</a></p> <p>Importer and distributor of dried fruits and tree nuts</p>
	<p><b>SANOVITA</b>  <a href="http://www.sanovita.ro">www.sanovita.ro</a></p> <p>Importer and distributor of dried fruits and tree nuts</p>
	<p><b>U.S. Embassy</b>  <b>Foreign Agricultural Service</b></p> <p>4-6 Dr. Liviu Librescu Boulevard, Bucharest  Phone: + 4021 200 33 74  Email: <a href="mailto:agbucharest@fas.usda.gov">agbucharest@fas.usda.gov</a></p>

Appendix 2 – Selection of published articles and TV broadcasts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfy2rmuaQlk&feature=autoshare>

[www.antena1.ro](http://www.antena1.ro)

<http://www.agerpres.ro/economie/2014/09/11/degustare-de-whiskey-si-de-preparate-culinare-specific-americane-sub-auspiciile-ambasadei-sua-17-23-44>

<http://monitorul.com.ro/national/invitatie-la-degustare-taste-of-america-food-and-spirits-50886.html>

<http://www.ziare-pe-net.ro/stiri/invitatie-la-degustare-taste-of-america-food-and-spirits-3432972.html>

<http://www.tribuna.ro/stiri-2013/actualitate/taste-of-america-ar-putea-fi-reeditat-in-sibiu-99903.html>

<http://www.argumentpress.ro/taste-america/>

<http://www.foodandbar.ro/un-sfert-din-carnea-de-vita-consumata-la-nivel-global-provine-din-sua/>

[http://rnews.ro/taste-of-america-food-and-spirits-o-sarbatoare-a-gustului-organizata-de-ambasada-sua\\_139763.html](http://rnews.ro/taste-of-america-food-and-spirits-o-sarbatoare-a-gustului-organizata-de-ambasada-sua_139763.html)

<http://observator.tv/social/gustul-americii-sarbatorit-la-bucuresti-134673.html#>

<http://metropotam.ro/Unde-iesim/cum-si-unde-am-mancat-cea-mai-buna-carne-de-vita-din-bucuresti-art0013524904/>

<http://www.ziarelive.ro/stiri/degustare-de-whiskey-si-de-preparate-culinare-specific-americane-sub-auspiciile-ambasadei-sua.html>

[http://www.monitorulvn.ro/articole/video-si-galerie-foto-doi-vranceni-la-marriott-lux-whiskey-si-carne-de-vita\\_2\\_167510.html](http://www.monitorulvn.ro/articole/video-si-galerie-foto-doi-vranceni-la-marriott-lux-whiskey-si-carne-de-vita_2_167510.html)

<https://www.facebook.com/Foodiefamily>

[www.antena1.ro](http://www.antena1.ro)