

Success Story Template

Calendar Year (year activity is completed; if not completed, enter latest active year)
2014
Cooperator
American Seed Trade Association
Non-cooperator organization (if you are not a cooperator, but you use FAS programs like EMP, TASC, or GSM)
Organization type: private or public (public means government)
Private
FAS program(s) used/funding sources (e.g. MAP, MAP/GBI, EMP, etc)
MAP
Commodity (if applicable, include if product is fresh, dried, concentrate, etc, like Fresh Sweet Cherries)
Planting Seeds
Country/region (to which you are exporting)
Mexico
HQ State (state where headquarters of cooperator or non-cooperator organization is located)
Virginia
Producing/exporting state(s) (attempt to determine exporting state; can enter "multi" if number of states is greater than 5)
Multi
Export dollars/projected sales (provide the dollar value/projected sales in the current program year and comparable data from previous program year)
Congressional district(s) (Example: CA-04;TX-11. Attempt to determine congressional districts of producing/exporting areas; enter n/a if unknown; can enter "multi" if number of districts is greater than 5.)
Multi
Story type (focus of story: trade show, small company, cooperator, FAS/post, program)
Program
For branded, company name, if applicable

Since 2009, ASTA has been partnering with the Mexican Seed Trade Association (AMSAC) to co-host cross border workshops. One focus has been facilitating the movement of untreated seeds into Mexico. Mexico requires all seeds to be treated with fungicides. These fungicides are not approved for use in organic agriculture. Many of the untreated seeds would eventually end up in the organic market but are not eligible for an organic certification because of the treatments. This inconsistency in the regulations removes the seed profitability and closes the market to US organic seed producers. In July 2014, Mexico published regulations for importing untreated seeds from the US for the first time.

How did FAS help achieve success? MAP funds were used to help fund annual border workshops specifically to offset costs associated with translation services, meeting rooms, and guest speakers. In addition, FAS personnel from Mexico City and Washington DC have actively participated in these workshops and served as resources to work with in-country counterparts' to help organize the workshops. This issue has been a priority of the FAS in Mexico City for several years. Their efforts combined with ASTA's workshops and trainings have led to the new regulations.

Specifically, how did U.S. agriculture benefit? In July 2014, SAGARPA announced a regulation for untreated seeds. Almost a dozen US companies are now approved to move untreated seeds into Mexico under the new regulations. This is a major win for the conventional and organic seed producers that export to Mexico. In the past SAGARPA approved new seed treatments that allowed the seed to be sold as organic, but they are less effective, and still made the seed eligible to be sold as organic. The primary benefactors have been vegetable and organic seed producers.

Highlight the USDA or FAS program that was used: ASTA has used \$50,000 of MAP funds over the past five years. The industry's and ASTA's in-kind matches were more than 100% of the MAP funds used. The results of this activity were evaluated internally via ASTA's Mexico Working group and ASTA's International Executive Committee.

Market Access: With the recent passage of this regulation the Mexican market is finally opened to untreated seeds, which is critical for the US organic seed exporters. US vegetable seed exporters have struggled with getting seed into Mexico because of ineffective and costly seed treatments. In addition, shipments were held at the border, which for the companies is costly and increases the risk of the seeds being rejected. Now, 15 species of vegetable seeds are allowed to enter Mexico without treatments that prevent them from being used in organic agriculture. In 2013, Mexico planted almost 90,000 acres of organic vegetables.

Budget impact and return on investment: The value of the seed industry with Mexico exceeds \$80M/yr., and Mexican growers and seed companies and dealers are dependent on US seed. The organic seed market alone exceeds \$20M/yr. and is experiencing growth of over 20 percent per year. The return on investment of the resources that FAS/ASTA have put into this effort exceeds 1000/1 just in terms of money and time saved by being able to get seed across the borders efficiently. The growth potential is even larger as more crops are covered by the new standard.

Timeframe: This effort has been ongoing since 2009. Over this period ASTA has developed an effective partnership with AMSAC. Together ASTA and AMSAC have been advocating for SAGRAPA to develop a regulation to allow untreated seed to move from the US to Mexico.