



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

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COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Southern United States Trade Association Announces 2022 Programs are Now Open

JACKSON, Miss. – The Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) has announced the 2022 program year is now open. Companies can login to their account to re-certify and update their information to register for 2022 Global Events and submit their marketing export strategy for the 50% CostShare program. By submitting applications this fall, Mississippi companies have the opportunity to take full advantage of these programs beginning January 1, 2022.

These funds are provided through the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) program. The United States Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) partners with U.S. agricultural trade associations, cooperatives, state-regional trade groups and small businesses to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products and commodities.

“I encourage Mississippi companies that are currently exporting or planning to expand into international markets to take advantage of the programs offered by SUSTA. These programs provide small- and medium-sized food and agriculture businesses a unique opportunity to explore new markets and meet foreign buyers, while receiving financial support,” said Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce and SUSTA President Andy Gipson.

The Global Events program connects southern U.S. companies with foreign buyers at three types of SUSTA sponsored events — inbound trade missions, outbound trade missions and pavilions at international trade shows. Due to travel restrictions, SUSTA has arranged for many of the events to take place virtually over the past two years, including virtual trade shows and trade missions. The 50% CostShare program provides small agricultural businesses with financial support in order for them to enter foreign markets. SUSTA provides eligible companies with 50 percent reimbursements for eligible international marketing expenses, such as advertising, exhibiting at trade shows and changes to packaging and labels.

In 2021, SUSTA expanded resources due to increased demand for export education and support. Through SUSTA’s new Export Helpline, participants can ask an industry-recognized expert with over 15 years of experience questions related to the export process, from how to do market research to pricing products for export. Export Readiness Training also launched this year to assist companies who are poised to export

but not sure how to develop an international marketing plan. Both of these resources will continue in 2022 and beyond.

“SUSTA will receive MAP funding in 2022, and continue assisting small- and medium-sized southern U.S. companies export their high-quality products across the world. Now is the time for companies to identify strategies and reach out to us to help them in the global markets,” said SUSTA Executive Director Bernadette Wiltz-Lang. “During the 2020 program year, SUSTA helped 1,428 Southern U.S. companies export \$65.13 million worth of regional agri-food products with CostShare companies reporting sales in 30 global markets during the pandemic.”

The Southern U.S. Trade Association is made up of the departments of agriculture in 15 southern states and is chartered to facilitate exports of U.S. food and high value agricultural products by small to medium-sized companies in the region. SUSTA works closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in administering federal export promotion programs, especially the Market Access Program (MAP) and Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) program along with investments by the states and individual companies. Companies interested in learning more about SUSTA’s Global Events program and 50% CostShare program can find additional information by visiting SUSTA.org.

To be eligible for either the Global Events or 50% CostShare programs, companies must be considered small according to U.S. Small Business Administration standards, be headquartered in the Southern region, have yearly gross sales of at least \$50,000 and promote a brand-name product that is at least 50 percent U.S. agricultural origin. The Market Access Program is funded by the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service and administered to southern U.S. companies by SUSTA. Companies located in any of SUSTA’s member states can apply for funding. The member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

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