

Market Access Program for Agriculture and Forest Products

Program concept

Vermont products are known and respected nationally and internationally for their quality and the strength of the Vermont brand helps our entrepreneurs sell products across the world. Our market access program has been targeted at the international marketplace because of the significant resources available to our Agency and to Vermont food businesses through Food Export-Northeast. However, many of Vermont's small agriculture and forest products companies are not export-ready, but instead need assistance building statewide, regional or national markets. Others that have products that are not eligible for assistance from Food Export.

Networking with other states has demonstrated that most have independent programs to fill these critical gaps. We propose the development of a program that provides: 1) Education and Technical Assistance; 2) Market Entry Activities and 3) Financial Assistance for Trade Show attendance. A "Market Access Coordinator" position will be needed to assist with the implementation of the program. These areas are described in detail, below, along with a proposed budget outlining potential funding sources.

Education and Technical Assistance

- Educational workshops and seminars offered annually on topics such working with brokers, maximizing the trade show experience, and identifying trends in specific markets
- One-on-one technical assistance provided to companies to assist them with developing a marketing plan

Market Entry

- Statewide Matchmaker held each annually, bringing together producers and buyers
- Buyers Mission held once every 2 years, bringing national and international buyers to Vermont
- Vermont Pavilions at trade shows to build Vermont brand recognition and promote peer-to-peer networking with Vermont businesses

Financial Assistance for Trade Show

- Provide matching grants of up to \$2,000 for small agriculture or forest products businesses to subsidize the costs of exhibiting at trade shows.

Program Delivery

- A Market Access Coordinator will be hired to assist with the implementation of this program. Duties will include:
 - Assistance with all activities (matchmaker, pavilions, missions)
 - Program recruitment
 - Technical assistance.

Program Budget

EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	
Workshops (2 x \$1,000)	\$ 2,000
Technical Assistance (10 companies x \$3,000)	\$ 30,000
MARKET ENTRY	
Matchmaker	\$ 6,500
Buyers' Mission (every 2 years)	\$ 10,000
Vermont Pavilions (\$20,000 x 2 pavilions)	\$ 40,000
TRADE SHOW ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	
Matching grants (20 x \$2,000)	\$ 40,000
PROGRAM DELIVERY	
Staff Person	\$ 68,000
	\$ 196,500

Sources of funds could include: Specialty Crop Block Grant, Vermont Dairy Promotion Council, Made in Vermont Program (in development), industry associations (e.g. Specialty Food Association, Maple Sugar Makers' Association, etc.), sponsors