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Resources for New York State Food and Beverage Producers Considering Export Opportunities

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As discussed in a previous “Smart Marketing” article, New York state food and beverage producers may find interesting opportunities to expand their markets outside U.S. borders. Not only are most of the world’s consumers and growing markets located outside the United States, but food and beverage products from the U.S. and New York can benefit from a perception of prestige and quality in many markets around the world.

Developing an export plan and entering export markets requires a serious commitment of resources, and research we conducted as part of an 18-month project funded by Empire State Development found that many companies, especially smaller and less-established businesses, lack the capacity to include export markets in their initial business planning.

For those who do wish to pursue those opportunities, however, there is a wide array of state, federal, and non-governmental resources available to assist in the development and execution of an export marketing plan. What follows is far from an exhaustive list or description of the services offered, and each product category and specific export destination may call for specific knowledge and resources. But the organizations identified here will give a prospective exporter a good starting point.

Food Export Northeast (www.foodexport.org): This non-profit organization promotes exports of food and agricultural products in cooperation with the state agricultural promotion agencies (New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Empire State Development) and the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service. In addition to assistance with market research and development through its Helpline and extensive seminars and webinars, through its “Branded Program,” Food Export Northeast provides small businesses and agricultural producer cooperatives valuable support in the form of cost-sharing for activities such as, export-related packaging and label modifications, trade show participation, website development, and more.

Global NY (global.ny.gov) is Governor Cuomo’s new initiative that “offers one-stop shopping to both foreign businesses looking to invest in New York and to local businesses who want to export globally” through the Empire State Development program. Global NY maintains commercial representation services for New York companies in a number of key markets around the world. It also manages the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) State Trade & Export Promotion (STEP) program for New York state, which makes funds available to qualifying small businesses to support a variety of export development activities.

United States Department of Commerce (DOC) (www.export.gov): The U.S. Commercial Service of the Department of Commerce offers extensive market research resources, including trade leads as well as training and counseling programs, help in developing an export business plan, and assistance with financing exports. The U.S. Commercial Service maintains regional offices and staff covering all areas of New York State.

United States Small Business Administration (SBA) (www.sba.gov) and **Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)**: The Small Business Administration provides counseling, training and financing to support small business export opportunities and serves as a clearinghouse for a number of federal programs and services that support export development for small businesses, including the STEP program (see below). SBA also supports a network of 24 Small Business Development Centers throughout New York State (www.nyssbdc.org) which provide business consulting and training resources, including assistance with creating business plans essential to export success.

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (www.fas.usda.gov): The USDA maintains expert staff in the U.S. and around the world who are continuously updating market intelligence information for specific industry categories. FAS also manages, among others, the Market Access Program (MAP) which shares the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities.

In addition to these government agencies, a number of local economic development organizations (e.g., the Central New York International Business Alliance www.cnyiba.net), Chambers of Commerce and private consultants offer a variety of support services as well.

Important non-governmental resources include industry specific trade organizations that offer support for New York businesses looking to develop their export opportunities, including:

U.S. Meat Export Federation (www.usmef.org): With support from the USDA, the Federation represents U.S. red meat producers and provides market intelligence and international outreach around the world.

U.S. Dairy Export Council (www.usdec.org): With ten international offices, USDEC monitors foreign market opportunities and challenges and delivers market research and know-how to its member organizations.

Finally, there are a number of government agencies whose assistance will be essential to implementing a food or beverage export program. At the New York State level, the **Department of Agriculture and Markets** (www.agriculture.ny.gov) can issue required “Certificates of Free

Sale” for those food and beverage processing and handling establishments that they inspect. At the federal level, the **USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service** (www.fsis.usda.gov) maintains an Export Certification Checklist that describes the requirements, by country, for exports of meat, poultry, and processed egg products. The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** (www.fda.gov) can supply export certificates for those food products that it regulates.

As noted above, this is not an exhaustive list, and specific product categories and market destinations may require access to additional resources, but it should provide a starting point for businesses beginning to develop an export program.

“Smart Marketing” is a marketing newsletter for extension publication in local newsletters and for placement in local media. It reviews elements critical to successful marketing in the food and agricultural industry. *Please cite or acknowledge when using this material.* Past articles are available at <http://agribusiness.dyson.cornell.edu/SmartMarketing/index.html>.