

Trade Notes...

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USDA Opens New Trade Offices in China and Philippines

FAS has opened new ATOs (Agricultural Trade Offices) in Manila, the Philippines, and Beijing, China. The opening of these offices is timely as agricultural trade between the United States and Asia is rapidly expanding. U.S. exports of agricultural products to China are forecast to reach \$5.4 billion this fiscal year, compared with \$3.5 billion in 2003 and \$1.8 billion in 2002. China is the fourth largest export market for U.S. agricultural products and has recently become a strong market for U.S. soybeans. In addition to the new Beijing ATO, FAS operates ATOs in Shanghai and Guangzhou. The Philippines is also a growing and dynamic market that is very important for U.S. agriculture. With U.S. exports of agricultural, fish and forest products totaling \$677 million in fiscal 2003, the Philippines ranks among the top 20 U.S. markets.

FAS has many agricultural affairs and trade offices covering countries around the world. Trade offices in key markets function as service centers for U.S. exporters and foreign buyers seeking market information. U.S. agricultural trade offices and attaché offices provide foreign buyers with information on potential suppliers in the United States. They also assist U.S. exporters in launching products in markets with diverse food preferences, social customs and marketing systems.

The Beijing ATO is located at No. 1 Guang Hua Lu, Cahoyang District, Kerry Center 24F, Unit Number 2425, Beijing 100020, China. Tel.: (011-86-10) 8529-6418; Fax: (011-86-10) 8529-6692; E-mail: atospublic.sta.net.cn. The mailing address for the Beijing ATO is Agricultural Trade Office, U.S. Embassy, Beijing, China, PSC 461 Box 50, FPO AP 96521-0002.

The Manila ATO address is Agricultural Trade Office, 25th Floor, Ayala Life-FGU Center, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1203, Philippines. Tel.: (011-63-2) 894-5381; Fax: (011-63-2) 812-5430; E-mail: agmanila@usda.gov. The mailing address for the Manila ATO is Agricultural Trade Office, Manila, Philippines, PSC 500, Box 31, FPO AP 96515-1000.

USDA Grants Assistance to Alabama Shrimp Producers Under Trade Adjustment Assistance

FAS has certified a petition from shrimp producers in Alabama under the TAA program (Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers). These producers are now eligible to apply for TAA benefits. Under the TAA program, USDA provides technical assistance and cash benefits to producers if an increase in imports of a like commodity has contributed importantly to a decline in price and a loss of income. FAS determined that, during January-December 2002, increased imports of farmed shrimp contributed importantly to a decline in domestic prices for producers in Alabama when compared with the previous five-year average. After producers submit their applications, they will be contacted regarding technical assistance and training. Financial payments will not be made until after applications are certified.