

Center for Integration and Agribusiness Development (CIDAIE), IICA

AGRIEXPORTAMERICAS

Since the Summit of the Americas held in Miami in December 1994, the governments of the region have engaged in a number of activities aimed at creating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). This initiative, referred to in the different bilateral and multilateral trade agreements signed by the countries of the Americas, is intended to create new opportunities for these countries to export goods and services. For its part, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), through its Center for Integration and Agribusiness Development (CIDAIE), has created the first network of organizations of agrifood exporters in the Americas.

With a view to increasing and diversifying exports, and augmenting the number of exporters in the agrifood sector of the Americas, the Inter-American Network of Organizations of Agrifood Exporters (Agriexportamericas) was founded on March 5, 2001, in Montreal, Canada. This new network is the result of efforts by CIDAIE, with collaboration from the Club Export Agroalimentaire du Québec and the Chamber of Exporters of Costa Rica (CADEXO).

At present, Agriexportamericas comprises the following organizations: the Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA), the Club Export Agroalimentaire du Québec, the Andean Agribusiness Network, the Chamber of Exporters of Costa Rica (CADEXO), the Association of Exporters of Chile (ASOEX), the Venezuelan Association of Exporters (AVEX), Food and Beverage Canada, the Export and Investment Promotion Center of Ecuador (CORPEI), the Bolivian Foreign Trade Institute (IBCE), the Center for the Promotion of Nontraditional Agricultural Exports of Ecuador (PROEXANT), the Dominican Center for Export Promotion (CEDOPEX), the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA), the Foreign Trade Promotion Agency of Costa Rica (PROCOMER), the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT), the Center for the Promotion of Exports of Chile (PROCHILE), Canada Pork International, Canadian Food Exporters Association, the Guatemalan Association of Exporters of Nontraditional Products (AGEXPRONT), the Mid-America International Agri-Trade Council (MIATCO), of the United States and the Dominican Agribusiness Board (JAD). Membership in the Network is open to organizations of agrifood exporters, and those that provide support to the export activities of the enterprises in this sector.



During the Assembly in which the Network was founded, its general regulations and the work plan for 2001 were approved, and its Board of Directors was appointed. Its officers are: André Coutu, of Club Export Agroalimentaire du Québec, President; Sergio Navas, of CADEXO (Costa Rica), First Vice President; Patrick Sibblies, of the CABA, Second Vice President. Its regular members are: María Gabriela Ruitort, of PROCHILE; Rolando Galván, of CEDOPEX, Dominican Republic; Roberto Castañeda, (AGEXPRONT, Guatemala; Juan Armando Antelo (Andean Agribusiness Network); and Francisco Mendoza (AVEX, Venezuela). Mario Dumais and Daniel Rodriguez, of CIDAIE, were appointed Executive Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.



In order to achieve its objectives, AGRIEXPORTAMERICAS proposes specific activities, based on experiences in the private agrifood sector and on the exchange of information between its member organizations and the countries that support the Network. One of these activities is the dissemination, among the organizations affiliated with the Network, of a training program for small-, medium- and large-scale enterprises, especially those that have not had the opportunity to export, but whose products are of excellent quality and are produced in fairly large amounts, meaning

that they can be marketed internationally. For these enterprises, there is the program designed and put into operation by the Club Export Agroalimentaire du Québec, entitled Export Platforms, which includes training workshops in international trade, the validation of products in the target market, and participation in trade fairs or missions.

Under this program, Agriexportamericas through CIDAE "train trainers", These trainers then will coordinate the training sessions, for new exporters. CIDAE also offers to prepare and adapt training materials, to establish a network of experts capable of validating the products in different markets, to provide the coordinating organizations with models of the contracts required to formalize commitments with those who will be doing the validating, and to collaborate in the identification of agrifood fairs. This program has been very successful in Costa Rica and Canada.

During the Assembly in which the Network was founded, agreement was also reached on the development of an Inter-American Clearinghouse for Information on the Labeling of Agrifood Products in the Americas. Depending on the interest of the members, efforts could eventually be made to harmonize regulations in this field.

Organizations interested in joining the Network and/or obtaining further information about the Network or CIDAE may contact Mario Dumais at cidae@iica.ac.cr, or (506) 216-0297 (tel) or (506) 216-0287 (fax).