The Nebraska Agricultural Trade Office staff recognize the importance of the Caribbean Basin for trade and see many opportunities for Nebraska food companies in the Caribbean. The Caribbean Basin continues to be a stable and dominant market for U.S. food suppliers because demand for U.S. products remains strong. This is because demand for imported food products is largely elastic since the islands have an insufficient amount of land, small water supplies on some islands, no large economies, and a limited food processing sector. The Caribbean Basin has to import the majority of their food to meet needs, which is a fantastic opportunity for Nebraska food companies.

Among the 3.7 million local residents in the Caribbean Basin there is a strong draw for American products. This draw stems from exposure to American TV channels and visits Caribbean residents make to the United States. In 2012, Nebraska exported $17 million worth of agricultural products to the Caribbean Basin.

CARIBBEAN FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

The Caribbean Basin is an excellent market for U.S. suppliers because of the growing tourism industry and local residents’ knowledge of American culture. Nebraska food companies should consider the Caribbean Basin when exporting because the United States is the largest supplier of food products to the Caribbean, which makes selling a product easier. Most Caribbean countries recognize and accept U.S. standards for food and agricultural products which will make exporting easier.

The following products are in high demand in the Caribbean:

- Snack foods
- Red meats
- Poultry meat
- Dairy products
- Fresh fruit
- Fruit & vegetable juices
- Tree nuts
- Alcoholic beverages
CARIBBEAN BASIN

Here are tips for exporting to the Caribbean:

**ANALYZE MARKET POTENTIAL:**
The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has a program called Food Export. Food Export provides food companies resources to help export their food overseas. Analyzing market potential is vital to exporting successfully, and Food Export offers Food Export Helpline and Market Builder for companies who want to export. Go to www.foodexportalliance.org/eweb to find out more information on both of these programs.

**APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE, AGENT, OR IMPORTER:**
Once you have found the market for your product, the next step is to find a way to get the product into that market. Foreign products are distributed into the Caribbean Basin through specialized importers or retailers. Caribbean importers rely heavily on consolidators in South Florida. Food Export Helpline can aid you in finding those distributors. Contact the Nebraska Agricultural Trade Office for details.

**USE A PERSONALIZED APPROACH:**
Developing a relationship with importers can make the process easier. Food Export has Buyer’s Missions and Focused Trade Missions which allow you to meet face-to-face with potential buyers.

**KNOW EXPORT REQUIREMENTS:**
Exporting regulations differ depending on the product and country. Nebraska Agricultural Trade Office staff can provide information regarding regulations and documentation. Also, Food Export provides webinars covering topics such as export documentation and the three “P’s” of exporting.

**LABELING REQUIREMENTS:**
Most Caribbean countries recognize U.S. labeling standards, however some follow European Union labels standards. You need to be aware of what the local importer requires. Because of this you may need to revise and change your labels or promotional materials. Food Export provides the Branded Program, which is a reimbursement program. The Branded Program allows companies to be reimbursed for marketing endeavors, which includes printed materials. Keep this in mind as you learn more about your importers’ expectations and needs for your products.

**EXPORT ASSISTANCE:**
Nebraska Agricultural Trade Office staff can provide information and assistance for your company in regards to your exporting endeavors. Food Export also has programs specifically designed to help food companies find markets and contacts, learn more about exporting, and become successful in international settings.

For More Information Contact:
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