

International Food Assistance Programs

April 2012

*Linking U.S. Agriculture
to the World*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) helps provide U.S. agricultural commodities to assist millions of people in need in foreign countries through direct donations and concessional programs. FAS administers food assistance through three programs: the Food for Progress Program, the McGovern–Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, and the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Pilot Project.

The **Food for Progress** (FFPr) program provides for the donation of U.S. agricultural commodities to developing countries committed to introducing and expanding free enterprise in the agricultural sector. Donated commodities are usually monetized (sold on the local market) and proceeds are used to support agricultural development activities.

The FFPr program supports projects that contribute to improved agricultural productivity and expanded trade of agricultural products. FFPr programs have trained farmers in animal and plant health, improved farming methods, developed infrastructure (such as roads, electricity, and irrigation systems), established and strengthened producer cooperatives, provided microcredit, and developed agricultural value chains. Program participants include nonprofit charitable organizations, foreign governments, universities, and intergovernmental organizations.

The **McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition** (McGovern-Dole) Program promotes literacy, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children. The McGovern-Dole Program provides donations of agricultural commodities and financial and technical assistance for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education.

McGovern-Dole program funds and donated commodities have helped establish school feeding programs around the world, increased elementary school enrollment and attendance among girls, improved the health of pregnant and lactating women and children by offering monthly take-home rations, and improved school children's health and hygiene. These projects are conducted by nonprofit charitable organizations, cooperatives, the United Nations World Food Program, and other international organizations.

USDA's FAS administers the **Micronutrient-Fortified Food Aid Products Pilot** (MFFAPP) under the McGovern-Dole Program. Through this pilot program, USDA hopes to identify new food aid products to be regularly provided in the McGovern-Dole Program. FAS defines micronutrient-fortified food aid products as foods used for direct feeding that are

nutritionally enhanced either through vitamin or mineral additions to address the micronutrient deficiencies of a population or group.

The 2008 Farm Bill directed USDA to implement a \$60-million **Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Pilot Project** (USDA LRP Project) in developing countries during fiscal years 2009-2012. USDA Commodity Credit Corporation funding was authorized to carry out the project in the following amounts: \$5 million for 2009; \$25 million for 2010; \$25 million for 2011; and \$5 million for 2012.

The primary purpose of the USDA LRP Project was to examine the timeliness and cost of using local and regional procurement as a tool to expedite the delivery of U.S. government food assistance to individuals who have been affected by natural disasters and other food crises. A portion of the funding must also be used to support development activities that help meet food needs during non-emergencies.

The Farm Bill specified that the program have four phases: a study phase, a guideline or regulation development phase, an implementation phase, and an independent final evaluation. The study was completed in January 2009 and Interim Guidelines were published in September 2009. All field-based projects were completed on September 30, 2011. The independent evaluation of the pilot project began in June 2011 and a report will be completed by June 2012.

Between fiscal years 2009–2011, USDA provided about \$52 million for LRP programs in 19 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Central America. More than 60 percent of the funding was provided to emergency programs.

The **Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust** is another resource to ensure that the U.S. government can respond to emergency food aid needs. The Trust is not a food aid program, but a food reserve administered under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Trust is designed to ensure that the United States can meet its international food assistance commitments.

The Trust may consist of any combination of cash and commodities. Presently, the Trust has exchanged all commodities and holds only cash.

Additional Information: For more information, contact: Food Assistance Division, Office of Capacity Building and Development, FAS/USDA, Stop 1034, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-1034; tel.: (202) 720-4221; fax: (202) 690-0251.

Information about USDA food aid efforts is also available on the FAS Web site:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp>

General information about FAS programs, resources, and services is available on the Internet at the FAS home page: <http://www.fas.usda.gov>.

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