



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# Press Release

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## **Southern United States Trade Association Accepting Applications For 2019 Market Access Program**

*Jackson, Miss.* — The Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) is now accepting applications for the 2019 Market Access Program. By submitting applications this fall, Mississippi companies have the opportunity to take full advantage of the Market Access Program beginning January 1, 2019.

Through the Market Access Program, SUSTA and the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) partners with U.S. agricultural trade associations, cooperatives, state-regional trade groups and small businesses to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products and commodities.

"I encourage Mississippi companies that are currently exporting or planning to expand into international markets to take advantage of the programs offered by SUSTA. These programs provide small- and medium-sized food and agriculture businesses a unique opportunity to explore new markets and meet foreign buyers, while receiving financial support," Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce and SUSTA Vice-President Andy Gipson said.

Two programs are offered within the Market Access Program — Global Events and 50% CostShare. The Global Events program connects southern U.S. companies with foreign buyers at three types of SUSTA sponsored events — inbound trade missions, outbound trade missions and pavilions at international trade shows. The 50% CostShare program provides small agricultural businesses with financial support in order for them to enter foreign markets. SUSTA provides eligible companies with 50 percent reimbursements for eligible international marketing expenses, such as advertising, exhibiting at trade shows and changes to packaging and labels.

"SUSTA will receive MAP funding in 2019, and continue assisting small- and medium-sized southern U.S. companies export their high-quality products across the world. Now is the time for companies to identify strategies and reach out to us to help them in the global markets," SUSTA Executive Director Bernadette Wiltz said. "During the 2017 program year, SUSTA helped 221 Southern U.S. companies export \$198 million worth of regional agri-food products to 64 global markets."

To be eligible for either the Global Events or 50% CostShare programs, companies must be considered small according to U.S. Small Business Administration standards, be headquartered in the Southern region, have yearly

gross sales of at least \$50,000 and promote a brand-name product that is at least 50 percent U.S. agricultural origin. The Market Access Program is funded by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and administered to southern U.S. companies by SUSTA. Companies located in any of SUSTA's member states can apply for funding. The member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

For more information about participating in international trade activities or SUSTA's marketing programs, contact Susan Head Lawrence at 601-359-1196 or [susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov).

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