PN-ABC-502

TRIP REPORT
PROMOTION MEETING FOR AGRITRADE 1993

San Salvador, El Salvador

Assignment Number: ST-162

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UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

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NANCY J. TUCKER, PMA PROEXAG II - TRIP REPORT

I. DATES AND DESTINATIONS. May 5 to May 7, 1993. To San Salvador, El Salvador.

II. PURPOSE OF TRAVEL. To participate in the planning and promotion meeting for Agritrade '93 and offer suggestions for promotion and marketing.

III. PERSONS CONTACTED. Those attending the meeting were: Eduardo González, Rafael Monroy, Jandira Thomsen, Carlos Larraondo, Martha Guerra, Ana María Vázquez, Alejandro Delgado, Ricardo Suárez, Romeo Calderón, Medardo Galindo, Emiliano Enríquez, Aristóteles Flores, Chuck Emely and myself.

IV. ACCOMPLISHMENTS. This meeting of the Agritrade planning committee and advisors was a productive event that generated much enthusiasm among the participants. Well-defined objectives were presented. These objectives included a target number of participants and exhibitors from each country. The representatives from these countries will review the target numbers with their staff and board of directors to make sure these are feasible. Any changes are due by the next meeting.

The floor plan of a new exhibit hall was unveiled. The dedication of a certain amount of space to each country will make this a very attractive and focused exhibit. The amount of space dedicated to Nicaragua may be overly optimistic, but the design allows for flexibility and change.

The report on mini-Agritrades generated a lot of interest among the participants from the other Central American countries. It is likely they will want to do something similar in the future. These regional meetings are a good way to:

* involve smaller growers
* increase the amount of training and education provided (especially technical information)
* promote Agritrade
* generate revenue

The suggested seminar topics for Agritrade '93 were discussed. It was mentioned that pesticides have been the focus for a seminar in most of the previous Agritrade conventions. However, this continues to be a relevant topic. Care should be taken to present a new twist to the subject. Ideas included presentations by APHIS or FDA representatives stationed in Central America, industry people (practical advice, how to information, as well as what people can expect to encounter), or a U.S. government official (update on any changes in the regulations), and maybe an explanation of HACCP.

Chuck Emely and I discussed marketing and promotion ideas and made the following

recommendations at the meeting:

Research studies by PMA over the past years have revealed that direct mail and advertising are the most effective ways to market our convention. We urge the GEXPRONT staff to continue their efforts in this area.

Direct Mail. Mailings are currently scheduled for April/May, early July, early August, and late September. We agree that these are good times for the mailings. We recommend that staff speed up brochure development so that the brochure is ready for the second (July) mailing. This will reinforce the professional image of the show. In the third and fourth mailings, staff should include inserts with speaker and seminar information, notices about field tours, etc., as appropriate.

Any mailing is only as good as the people it goes to. The GEXPRONT Miami staff is calling to revise and confirm addresses/contacts. Staff is asking Central American people for their contacts and is getting names from the registration lists of the frozen food convention, PMA and UFFVA. We suggest that staff request lists of those with a known international interest (such as the lists from the International Trade Seminars of PMA and UFFVA) to maintain the quality of their direct mail list and keep down the costs of mailing and printing.

Advertising. We recommend that staff move up, by one week, the dates for ads appearing in the Packer and Produce Business. This will place them in the issues that comes out just before the PMA convention. There is good readership of these issues, and the publications are not as large and busy as the issues that come out during the PMA convention. Staff should continue trade offs with these publications. The International Produce Journal and publications such as Eurofruit should be considered as well.

Public Relations. A schedule of press releases should be created and followed. The first could focus on the results of the planning meeting. Others should follow about once a month (or at least to correspond with the direct mail pieces). The releases could focus on the new exhibit area, the increased number of exhibits, seminar topics, keynote speaker, etc. PMA/UFFVA can help write the English version of the releases. The GEXPRONT staff should make sure a Spanish version goes to Central American media and to all the Central American associations. The newsletters of each association should carry stories about Agritrade from now until December.

Agritrade should be promoted at the seminars and meetings of each agricultural association in Central America. Each group should distribute brochures and information, make presentations if possible, and gather contact names to add to the direct mail list. The posters were a successful way to promote Agritrade last year and it is good to see that this will continue in 1993. Other events mentioned by GEXPRONT staff for promoting Agritrade were the FMA/SFS in June and a reception co-sponsored by Asgrow Seed Company at the PMA convention in October.

Buyers. To expand sales opportunities for Central American growers, both local and international supermarket executives need to come to Agritrade. One way to attract Central

American retailers might be to offer a training program in conjunction with the convention. PMA, in cooperation with Fundación Chile, recently translated into Spanish the Produce Skills retail training program (10 videos and corresponding workbooks). We might be able to convince Fundación Chile to hold a training seminar before or after Agritrade. After participating in the seminar, retailers will be able to go back to their supermarkets and make their produce department more professional and profitable.

To encourage their participation, international buyers could be offered special field tours of growing operations.