

Agricultural Specialist FSN 11

Office of Agricultural Affairs

Basic Functions of Position:

The incumbent is the Advisor to the Minister Counselor and Attachés, and often to other USG agencies on Egyptian agricultural and food security policies. The incumbent is charged with advising officers and writing reports on Food Security Policy issues that include but are not limited to those related to agricultural commodity production, food supply and food security, agricultural science and technology, and food standards.

Major Duties and Responsibilities:

A. Agricultural and Food Security Policy -- 40%

Food security, specifically the supply of subsidized baladi bread and ration card commodities, is vital to the overall political stability in Egypt. Therefore, reporting on these issues receives high level attention in the Embassy and Washington Agencies. The incumbent's duties include monitoring and advising on the developments of new agricultural and food security policies and their impact on food supply, agricultural trade, adoption of new agricultural technologies and food-related standards. He/she also provides advice on trade, standards, and commodity negotiations with the host government based on the incumbent's own understanding of the political-economic situation, as well as the relevant scientific background and international standards as it relates to the portfolio. He/she is a strong advocate for USG policies with the host government, academia and the private sector, and does so independently with little or no direction.

The incumbent utilizes his/her in-depth understanding of current and proposed agricultural policies, as well as extensive experience and training in agricultural economics to determine their impact on agricultural production, agricultural trade and food security. Through senior level contacts with the relevant GOE Ministries and agencies as well as in the private sector gains an understanding of these policies and their impact and advocates for USG policies.

The incumbent provides strong advocacy for the development and implementation of Egypt's current and future food safety laws, regulations and standards to ensure they are science-based and internationally accepted. He/she works with a number of Egyptian government agencies under MIFT, MOH, and MALR to monitor the development of food standards that are in accord with international standard and assure that they do not negatively impact U.S. food and agricultural trade interests. Envisions and designs appropriate technical assistance and capacity building activities, to positively impact food safety laws, regulations and standards.

The incumbent is also responsible for required reporting on Egypt's Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS), and the state of Agricultural Biotechnology in Egypt. The incumbent is the primary contact point on furthering USG goals related to expanding the acceptance and commercialization of agricultural biotechnology in Egypt, and the development of an Egypt's Biosafety Law. Worldwide acceptance of agricultural biotechnology is one of the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's primary goals. The incumbent may work independently with appropriate Ministry contacts and provide advice to USDA officers on how to best develop a plan to further these goal. Is a strong advocate for USG goals on agricultural biotechnology. He/she plays a vital role in building the core regulatory competence of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment by working with FAS Market Development Cooperators, private partners and contractors to provide technical advice on biotechnology. As part of these capacity building efforts, the incumbent organizes regional and local conferences and workshops to strengthen awareness and understanding of the benefits of biotechnology and the importance it can have for Egypt's agriculture and economy. By guiding FAS headquarters to approve and fund outreach programs designed by the incumbent, programs will be implemented in cooperation with appropriate GOE ministries like the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, and Industry and Foreign Trade.

The incumbent plays a central role in keeping close contact and serves as a liaison for the USG with Egyptian traders and officials to determine market constraints that limit U.S. agricultural and food exports to Egypt, as well as provides guidance to the Agricultural Minister Counselor on how best to overcome such constraints. As needed, the incumbent provides technical scientific and legal translation to interpret laws and regulations related to his/her portfolio. The incumbent is the primary interlocutor with senior and mid-level officials in the Agricultural Research Center, National Biosafety Committee, Ministry of Environment, General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC) at the Ministry of Supply. The incumbent and the Senior Agricultural Specialist will work with the General Organization for Export and Import Control (GOEIC), and the Egyptian Organization for Standards (EOS) on issues relevant to their portfolios as well as with academic institutions. These integral contacts also serve as a primary source of market intelligence that the incumbent will use for negotiating and solving trade barriers and problems. In addition, the information is used for analysis and writing regular trade policy reports on biotechnology and biosafety as it is related in the above job description, as well as others trade issues as they arise. Develops extensive contacts in the press/media on agricultural and scientific issues that can be used to explain and support U.S. positions in coordination with the Public Affairs Office. Briefs official visitors on current economic and agricultural as it relates to the portfolio, and accompanying them to high-level meetings, acting as an interpreter when needed.

B. Market Intelligence --50%

The incumbent has lead responsibility for the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) oilseeds and grain and feed portfolio (U.S. exports valued at \$2.2 billion in 2011), providing specialized technical analysis and forecasting that is used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in monitoring world production, supply and demand as well as developing strategies for tackling bilateral trade issues. Egypt is the world's largest wheat importer and a major importer of wheat, corn, soybeans and vegetable oil. The incumbent is responsible for reporting on agronomic and economic conditions related to oilseeds, grain and feed commodities, as well as government policy developments in the agricultural sector that affect production, consumption and trade for scheduled and voluntary reports and other subjects as needed. Maintains in-depth knowledge of Egypt's food subsidy system and the food security situation. Is called upon to provide briefings on the current forecasts on the food security situation for the USG, especially the wheat supply and baladi bread, due to the profound impact on political stability. Utilizes in-depth knowledge of agriculture, agricultural economics, and markets to prepare detailed estimates and forecasts of the Egyptian agricultural production, supply and demand situation that play a vital role in USDA's World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates that is part of our GAINS database system. The data and estimates generated for this system are amongst top priorities for our Post. It is essential that the incumbent maintain excellent senior and mid-level contacts at the GOE Ministries and agencies responsible for agricultural production and trade and food security and understand how to gather and analyze vital market intelligence in order to preserve the integrity of the global database. Sound estimates and analysis is an integral part of the world commodity trading system. It is highly technical in nature and can negatively impact the GAIN's database system, and relies on extreme accuracy. FAS and other USG analysts depend on what the incumbent reports in this database system, as it is essential tool for USG analysts to understand how the global market will react and respond to market shifts. In addition, the incumbent provides essential similar analysis in cables put out by the U.S. Embassy Cairo that the Ambassador and Agricultural Minister Counselor draw from when briefing the White House and high level USG officials on food security issues related to Egypt.

As the world's largest wheat importer and a major market for corn, soybeans and vegetable oil, the attention of USDA and the world's major commodity traders is focused on Egypt. This requires the incumbent to provide timely updates of the evolving market situation and accurate forecasting of future production, supply and trade. The incumbent is responsible for preparing the technical analysis and forecasting production, supply and demand of these top traded commodities in the world, in the form of required reports for the FAS Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) system. The GAIN reports are monitored not only by USDA but also other USG agencies and the international commodity trade. The data and information fed into the system impacts world market prices, as Egypt is one of the leading consumers of grain, feed and oilseeds in the world, valued at more than US \$2.2

billion. Such analysis and estimates play an important role in world trade, and food that feeds the entire world.

The quality of data and estimates entered into the Production, Supply and Demand (PSD) database, which is a fundamental part of the GAIN system, is amongst FAS's top priorities. It is essential that the incumbent maintain excellent contacts and understand how to gather and analyze vital market intelligence, in order to preserve the integrity of the GAIN system. Sound estimates and analysis is an integral part of the world commodity trading system. It is highly technical in nature and can negatively impact the PSD database system, as it relies on extreme accuracy. FAS and other USG analysts depend heavily on this data and information. Without this essential marketing information, USG analysts would fail at understanding how the global market will act and respond to market shifts, and will be unable to predict food security around the globe.

Response to Trade Inquires and Research Requests – 10%

Incumbent plays a vital role in resolving frequent immediate trade problems, using contacts in the Egyptian government, advising American counterparts how to proceed and bring to bear appropriate technical and policy resources to resolve problems on documentation, testing requirements, quality standards, etc. Assists to the maximum extent possible, and often independently, resolving trade complaints and disputes involving U.S. exporters and Egyptian importers over issues dealing with agricultural biotechnology.

Position Elements:

- A. Education: Master's degree in agricultural economics, economics, agronomy, or closely related agricultural science field is required.
- B. Prior Work Experience: Five to ten years progressively professional experience in agricultural economic research, agricultural policy, agricultural trade or agricultural marketing. Strong skills in Microsoft Office (Word and Excel) as well as ability to use the Internet for research.
- C. Post Entry Training: Training in the FAS Global Access Information Network (GAIN) system, which is used to prepare and publish reports from the field as well as FAS desktop computer applications including the office contact database. The incumbent should be able to use these applications to generate reports and perform routine analysis in the agricultural sector of the country, and is also expected to develop a good understanding of FAS' Unified Export Strategy (UES) and Post's Country Strategy Statement, which is used to assess market opportunities or constraints for U.S. agricultural exports to Egypt. Become thoroughly familiar with the GAIN reporting instructions for assigned reporting. Develop a good working knowledge of USDA marketing, credit and trade-related programs.
- D. Language: Level 4 (fluent) English and Arabic required for writing, speaking, reading in English and Arabic.

E. Knowledge: Expert knowledge of agricultural programs, institutions, acquaintance with key figures in Egyptian agriculture, as well as government policies in this sector.

F. Skills and Abilities: Develop and maintain an extensive contact base with particular emphasis on senior levels. Apply discriminatory judgment in evaluating and advising on agricultural matters. Ability to communicate orally and in writing. Ability to get on well with people, including top officials. Skilled at analyzing and interpreting statistical data and commodity information. Ability to write high quality analytical reports on Egypt's agricultural market. Ability to work in a small team environment within the office setting.

G. Position Elements:

H. Supervision received: Guidance from the Agricultural Minister Counselor or Attaches.

I. Available guidelines: FAS/USDA reporting instructions, regulations and instruction, Embassy policies and procedures.

J. Exercise Judgment: Critical to success of USDA programs at post. Incumbent's judgment is relied upon for issues that impact U.S. agricultural trade.

K. Authority to Make Commitments: none

L. Nature, Level and Purpose of Contacts: Incumbent is expected to develop senior level contacts in host government ministries and in the private sector. Frequent rapport with key business people and government regulators is critical.

M. Supervision Exercised: None

N. Time Required to Perform: 1-2 years