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Opening Global Doors: How NASDA and SRTGs Help U.S. Farmers Reach New Markets Together

For U.S. farmers and food producers, reaching new buyers helps build more resilient and sustainable operations. Opportunities to expand into new markets often lie outside of the U.S., as buyers look for the quality, innovation and reliability that American agriculture delivers every day. But expanding into international markets can be complex, especially for small- and medium-sized businesses, and that's why State Regional Trade Groups and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture partner to help.

Both NASDA and the SRTGs are cooperative agreement holders with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working in partnership with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service to strengthen agricultural trade and export opportunities. NASDA members often serve on SRTG boards, providing policy expertise, farmer perspectives in their states and regions, and further opportunities for collaboration to advance agricultural trade. While the organizations' goals to expand trade opportunities, educate about U.S. agriculture practices and advance agriculture worldwide align are shared, their roles are distinct to their individual strengths and responsibilities.

NASDA represents the state departments of agriculture in all 50 states and four U.S. territories and helps [open doors to new markets](#) through building international relationships and creating opportunities for knowledge exchange. NASDA convenes agricultural leaders, facilitates trade missions and connects state and federal partners to align trade policy with market development priorities. When NASDA leads a trade mission or hosts international trade pavilions, the goal is to create connections, educate about U.S. farms and businesses, learn about challenges and opportunities in trading with specific countries, share best practices, and foster trust that makes it easier for U.S. products to enter and grow in those markets. These conversations are often focused on policies and regulations related to trade. NASDA helps set the stage for long-term market access and agricultural cooperation.

SRTGs take the next step by helping farmers and agribusinesses turn those opportunities into tangible results. The trade groups do not focus on policy, but on helping U.S. businesses secure sales by offering services such as export training, analysis of export markets and opportunities, international marketing campaigns and business development and marketing assistance. SRTGs help producers promote, brand and sell their commodities and value-added products around the world.

There are [four SRTGs](#): Food Export–Midwest USA, Food Export–Northeast, the Southern United States Trade Association and the Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association. Having multiple groups across the U.S. helps provide regionally tailored support for farmers and food producers. Their programs include cost-share funding, buyer matchmaking and in-market promotion, ensuring that producers have practical tools and resources needed to export successfully.

Collaboration efforts between NASDA and SRTGs go far beyond NASDA members serving on the trade groups' boards. For example at NASDA's [A Taste of the States](#) trade shows, SRTGs host their own booths. Also at the A Taste of the States: Chicago show, Food Export partners with NASDA to host a Foodservice Buyers Mission to match international buyers with suppliers for one-on-one meetings to



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generate new sale leads and build relationships. At the 2025 A Taste of the States: Chicago show, NASDA sponsored three buyers while Food Export–Midwest USA and Food Export–Northeast sponsored an additional 13 buyers. Additionally, SRTGs often participate in NASDA’s trade missions, such as Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association Executive Director Jason Fearneyhough [joining NASDA in California](#) earlier this year for an inbound Morocco trade mission. Through trade mission participation, SRTGs, NASDA and officials from the government, public and private sectors are able to come together, often directly on the farm or on a business floor, to discuss challenges and opportunities and offer first-hand insight to the agricultural industry both in the U.S. and abroad.

By working in tandem, NASDA and the SRTGs deliver lasting benefits to U.S. farmers and agribusinesses. This collaboration ensures a seamless pathway for farmers from exploring a new market to making their first international sale. The result is a coordinated, nationwide effort to enhance U.S. competitiveness, build relationships and showcase the excellence of American agriculture on the global stage.

Learn more about NASDA’s trade activities and its partnership with SRTGs by [following NASDA tradeshow on social media](#).

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NASDA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. NASDA grows and enhances American food and agricultural communities through policy, partnerships and public engagement. To learn more about NASDA, please visit www.nasda.org.



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