U.S. MEAT EXPORT FEDERATION BRANDED PROGRAM APPLICATION

Who is Eligible
Only U.S. entities are eligible for this program. In addition, the program is limited to small businesses. These standards are defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and includes the maximum number of employees a company (together with its parent companies and subsidiaries) has on average in a given year. Participants must fit within one of the categories listed in the table below. With the onset of supplemental funding from 2024-2030, the small business size standards for the "Normal Branded Year" may be exceeded by 300% and are defined in the "RAPP/AFTPP Funded Branded Year" column.

Industry Role	Normal Branded Year	RAPP/AFTPP-Funded Branded Year
Animal (except poultry) Slaughtering	Maximum 1,000 employees	Maximum 3,000 employees
Meat Processor	Maximum 1,000 employees	Maximum 3,000 employees
Other	Maximum 500 employees	Maximum 1,500 employees

In addition, participants must own the brand name under which the product is marketed. If the participant does not own the brand name, it must provide documentation that it is the legal representative of the brand owner (USMEF Certificate of Exclusivity), and that brand owner must also meet the BPP program eligibility requirements as a U.S.-owned entity (but **not** the small business size standards) or must be an agricultural association or cooperative.

Products promoted must contain at least 50 percent U.S. red meat to qualify.

Program Year
Activities must be completed within the given program year. The program year begins January 1, 2026 and ends December 31, 2026.

The following are examples of activities that may be eligible for matching funding to offset certain costs in support of export development activities:

- Exhibiting at trade shows and fairs, including select U.S. domestic trade shows with large international attendance. **Please Note:** participants that previously attended an approved domestic trade show using **non-Branded Products Promotion (BPP) funding will not be eligible to receive funding to attend the same show for three years**. Please refer to the program manual for specifics on trade show eligibility.
- Retail and foodservice promotions, including demonstrations, point-of-sale materials, signs, displays, and costumes (does not include travel eligibility).
- Seminars, including materials, translation of company literature, interpreters, set-up costs/room rental, and presentation production (does not include travel eligibility).
- Website development intended for an international audience including expenses such as domain, maintenance, translation, web banner design, etc.
- Social media ads and PR campaigns intended for an international audience including KOL fees, social media management and design fees, etc.
- Website banner ad placement intended for international audience.

****Restrictions for this program are subject to FAS MAP, RAPP and AFTPP rules and regulations without exceptions.**

Activity Reimbursement and Fees
USMEF will reimburse 50 percent of the costs of the participant's approved reimbursable activities (and eligible expenses), with the participant paying for the remaining share of the costs. Participants may use funding from other organizations for the same activity as long as the monies pay for different costs. This additional funding *must* be described in the BPP application, including the organization name and activities funded. No funds, services, or personnel provided by any U.S. or state government agency or a commodity check-off can be counted as part of the participant's 50 percent contribution, nor can costs reported by the participant be covered by any other state or federally sponsored program.

To offset administrative costs, USMEF charges a 5 percent fee based on the total amount of funding awarded. If the participant defaults on the contract, the administrative fee is not refunded. Administrative costs must be paid prior to receiving reimbursement and cannot be deducted from reimbursement funds.

Activity Evaluation
During the program year, USMEF will request export sales data related to funded activities to report to USDA/FAS. Collection and reporting of program results is critical to the future availability of the Branded Program. Following the program year, USMEF will distribute a more comprehensive evaluation form to further gauge the success of the activities funded. **Failure to provide evaluation information will result in exclusion from the program in future years.**

Brand and Country-of-Origin Identification Requirements
All printed materials, signs, tradeshow booths, etc., funded by the branded program must prominently display the brand being promoted and the words "Product of the U.S.A.," "Made in America," or a similar statement. To demonstrate compliance, participants will be required to submit proof (photos, hardcopies, etc.). Participants may send samples to USMEF prior to printing/production to confirm compliance. Company address lines, state names in the brand name, state abbreviations, and **USDA inspection seals** are **NOT** sufficient country of origin identifiers.

Ineligible Expenses
Expenditures not eligible for reimbursement include, but are not limited to:
- ✓ Salaries, living expenses and office costs.
- ✓ Selling costs, including slotting fees.
- ✓ Coupons, "price-off" deals.
- ✓ Capital expenditures such as permanent displays, business cards, or company attire.
- ✓ Market research.
- ✓ Cost of product samples.
- ✓ Product development costs.
- ✓ Production costs for packaging or labeling unless such packaging or labeling is necessary to meet the importing requirements of a foreign country.

Travel Expenses
- ✓ **USMEF can only reimburse economy class airfare on a U.S. carrier for the participant to travel to an international trade show.** Travelers must conform to the U.S. Federal Travel Regulations and the "Fly America Act," meaning USMEF can only reimburse its share of economy fares on U.S. carriers. Exceptions are made for flights to Europe (European airlines are permitted) and Japan (Japanese airlines permitted).
- ✓ USMEF will only reimburse travel for up to two company representatives.

Please see the program manual for more information on travel regulations.

Acceptable Proof of Payment Documents
For each invoice you wish to be reimbursed, the following is a list of all the acceptable forms of documentation to verify proof of payment.

- ✓ Copy of checks: (*If a check is covering multiple expenses, a remittance statement that outlines individual invoices must also be included.)*
- ✓ Credit card statements (all personal information can be blacked out)
- ✓ Wire transfers
- ✓ Receipts are only acceptable for small cash purchases made directly at retail outlets or paid to contracted labor (such as interpreters or sample distributors at trade shows). In all other cases, copy of checks, credit card statements or wire transfers are required proof of payment documentation to meet reimbursement eligibility rules.

Before continuing to the application, please sign that you have read and understand application criteria:

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Company Name:

Contact Name & Title:

Address (city, state, zip):

Congressional District:

DUNS Number (if applicable):

Telephone Number:

E-Mail Address:

Small Business Criteria:

How many employees does your company have? If you are an agricultural cooperative, please note here. _____

Do you own the brand(s) being promoted? _____

Target Export Market: (*List only **one** specific country, and not a region).* _____

Dates Activity Will Take Place: _____

Activity Name: (*List specific trade show name, promotional, or educational activity.*) _____

Target Market Segment: (*Circle/highlight all that apply.*)

Trade Hotel/Restaurant Retail Consumer

Activity Plan

1. Verification of U.S. Origin of Product(s) to be Promoted:

Product Description*	Brand/Label Names	% of Product that is of U.S. Origin **

*Please identify specific cuts or further processed items (i.e., ribs, sausage, hot dog, etc.)

** U.S. origin must be determined based on the weight of the agricultural components, excluding added water.

2. **Activity Description & Strategic Market Plan:** (*Use additional space as necessary*.)
   Please provide a comprehensive description for how you will introduce/promote your product(s) during the activity. Outline your knowledge of the market you are targeting and how your strategy will help you reach your export goals. If applicable, describe previous activities in the market and their results.

3. **Past Funding:** (*Please describe, if applicable.*)
   Have you conducted this activity in the past using other funding, including private company funds?

   If yes, please describe when, and describing funding sources used.

4. **Other Outside Funding Received for this Activity:** (*Please describe, if applicable.*)

5. **Benchmarks and Activity Goals:**

Total Direct Sales both Domestically & Internationally (volume and value)*

Year	Total Sales Value (US$) (Domestic & International)	Total Export Volume (International Only)	Total Export Sales Value (US$) (International Only)
2024			
2025			
2026**			

*Do not include domestic or export sales through other U.S. third parties.
**For 2026, numbers for volume and value represent estimates/goals.

Direct Sales to Target Export Country (volume and value)*

Year	Target Export Country Volume	Target Export Country Sales Value (US$)
2024		
2025		
2026**		

*Do not include export sales through other U.S. third parties.
**For 2026, numbers for volume and value represent estimates/goals.

6. Estimated Activity Budget:

Item(s)	Cost (USD$)
Please edit/add line items to reflect your branded activity (i.e. trade show; retail/foodservice promotion; seminar)	
Booth Cost	
Shipping costs	
Promotional/educational materials	
Airfare (only for international shows)	
*Per-diem (only for international shows, **USMEF will fill this in using most recent Department of State per diem rates for the activity destination for both maximum lodging and meal budgets**)*	*Please note the number of people from your organization attending the show here:*
Sub-Total	
	x 50%
Maximum Contract Amount	

*USMEF can reimburse daily per diem rates for the participant consistent with those established by the U.S. State Department for specific cities. Branded Program funds will cost share the full per diem amount for meals and incidentals during the dates of the trade show and will only cost share 75% of the per diem for meals and incidentals for the day prior and day post the trade show. Branded Program funds will cost share up to the full per diem lodging amount for the days of the trade show and the day prior to the trade show. Daily foreign per diem rates can be found at: https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp.

Where to Send Applications:

Email your completed application and submittal fee to evavra@usmef.org (applications can also be sent to the following address). Please contact USMEF for additional information regarding the Branded program.

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