

Technical Agreements

Description: Numerous formal agreements with foreign countries for technical and scientific exchanges in the agri-food sector have been established mainly by Agriculture Canada but also by provincial governments.

Assessment: In addition to providing for reciprocal visits by scientific groups they can identify areas for priority activity where Canada can benefit from such scientific interchange. From our viewpoint they can be of particular relevance in gaining access to germplasm for breeding programs conducted in Canada.

From a market development perspective, exchanges demonstrate Canadian expertise in many areas. In centrally planned economies there is particular benefit in demonstrating our expertise to officials who may be involved in the decision making process. With countries such as China where Canada has a large balance in agricultural trade, technical exchanges help to partially offset criticism that Canada should purchase more Chinese agricultural products to help balance our large grain sales.

Technical exchanges generate goodwill and a good image for Canada as a country willing to freely exchange scientific information and personnel.

Model Farms

Description: Model farms are complete farming systems established to demonstrate technology usually in a specific sector, e.g. dairy farming. They are equipped with the latest equipment and advanced techniques of management are used. Demonstration work and teaching may also be done on model farms.

Assessment: Model farms are effective in centrally planned economies and in developing economies. They allow a complete farming system to be demonstrated on a fully operational basis. Training can also be accomplished. High production efficiency can be demonstrated as compared to situations when only certain equipment or sub-sections are utilized, in some cases by poorly trained personnel.

Establishing and operating model farms is expensive. There appears to be some question whether export sales resulting from model farms justifies the costs. Is the money used in the most efficient manner in promoting Canadian technology and equipment? Excellent profile is generated however by having a showcase for Canada.

Dissemination of Information

Description: Information from posts abroad is provided to businessmen and federal and provincial government departments involved in trade development. Scheduled and "spot" reports form the basis of the reporting system. Trade officers posted abroad are considered to be the "eyes and ears" for exporters particularly for small and medium sized firms. Information is often communicated directly to firms or sent through headquarters for dissemination, as is the case for scheduled reports.

Assessment: Accurate and timely information is essential if Canadian exporters are to operate effectively in the international marketing environment. Posts provide this information directly to exporters in many cases via telex,