



JUN 17 2016

Ms. Claire Gilbert
Program Coordinator, Haiti and The Middle East
Grassroots International
179 Boylston Street, 4th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02130

Dear Ms. Gilbert:

Thank you for your email of May 2, 2016, to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern-Dole) Program in Haiti. The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) was asked to reply for USDA.

The United States is committed to supporting the people of Haiti by helping to create jobs, boost incomes, reduce extreme poverty and ensure greater food security, especially for its most vulnerable citizens. Nearly one-third of Haitian children suffer from chronic malnutrition and stunting, and the food security situation has been compounded by the challenges of extreme weather. Severe drought associated with the 2015 El Nino has caused crop losses across much of the country and, as a result, national crop production is totaling less than 50 percent of the five-year average.

In conjunction with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), USDA currently provides daily hot meals to more than 175,000 children through the McGovern-Dole Program. In partnership with WFP and in coordination with the Haitian government, USDA donated 500 metric tons of peanuts, which are a traditional part of the Haitian diet and a vital source of protein, to be used as a morning snack to supplement the daily meals we are providing.

Prior to the donation, USDA worked closely with WFP to develop a distribution program that would not negatively affect Haiti's domestic peanut market. To prevent leakage into the commercial marketplace, the peanuts are packaged in individual bags and are to be consumed at school only. There will be a strong monitoring and evaluation program with the WFP to ensure the peanuts go directly to the children who need them. We are also taking measures to strengthen local food production through tools such as USDA-funded research into the use of locally procured peanuts in emergency rations and in school meal programs.

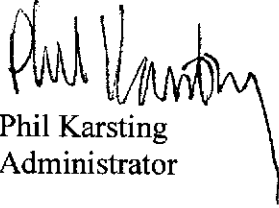
USDA is also providing support for a new vocational agricultural school that will train the next generation of Haitian agricultural professionals. In addition, in collaboration with the U.S. Agency for International Development, USDA has provided more than \$15 million in technical expertise to the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture to revitalize Haiti's agriculture sector.

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We will continue this collaboration with the Haitian government, and further emphasize the importance of local production and procurement, as we begin implementing the recently authorized Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program.

USDA will continue to work closely with its partners and the government of Haiti to address the country's current food security challenges and to strengthen the Haitian agricultural sector for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Karsting", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Phil Karsting
Administrator