



The Cochran Fellowship Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), with the cooperation and financial support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation is pleased to announce the **2011 Cochran Fellowship Program** for Bulgaria.

The America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF) assists in the development and growth of a vibrant private sector in Bulgaria, helping the country to realize its full potential as a successful, modern European nation. ABF is a successor to the Bulgarian American Enterprise Fund, an investment fund created by the U.S. government acting through the U.S. Agency for International Development. The grants provided by ABF build on the legacy of goodwill and friendship that exists between the American and Bulgarian people.

The Cochran Fellowship Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service. It provides U.S.-based agricultural training opportunities for senior and mid-level specialists and administrators from public and private sectors who are concerned with agricultural trade, agribusiness development, management, policy, and marketing.

Twenty six years ago, U.S. Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi envisioned providing training and support to help nations improve their agricultural systems and strengthen and enhance trade links with the United States. This year the Cochran Fellowship Program celebrates its 25th Anniversary.

Since its inception in 1984, the program has provided U.S. - based training for over 13,500 international participants from 121 countries worldwide.

Training Focus

The program offers short-term training opportunities, most ranging from two weeks to three months, depending on the objectives of the program. Participants meet with

professionals in their fields, participate in field observations and industry visits, experience on-the-job training, and attend university courses and seminars.

FAS works closely with Cochran Fellowship Program and U.S. agricultural trade and market development associations to identify potential areas of training for countries participating in the program. Every effort is made to match U.S. agricultural interests with those of recipient countries.

Training topics for 2011 are as follows:

- Advanced grain production, technology and best management practices
- Advanced dairy cattle production, technology and best management practices
- Forest management and best forestry practices

Program Design

Each program reflects a philosophy that training should provide participants with sound technical knowledge and the opportunity to test and practice new skills in practical situations. Therefore, most programs offer a mixture of technical instruction, practical field observations, and "hands-on" experience. Programs are specially designed in accordance with the training objectives discussed during interviews with candidates and the recommendations of the respective FAS foreign agricultural affairs officer.

Applicant Eligibility

Program participation is open to the staff of agribusinesses, government departments, universities, and other agricultural organizations. In their own countries, applicants may be managers, technicians, scientists, professors, administrators, or policy makers. All participants must be in good health. Applicants are strongly advised to have a thorough physical exam prior to traveling to the United States. Participants who are proficient in the oral and written usage of the English language are preferred.

Selection Procedures

Applications are required to be completed in English (preferably typed) and should be submitted to the FAS Sofia office at the U.S. Embassy at agsofia@fas.usda.gov. or alex.todorov@usda.gov and mila.boshnakova@fas.usda.gov. The deadline for submission of applications is **March 20, 2011**

The application must include a detailed description of the training request. Please, see the application form for 2011 at www.bulgaria.usembassy.gov/fas.html

Interviews: A final pool of applicants will be selected and interviewed during country visits by CFP staff from USDA/Washington in **early April 2011, upon further individual notification.**

Committee Selection: Final approval of Cochran Fellowship Program candidates will be made by a USDA committee on the basis of a candidate's qualifications, an interview, and country specific training needs.

Training Schedule

Training will take place as soon as the appropriate training program can be arranged. The Cochran Fellowship Program officer selects training sites on the basis of (1) seasonal variances and growing seasons, (2) trainer availability, and (3) schedules at training sites.

Evaluation

Program participants are expected to submit an oral and written evaluation to their program officer upon completion of their training.

Follow-Up

After the training program is completed, trainers and program participants correspond with one another to ensure the objectives of the training were met. This type of relationship is strongly encouraged to extend the training benefits to all involved.

Cochran Alumni are encouraged to "keep in touch". One of the possible ways to do this is through the Cochran Community on the State Alumni website.

For more information, please contact:

Cochran Fellowship Program
USDA/FAS/ICD/Food Industries Division
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<http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/cochran/cochran.asp>

