



STATE OF NEBRASKA

ROBERT B. EVNEN
SECRETARY OF STATE

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(left-right Secretary of State Bob Evnen, US Ambassador Herro Mustafa)

Secretary of State Bob Evnen leads a second trade mission to Bulgaria

LINCOLN- Secretary of State Bob Evnen has issued his final report on the successful trade mission he led to the Republic of Bulgaria, financed in part by a grant from the USDA Emerging Markets Program. Bulgaria is growing economically and is a stable European Union (EU) member. It also is an important gateway into the wider EU market for agricultural products due to its political and financial stability, its Black Sea ports, and its developing agriculture sector.

This trade mission was a follow-up to a trade mission to Bulgaria held in 2019. An Emerging Market Program (EMP) grant through USDA funded a portion of the trade mission.

“We returned to Bulgaria after our successful visit in 2019. Nebraska dry edible beans were the focus of this trade mission,” stated Secretary Evnen. “Nebraska is the number one grower of Great Northern beans (GNB) in the United States and the number three grower of Pinto beans.”

In 2021, the Nebraska bean industry experienced a surplus of Great Northern beans, partly due to a 25 percent retaliatory tariff imposed by the EU on dry edible beans from the U.S. Earlier this year that tariff was removed. Nebraska dry beans can once again be price-competitive in Bulgaria and the EU, giving our growers and processors greater access to these markets and helping to alleviate pressure from the surplus.

Pierfrancesco Sportelli, Kelley Bean International Trading Manager from the Netherlands participated in the trade mission. Kelley Bean Company is a large western Nebraska processor. Sportelli met with two major dry bean processors and distributors in Bulgaria, and he participated in a conference with others interested in Nebraska ag products.

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German Martos Director of Sales Lindsay Irrigation, and Dr. Chris Calkins, representing beef from Nebraska, also participated in the trade mission. Martos met with the largest agricultural grower in Bulgaria and, as a result of that meeting, Lindsay will be sending an engineer to Bulgaria to evaluate potential irrigation advances for that grower.

Dr. Calkins, Professor Emeritus of Animal Science at UNL, presented information about the superior quality of beef from Nebraska to an eager audience of chefs and hospitality managers. Calkins also engaged in a cutting demonstration, showing the audience how to increase the value of cuts from a shoulder clod and chuck roll.

“We greatly appreciate the work of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service in Bulgaria, whose assistance and support was integral to the success of this trade mission,” Evnen said. “We are grateful for the strong support of our trade mission provided by the U.S. Embassy in Sofia. We also thank the Nebraska Department of Agriculture for its administrative support in processing this grant request.”

The USDA has indicated its strong interest in continuing to work with the Nebraska Secretary of State’s office in future trade missions.

“We are very happy with the outcomes and look forward to ongoing trade between Nebraska and Bulgaria, and other markets around the world,” Evnen concluded.

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