



# Strategic Planning Process Report

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# Executive Summary

# Key Takeaways From This Report

FAEA works on food/feed safety laws and regulations that facilitate the export of products represented by FAEA members. The organization also ties members to USDA/FAS work and offers a networking platform for member orgs/leaders. Historically, FAEA's greatest impact has stemmed from long-term investment and focused effort on detailed issues and challenges.

To date in the most recent strategic planning process, members have agreed:

- to a governance proposal for a rotating chair and vice chair, to be implemented after a pending staff transition.
- to continued with the established pace of meetings and engage SMEs within members orgs, as needed and on an ad hoc basis.
- to establish a Codex working group made up of member organization Codex experts, as available.
- to continue making decisions by consensus, as has been the organization's historic approach.
- when setting target markets, to prioritize 1) impact potential and 2) the readiness and willingness of market leaders to engage.

Next steps for FAEA in this process include:

- finalizing a new priority setting process and new market priorities discovered using that process.
- discussion and discernment about the working capacity of FAEA in the near- and medium-terms.
- articulating how success will be measured for the org's performance and against goals in target markets.
- undertaking a process of hiring and onboarding a new executive director.
- continuing to memorialize and articulate the successes of the organization through success stories and other methods.

# FAEA Strategic Planning Elements

Values	Vision	Mission	Goals	Strategies	Tactics
<p>What guides you? What do you hold most dear?</p>	<p>What version of the world do you want to be living in?</p>	<p>What are you here to do?</p>	<p>Based on your vision of the future, what do you want to have happen? What do you want to get done?</p>	<p>What is going to make your goals happen? What's the play you're going to make to win?</p>	<p>What do you or others actually have to do to implement your strategy?</p>
<p>science-based long-term focus being nimble member-driven having impact belief in change</p>	<p>a world in which emerging markets have regulatory systems aligned with the U.S. and international standards</p>	<p>to influence food/feed safety laws by offering technical assistance and resources that demonstrate sound regulatory practices</p>	<p>In development for 2023/2024/2025 - see pages 13-15</p>	<p>established through FAEA's history, these vary by situation and can include monitoring, direct engagement and partnerships</p>	<p>assessments workshops trainings briefings networks USG partnership mentoring info sharing Codex sponsorship team study tours/exchanges</p>

# Contents/Purpose Of This Document

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The Food and Ag Export Alliance (FAEA) Board agreed in late 2022 to undertake a strategic planning process for the organization. As conceptualized by spring 2023, this effort aimed to include the traditional work of strategic planning - reviewing vision, mission, key goals and strategies to reach them - while also diving into FAEA's operations to discern or confirm agreements on priority setting processes, governance, staff job descriptions, funding, membership and more.

The subsequent strategic review has focused on two work areas:

- what the organization does: the markets in which it works, the activities it conducts, how it describes itself and its successes, and what future-looking goals should be.
- how the organization runs: including funding, priorities setting, membership, value and ROI, communication and governance.

Key tasks of the work undertaken through this process have included:

- checking in with members after the acute Covid period to gauge their satisfaction with FAEA's functioning.
- discussing and aligning on the value and purpose of the organization and its areas of focus.
- developing a draft process for prioritization of FAEA's work, described in this report.
- getting down on paper key elements of FAEA's approach on all related topics and next-step questions to address.

To support this process, interviews were conducted in March 2023 with each available member organization and key figures from FAEA's wider ecosystem, including USDA contacts and past leaders. A data report submitted in April 2023 summarized the findings of this outreach, which members discussed at length during a Zoom call in mid-June.

At the organization's July 2023 Board meeting, the group discussed:

- priorities for the work, including current country and program priorities;
- the organization's priority-setting process;
- how FAEA will do the work, including governance, working groups and staff; and
- what these decisions mean for membership and funding changes going forward.

This strategic planning process intersected with the announcement of a staff transition, the result of which will bring change to both organizational processes and expertise. With that in mind, at the July meeting, the Board worked toward conclusion on some questions while deciding to hold off on answering others until after the new staff arrangement is complete. As a practical matter, that means parts of the review as documented here are functionally finished, while other parts are actively in development, and still other parts are pending input from the new executive director.

What follows is meant to reflect agreements as of July 2023. Rather than a "final product," this should be considered a working document to help guide the organization's leaders as they take it into the next phase of its structure and activities.

# FAEA History and Background



# FAEA History

Conversations with former FAEA leaders and current FAEA members, supplemented by document review, grounded the work of this strategic planning process in the organization's history and successes to date. Key insights included:

- FAEA developed out of conversations circa the early 2000s among corn and soybean farmers about a lack of coordination between checkoff programs. This dialogue, known as “The St. Louis Project,” sought to coordinate work on the common needs of feed/animal agriculture-related cooperators. FAEA was launched in 2004.
- FAEA was explicitly not formally structured; it was not intended to become another cooperator but rather to operate with MAP and member funding. FAEA was always meant to do work that was complimentary to the work done by its members.
- Early in FAEA's life, there was a strong desire to have elected leaders (versus staff leaders) from member organizations as chair/vice chair; Dennis Erpelding, employed by Elanco, as an elected leader at USMEF, filled this role for more than 10 years.
- Early priority setting was based on 1) member needs; 2) ability to properly serve a market; and 3) accessible funding.
- Historically, work plans were developed by the the executive director surveying the environment, doing early assessments to determined fruitful areas of work, and pursuing those with Board approval. Committees of subject matter experts would form and dissolve as needed.
- For much its existence, FAEA has had more money than it could reasonably spend with only staff capacity of a part-time executive director. It has reduced dues in the past, and also it built up a relatively healthy reserve account.
- Reviews of FAEA's strategy and approach were conducted circa 2014/2015 and 2016/2017.
- FAEA has worked in a variety of markets and with Codex, with notable success in Vietnam and China.

# FAEA Today

- FAEA's current membership includes: Elanco; Merck; North American Renderers Association (NARA); National Pork Producers Council (NPPC); USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC); U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC); U.S. Grains Council (USGC); the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF); and the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC).
- FAEA still functions as a coalition organization with access to USDA/FAS MAP funds, managed through USGC.
- In more recent years, FAEA's staff has been expanded from one, part-time executive director to a part-time executive director plus a part-time Codex coordinator and a part-time program support coordinator.
- The FAEA Board meets twice per year to oversee functions of the organization and set priorities for its work. Most Board representatives are executive- or vice president-level staff from member organizations. At this time, input from others within FAEA member organizations is limited and ad hoc.
- FAEA members generally make decisions by consensus and strongly prefer to continue doing so.
- Members support FAEA and are broadly aware that the environment in which FAEA is working has changed significantly:
  - in target markets, due to Covid, the trade policy environment (lack of negotiations) and geopolitics.
  - in the organization, with a new executive director, more/new staff, changing funding levels, constraints on FAS dollars and changed abilities to/needs for travel.
- At present, the organization is nearing the end of membership dues reserves that have funded expanded staff capacity, which has prompted questions about membership size and dues structure.
- The benefits of FAEA accrue to its members from both its direct work and its cooperative structure.

# Existing FAEA Approach

## Stated objective:

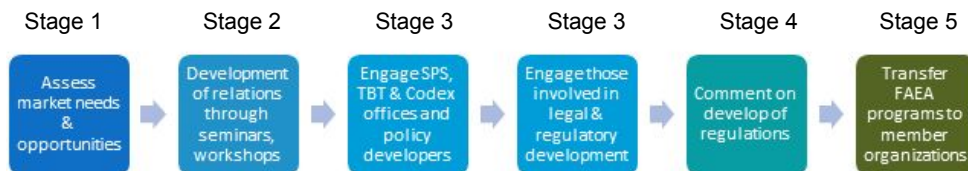
- 1)...identify and understand what foreign nations/officials are considering in terms of establishing, revising, and implementing food/feed safety and animal health/production laws and regulations...
- 2) then taking action to intervene BEFORE any potential trade restricting barriers are put into place.

## Stated activities:

- 1) management and administration
- 2) information gathering, analysis and intelligence sharing
- 3) capacity building activities
- 4) advocacy at Codex

## Stated strategy:

- 1) identify where food/feed safety and animal health laws and regulations are being developed or changed for the products represented by FAEA members
- 2) prioritize to focus on those countries where FAEA members share a common interest in maintaining or gaining access
- 3) evaluate progress in the markets where we are working and also consider any new opportunities or challenges that develop globally



# 2023 Strategic Planning Process Results

# FAEA's Identity And Purpose

## FAEA:

- works on food/feed safety laws and regulations that facilitate export of products represented by FAEA members.
- is oriented around action versus information sharing.
- brings members together to engage in work they can't do individually (due to time, expertise, cost).
- creates an input mechanism for industry and ties members to USDA/FAS work.
- offers a networking platform for member orgs/leaders that has impact beyond FAEA's mission.

**FAEA uniquely offers** multi-cooperator focus on regulatory structures and issues in emerging markets.

**FAEA is an organization that does a very specific thing very well. FAEA's work should be focused and action- and implementation-oriented.**

**Historically, FAEA's greatest impact has stemmed from:**

- long-term (five years or more) return on investment.
- being there as a trusted resource.
- working on very focused and detailed issues and challenges.
- creating local networks in target markets.

# FAEA Strategic Planning Elements

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# Operational Agreements

## Governance

- Members agreed to a governance proposal that would institute a rotating chair and vice chair with two-year terms.
- Members agreed not to move forward with implementing the new leadership structure until after the pending staff transition.

## Meetings

- Members agreed to continue with twice-yearly, in-person Board meetings.
- Members agreed to ad hoc/informal calls as needed on emergent issues and/or when staff needs quicker input than possible based on Board meeting schedule.
- Members agreed that SMEs within their organizations could be requested for subject-specific input as needed including participation in informal (but not standing) working groups.
- Members agreed to establish a Codex working group made up of member organization Codex experts, as available.

## Decision Making

- Members agreed to continue making decisions by consensus, as has been the organization's historic approach.
- Members further noted that they want to keep the organization's total membership at a size and within a scope of interests that continues to allow for consensus-based decision making.

# Operational Agreements, Continued

## Expanded Membership

- Questions on if and how to actively expand membership were deferred until after pending staff transition.

## Dues Modifications

- Questions on dues modifications, including increased dues and/or changed dues structures, were deferred until after pending staff transition.

## Staffing Approach

- Noting that a staff transaction is pending, members agreed a new executive director should offer: international experience, FAS experience, strong communication skills, and the ability to offer direction on market/organizational priorities.

## Member Communications

- Members broadly expressed a desire for increased communication on FAEA work; see details of these requests and ideas to address them in full data report (April 2023).

## Articulating Success

- Members and FAS stakeholders requested increased access to success stories and other demonstrations of the outcomes of the organization's work; see details in data report (April 2023).



# Priority Setting

A primary goal of this process was to develop a priority setting approach that works well for FAEA given its operational capacity and the shifting policy environment.

An extensive list of criteria for market prioritization emerged from the member interview process (see data report, April 2023). **These criteria were discussed and summarized at the July 2023 meeting**, as articulated in the box to the right.

## Other important considerations for the FAEA priority setting process include:

- Members are encouraged, and committed to, shifting to a “FAEA view” when discussing and deciding on FAEA goals, informed but not solely driven by the priorities of member representatives’ home organizations.
- A robust priority setting process will result in greater specificity about projects within markets versus simply a list of target countries, including geography, issue and approach (i.e. address X in Y working with Z).
- Work in some FAEA target markets will involve active programming while work in others will be primarily monitoring of work done/could be done.
- As noted elsewhere in this report, the FAEA Board prefers to make decisions about market activities based on discussion and consensus.

## Criteria From July 2023 Meeting

### Top Priorities

- Impact potential
- Readiness and willingness of leaders in market to engage

### Other Significant Considerations

- Precedent, or how much impact working in this market could have over time locally and in other markets
- U.S. government support

### Also Noted

- Value of FAEA exports in the market
- What FAEA can uniquely do
- Collective action - where does it matter that we work together?

# Priority Setting/Evaluation Process



# Market Priorities - July 2023 Board Meeting

## Most mentions:

- Kenya (9)
- Bangladesh (5)
- Cambodia (5)
- Nigeria (5)

## Most #1 votes:

- Nigeria (4)

## Additions from provided list of current FAEA priorities:

- Senegal (3)
- Philippines (2)
- Latin America (1)

	1	2	3	4
<b>Elanco</b>	Vietnam	Cambodia	Bangladesh	Kenya
<b>Merck</b>	China	Vietnam	Bangladesh	Kenya
<b>NARA</b>	Nigeria	Kenya	Cambodia	Latin America?
<b>NPPC</b>	China	Vietnam	Philippines	Kenya
<b>USAPEEC</b>	Nigeria	Cambodia	Kenya	Senegal
<b>USDEC</b>	Cambodia	Philippines	Bangladesh	Kenya
<b>USGC</b>	Kenya	Nigeria	Bangladesh	Senegal
<b>USMEF</b>	Nigeria	Kenya	Vietnam	Senegal
<b>USSEC</b>	Nigeria	Kenya	Bangladesh	Cambodia

# Measurement/Critical Success Factors/KPIs

Greater definition of how FAEA's work will be measured - including critical success factors and key performance indicators - should be part of the process of further refining FAEA's near- and medium-term goals, strategies and tactics. Again, this has two layers:

- **Reviewing FAEA's performance as an organization:**
  - Is the organization articulating and working to achieve goals? Using money efficiently? Communicating and managing member relations well? Etc.
- **Reviewing success against mission-oriented goals:**
  - Is the organization's work making an impact in target markets? Are desired changes occurring? How is FAEA's work impacting market performance and/or attitudes toward science-based regulations in target markets? Etc.

Member interviews for this process provided numerous ideas about how these things could be evaluated; those ideas are reviewed on the next page for ease of use. However, there's **general recognition that FAEA's work is (very) long term and hard to evaluate**, quantitatively or even qualitatively. One member's comment summarized this: "You know it when you see it."

This necessary ambiguity around measurement of FAEA's work also speaks to the desire among members and USDA/FAS stakeholders for **additional demonstration of what FAEA is doing and accomplishing** through regular communication (emails, calls as needed, Board meetings) and development of documented success stories and informal storytelling about successes.

# How do FAEA's members evaluate ROI and success?

**Generally acknowledged:** measuring success/ROI for FAEA's work is very challenging because of its policy focus and long-term nature. Still, stakeholders want to see demonstrations of progress.

## WHAT GETS DONE

- progress - hit objectives, momentum
- demonstrate impact

## IN MARKETS

- goal setting by participants
- engagement
- relationship growth
- what story is told after engagement
- reconsideration of regulation
- movement in food safety laws
- laws being implemented
- find FAEA fingerprints
- stakeholder travel to the U.S.
- program participant surveys/stories

## WITH MEMBERS

- work can be used/added to by members
- members can be involved in programs
- build relationships with USDA

## ROI

- influence
- 3rd parties doing work we can't do
- did FAEA affect desired change?

## WOULD LIKE TO SEE....

- accomplishing something specific
- need to remind members and FAS what FAEA has accomplished

**Historical note:** interviewees noted messages on success have historically not been clearly communicated within FAS; in interviews with FAS stakeholders, they also requested additional success stories.

# Conclusions/Next Steps

The strategic review process summarized here took a broad look at FAEA's present-day work and the questions before it as it moves into its next phase of organizational life. Owing to the large scope of this work and a pending staff transition, several key questions remain unanswered even while many processes and priorities have clarified.

## **Next steps to build on this process include:**

- digging further into the market priorities articulated, which - as described on page 14 - includes staff assessments and report backs on the top 4-6 markets identified as important by members + suggested goals within those targets.
- discussion and discernment about the working capacity FAEA has in the near- and medium-terms. What combination of goals/strategies/tactics can the organization undertake? Is this satisfactory for members or do they prefer to expand capacity through adding additional members, changing dues, raising funds elsewhere, etc.?
- as goals, strategies and tactics in target market are clarified, articulating how success will be measured against them. How will stakeholders know they got what was hoped for from this work? What will they measure or assess (and with what expertise from membership, staff, others) to know it?
- concurrently, undertaking a process of hiring and onboarding a new executive director, who will necessarily bring new ideas and approaches to the table for FAEA operations and mission-focused goals.
- continuing to memorialize and articulate the successes of the organization, historically and recently, which will drive member engagement and funding under all scenarios.

# Appendix: Additional Resources

# Where To Find Historical Documents

This strategic review surfaced many historical documents and data. At present, this information “lives” in different places and with different stakeholders involved in FAEA. A brief guide to these files includes:

- Files about **historical and current operations** are held by FAEA staff.
  - Historical GBI and FAEA member budgets and expenditures – worldwide and by country
  - Historical list of FAEA activities and GBI expenditures - by country and type of expenditure
  - List of current food and feed safety opportunities/constraints of interest to FAEA members by country
  - List of historical and current Codex issues of interest to FAEA members
  - Summary of FAEA success stories and accomplishments since it was established
  - Final documents from this strategic review process
- **Additional historical files** discovered during this process are held by the consultant, to be transferred to FAEA staff/USGC.
  - Files from Richard Fritz, former FAEA executive director, and Dennis Erpelding, former FAEA chair
  - Past versions of strategic plans and decision criteria/matrices
- **Administrative records** are held by USGC.
  - UES submissions, budgets and accounting documentation
- **Documentation about this process** will be held by the consultant for a period of years and FAEA/member staffs.
- **Current, public-facing details about FAEA programs and successes** are on the FAEA website.