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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### FOOD EXPORT WELCOMES FAS ADMINISTRATOR DANIEL WHITLEY TO CHICAGO OFFICE

CHICAGO (October 6, 2023)— U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Administrator Daniel Whitley spent time on Oct. 4 and 5 with Food Export-Midwest during both a supplier visit in Indiana and at the organization’s headquarters.

On Oct. 5, Administrator Whitley visited Food Export’s office in Chicago. He met with staff members, listened to the organization’s plans for the future, and addressed employees in both Chicago and Philadelphia.

“The Foreign Agricultural Service’s long-standing partnership with Food Export Association of the Midwest USA and Food Export USA-Northeast has helped regional U.S. agriculture producers enter international markets and introduce their world-class products to new consumers around the globe for nearly 40 years,” said FAS Administrator Daniel B. Whitley. “The continued collaboration between FAS and Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast was key to achieving record-breaking exports of U.S. agricultural products and commodities the past two years, and putting us on target to have an outstanding 2023.”

FAS’s [Market Access Program](#) allocates funds to Food Export Midwest and Food Export-USA Northeast to help promote U.S. food and agricultural products across the globe. Through collaborations like this one, USDA ensures that small and medium-sized enterprises can take part in trade missions, trade shows, and other export promotion activities designed to expand their businesses and increase their bottom lines.

Food Export was honored to welcome FAS Administrator Whitley to Chicago.

“This was an exceptional day for all of us at Food Export. We are proud of the work we do here. It was an honor to welcome Administrator Whitley to our offices,” Food Export CEO/Executive Director Brendan Wilson said. “Value-added small businesses can show off the depth and breadth of American agriculture.”

Food Export receives funding through the Market Access Program (MAP), which is administered through FAS. These funds are used to help small- and medium-sized businesses export their food and agricultural-based products.

“Our public-private partnership is exceptional. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast each have more than 50 years of experience in aiding American agricultural businesses thanks to financial support from FAS,” Wilson said. “Having Administrator Whitley in our offices, addressing our team, both in Chicago and Philadelphia, and listening to our plans was a reaffirmation of the deep relationship. The future feels promising.”

Food Export is currently reviewing applications for the 2024 Branded Program. The organization’s 2024 list of approved trade shows (both domestic and international), Focused Trade Missions and Buyers Missions is available at [foodexport.org](http://foodexport.org). Educational programs, market entry and educational opportunities are available on a rolling basis.

On October 4, Administrator Whitley joined Food Export CEO/Executive Director Brendan Wilson, COO/Deputy Director-Midwest Michelle Rogowski and Liaison Manager Paul Weiss to visit BNutty in Portage, Indiana.

BNutty is a gourmet peanut butter company that is minority-owned and women-owned. It was founded by two self-professed soccer moms in Indiana who wanted to raise funds for youth programs. Since 2014, they have added 74 jobs and expanded from a home kitchen to a 48,000-square-foot facility. Food Export has helped the company expand into 13

different markets from the United Arab Emirates to Korea. BNutty works with Food Export's educational services and Market Builder and leverages the marketing dollars in the cost-share program.

"Food Export has been a critical partner for BNutty — they make it possible for us to succeed overseas and grow our business back home," BNutty Co-Founder Carol Podolak said. "Their ability to provide technical expertise, sales opportunities, and marketing dollars on a cost-effective basis helps a company of our size stay competitive in challenging markets abroad. Groups like Food Export are important public investments that allow businesses like ours to thrive."

Wilson said he is proud of BNutty's growth into international markets.

"They have stayed true to their purpose while growing beyond our borders. We have numerous more examples of exports building stronger, more resilient companies and their stakeholders benefitting," Wilson said. "The businesses we work with, and their communities, benefit greatly when they are engaged in commercial exchange on a global level. This contributes to the future food system we need."

Following his visit to Chicago, Administrator Whitley left for Germany to attend food trade show Anuga, opening October 7 in Cologne, Germany.

#### About Food Export:

Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export–Midwest) and Food Export USA–Northeast (Food Export–Northeast) are non-profit organizations that assist U.S. companies looking to start or expand export sales. Food Export aims to maximize their success through programs and services in Export Education, Market Entry, and Market Promotion.

The organizations cooperate with the agricultural promotion agencies of its 23 member states to facilitate trade between suppliers and worldwide importers, and to promote the export of food, agricultural and seafood products from those states. The organization is funded through the Market Access Program (MAP), administered by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

To become a supplier or to learn more, please visit [foodexport.org](http://foodexport.org) or email [info@foodexport.org](mailto:info@foodexport.org).

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PHOTOS on next two pages



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator Daniel Whitley (center) with USDA FAS Global Engagement Executive John P. Passino (left) and Food Export CEO/Executive Director Brendan Wilson (right) during Administrator Whitley's visit to Food Export-Midwest's Chicago office on Oct. 5.



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator Daniel Whitley (center) with BNutty co-founders Carol Podolak (second from left) and Joy Thompkins (second from right) with (back row left to right) Food Export Liaison Manager Paul Weiss, Food Export COO and Deputy Director-Midwest Michelle Rogowski, Food Export CEO/Executive Director Brendan Wilson, and USDA FAS Global Engagement Executive John P. Passino during Administrator Whitley's visit to BNutty in Portage, Indiana on Oct. 4.