

John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program

The John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program provides voluntary technical assistance to farmers, farm groups, and agribusinesses in developing and transitional countries to promote sustainable improvements in food security and agricultural processing, production, and marketing. The program relies on the expertise of volunteers from U.S. farms, land grant universities, cooperatives, private agribusinesses, and nonprofit farm organizations to respond to the local needs of host-country farmers and organizations. Volunteers, recruited from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, generally are not overseas development professionals, but rather individuals who have domestic careers, farms, and agribusinesses, or are retirees who want to participate in development efforts. Volunteers tend to be senior or mid-career professionals with practical agro-industry experience.

The Farmer-to-Farmer Program was initially authorized by Congress in the 1985 Farm Bill and funded through Title V of Public Law 480. The program was designated as the "John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program" in honor of one of the pilots killed September 11, 2001 and of former Congressman Bereuter, who initially sponsored the program.

Evaluations suggest that the program provides high quality services from volunteers. Over the past five years alone, the Program leveraged over \$31 million worth of volunteer time contributions to development efforts and mobilized \$40 million from assisted local host organizations. Nearly 1 million farmer families (representing about 47 million people) directly benefitted from the Farmer-to-Farmer Program. Approximately 37% of all individuals trained by Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers are women. Volunteers help host individuals and organizations build local institutions and linkages to resolve local problems and have provided direct hands-on training to over 120,000 people. This assistance has direct impacts, increasing sales for assisted host organizations by over \$442 million and raising incomes by \$132 million. Since program initiation, nearly 16,000 volunteer assignments have been completed in more than 110 countries.

Current Farmer-to-Farmer Program, FY14 – FY18

USAID has awarded cooperative agreements to six organizations for implementation of the core Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer programs for international agricultural development for fiscal years 2014 – 2018. The program will provide services to 26 core countries, providing over 3,000 volunteer technical assistance assignments averaging three weeks each. An additional Special Program Support project funds volunteer activities with new implementing organizations and special activities. The six program implementing organizations will work closely with overseas USAID Missions and local partner organizations, supporting a variety of development programs aimed at reducing poverty and stimulating sustainable and broad-based economic growth. The core program agreements allow USAID country programs to provide additional funding for agricultural development projects using Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers.

Farmer-to-Farmer places increased emphasis on economic impact and measurable results by concentrating volunteer assignments in specific geographic areas, commodities programs, and service sectors. New programs go beyond simply placing volunteers on an individual basis and focus on developing specific market chains for which overall impact can be evaluated. Programs build institutions and transfer technology and management expertise to link small farmers with markets that make use of comparative advantages in production, processing, and marketing. Volunteers typically work with

medium and small agro-enterprises, cooperatives, individual producers, agricultural extension and research agencies, and financial institutions.

Major areas of program focus are: horticulture, dairy and livestock, staple food crops, producer organization development, financial services, marketing and processing, agricultural education and training, and natural resources management. Current Farmer-to-Farmer Program implementing agencies and country activities are listed below:

- **Catholic Relief Services** – core country programs in East Africa
- **ACDI/VOCA** – core country programs in West Africa and in Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
- **CNFA** – core country programs in Southern Africa
- **Land O'Lakes** – core country programs in the Middle East and North Africa
- **Partners of the Americas** – core country programs in the Caribbean Basin
- **Winrock International** – core country programs in Asia and in West Africa agricultural education and training