

Trade – A Federal-State Partnership

Summary of SARL Breakout Session

January 7, 2012

Peter Thorton

North Carolina Department of Agriculture

Anne Evans

US Department of Commerce

Rusty Fowler, Chair AEM, Moderator

Peter Thorton explained that the USDA has a number of excellent programs to assist businesses with exporting. However, the USDA in most states may not have representatives that can directly meet and assist businesses. He said it was imperative for state legislators to understand that state exporting efforts need to be staffed with people who can meet industry representatives and link them up with USDA programs. Peter gave a number of examples of companies with products that people said could not export but who were able to find niche markets overseas and become very successful exporters through the use of USDA programs.

Anne Evans is an on the ground example of a US Department of Commerce representative who has worked directly with businesses to help them export. She spoke to the comprehensive assistance she offers from webinars and counseling on how to export to assisting with branding and marketing of products. She used a couple of excellent examples particularly of smaller producers that through assistance were locate markets and successfully sell overseas.

Representative Buddy Harden, Jr. (GA) commented that marketing assistance was critical to successful exporting and asked the panelists if there were enough port jobbers in the US to efficiently get products shipped overseas. Peter Thorton replied that there are not enough jobbers and that this is causing bottlenecks in transporting goods out of the country.