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Date: Tue, Nov 10, 2020 at 8:11 AM  
Subject: Realigning Our APHIS Overseas Footprint

## **Realigning Our APHIS Overseas Footprint**

For the past year, APHIS International Services has been evaluating our overseas footprint with the goal of strategically opening offices where we see burgeoning opportunities for potential market access. We have finalized several decisions and want to make you aware of some upcoming changes. Our mission to support U.S. agriculture and industry includes aligning our presence and resources to maintain current markets, increase agricultural trade, and cultivate emerging markets for animal and plant products.

To start, APHIS International Services will transition to expand the APHIS mission in the Middle East and Africa. APHIS is working with the U.S. Department of State and USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service to identify other potential office locations in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Region, a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman); and in east and west Africa, two areas of strategic importance in agricultural growth markets. We will also reopen our Cairo office in January 2021, placing two American officers at the U.S. Embassy. We are also exploring opportunities to assist the International Plant Protection Convention and will station a foreign service officer in Rome as soon as practical to support their mission to develop international standards that affect trade in plant commodities.

In the Western hemisphere, APHIS International Services will relocate Foreign Service Officers to larger regional offices to provide continued coverage to Haiti, Ecuador, Uruguay, Bolivia and Costa Rica. These countries will no longer have an American-led APHIS office, but they will continue to be covered by APHIS Foreign Service Officers in the Latin America & Caribbean Region.

### **When Will These Changes Begin?**

Offices in Ecuador, Haiti and Uruguay have already closed. In Bolivia and Costa Rica, we will scale down staffing and transition activities to other locations over the next two years.

Maintaining our continuity of service, is an agency priority. To stay up to date on our latest news, please visit our website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/internationalservices>.

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