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Voluntary Public

Date:

GAIN Report Number:

Colombia

Post: Bogota

SaborUSA - Increasing the Popularity of U.S. Food and Beverages in Colombia

Report Categories:

Market Promotion/Competition

Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events
and Shows

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Report Highlights:

SaborUSA is a non-traditional marketing campaign that began in July 2015 to promote U.S. food and beverages in Colombia. This report reviews the performance of the SaborUSA campaign in 2016 and the plans for the project in 2017.

General Information:

SaborUSA is a non-traditional marketing campaign in Colombia, funded by a FAS Global Broad-Based Initiative (GBI). We have increased the number of non-profit U.S. agricultural trade associations or cooperators participating in the GBI from 12 in July 2015 to 20 today. The lead cooperator of the project is the California Pear Advisory Board. Cooperators in the project represent a wide range of agricultural products including pears, meat, peanuts, wine, liquors, apples, poultry and eggs, popcorn, grains, table grapes, dry beans, soybeans, rice, pulses, sunflowers, other consumer oriented products, and most recently, Alaskan seafood and cotton.

The Colombian Canal 13 television station is the implementing partner for the campaign. Canal 13 is a regional television station based in Bogota that focuses on younger audiences.

***SaborUSA* Has Four Key Components**

The overall objective of the project is to increase U.S. consumer-oriented exports to Colombia by building a growing community of Colombian consumers who are interested in U.S. food culture. The campaign takes advantage of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA), a growing economy, and Colombia's fascination with all things American. There are four components in our strategy: television promotions, social media, smartphone application and website.

1. Television Promotions

Television is an extremely powerful tool for any consumer product promotional campaign. We are using television as an effective compliment to the other elements in our media mix.

- **Television Cooking Show**



Left: Phil Karsting, former FAS Administrator, and Alejandro Canedo, Plan Chef host. Right: Cristeta Comerford, White House executive chef and Karina Correa, SaborUSA host.

In 2015, we began airing the Plan Chef cooking show to highlight cooperator products. Plan Chef had

been broadcast by Canal 13 since 2011. Plan Chef helped to familiarize the Colombian audience with the SaborUSA campaign and cooperator products. Last year we developed our own television cooking show, *I ❤️ SaborUSA*, to replace Plan Chef. Similar to Plan Chef, the show aired on Canal 13 on Saturday evenings.

Our television cooking shows has had a lot of success. Over the year and a half of the project, our cooking show was seen by over 500,000 Colombians. Plan Chef was nominated in early 2016 for a TAL Award (TAL stands for Latin America public television) for interactive content for a television show. We had a number of well-known guest chefs on our show including former FAS Administrator Phil Karsting, the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Kevin Whitaker, and Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe.

The show was also helped by the State Department's Culinary Partnership. Through the partnership, we were able to have White House Executive Chef, Cristeta Comerford, and celebrity chefs such as Eric Ziebold and Rock Harper as guests on the show.

- **A New Format for our Cooking Show**

In late 2016, Canal 13 analyzed our television show viewership and viewer trends. Out of a population of around 49 million people, almost 60% use the Internet and are active in social media, and there are more cellphone accounts than there are people in Colombia.

Canal 13 determined that for a younger audience who are social media savvy, which is the target audience for the channel, shorter programs would be more effective. So, Canal 13 is developing 3-minute *I ❤️ SaborUSA* cooking shows that will be aired on Canal 13 throughout the week. This format will replace the 30 minute show that was broadcast on Saturday evenings. These new shows will also be placed on our social media and website to reach a greater audience.

- **A Wider Audience for Television Promotions**

Canal 13 is teaming up with the Discovery Channel in Bogota to increase *SaborUSA*'s audience in Colombia. Five short television advertisements will be aired on the Discovery Home & Health channel, which is based in Bogota. The channel is broadcast throughout Colombia along with a number of other Spanish speaking countries. Each advertisement will be focused on a certain product (Washington apples, U.S. popcorn, U.S. dry beans, U.S. beef and U.S. whiskey) and will be aired on Tuesday nights at prime time, one product per month, from March through July. The advertisements will direct viewers to our website (saborusa.co). We will also place these advertisements on our website.

2. Interactive Web Site (*SaborUSA.co*)



The homepage of the website has a brief explanation on *SaborUSA*. The website also has information on U.S. cooperator products, recipes (text and video), blog, where to buy U.S. products and links to cooperator websites. The website went public on July 11, 2015. At the end of July 2015, the website had 839 unique hits. As of February 2017, the web site has had 31,207 unique hits.

Since the campaign intends to produce even more digital content, Canal 13 changed the look and feel of the website to create a better experience for viewers. We will be featuring more short video recipes and practical product information. Social media will also help increase visits to the website, and both the website and social media will strengthen the *SaborUSA* message to Colombian consumers to buy U.S. products.

3. *SaborUSA* Smartphone Application



The *SaborUSA* smartphone app features recipes with cooperator products and is utilized by consumers to discover cooperator products. It is easy and free to download for both androids and I-phones. We started the app on July 7, 2015. At the end of July, we had 66 downloads. As of February 2017, we had 894.

4. Social Media



We are using Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, and Instagram to promote *SaborUSA* and cooperator activities.

- As of February 2017, Facebook had 11,159 followers.
- As February 2017, Twitter had 643 followers.
- As February 2017, Instagram had 1,473 followers
- We also have a *SaborUSA* YouTube channel.

Complimenting *SaborUSA*

- **Cochran Program**

In 2016, we took sixteen well-known Colombian chefs to the United States for training under the FAS administered Cochran Fellowship Program. The program provides U.S.-based training opportunities for Colombians in agricultural and food related fields. The chef training included seminars on the latest culinary trends, menu design, dish presentation, wine pairing, new cooking techniques and equipment, and attendance to the National Restaurant Association show in Chicago. As a result of the program, the chefs became *SaborUSA* ambassadors and have participated at various promotional activities.

FAS/Bogota intends to send six food industry journalists (from both traditional and non-traditional media) to the United States on a Cochran program later this year to learn about the dynamic gastronomy scene in the United States.

- ***SaborUSA* on the Road**

One of the ways to attract a wider audience is to showcase travel and regional cuisine. *SaborUSA* participated in *Sabores Cartagena* gastronomic festival in July 2016 in Cartagena Colombia. We also took *SaborUSA* to the United States in 2016 on successful culinary trips to Washington, DC, Virginia, and Denver.

We are expecting to take *SaborUSA* on the road once again in 2017. We plan on visiting Memphis, Tennessee for the Memphis in May International Festival, which is highlighting Colombia this year. The tour will highlight traditional Memphis barbecue, U.S. distilled spirits, cotton and Southern cuisine.



Left: The SaborUSA team filming by the National Mall at Washington, D.C. Right: Joe Vostrejs, Larimer Associate and Karina Correa, SaborUSA Host at Larimer Square, Denver.

- **State Department Assistance**

The *SaborUSA* team continues to partner with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy to expand the campaign's audience. The U.S. Embassy's website and social media are extremely popular in Colombia. We are also hoping to work with the State Department's Culinary Diplomacy Program in 2017 to showcase U.S. celebrity chefs on our show.

- **Cooperator Marketing Activities**

A primary goal of the campaign is to use *SaborUSA* to supercharge cooperator activities and promote the *SaborUSA* brand to Colombian consumers. In 2016, we promoted 23 marketing activities for U.S. food products, which reached thousands of Colombian consumers. These activities included promotions for Washington apples, California wine, U.S. beef, pork, rice, poultry, pulses and soybeans. We are hoping to expand the number of activities in 2017.



Left: Rock Harper, U.S. celebrity chef, at the SaborUSA booth in Sabores Cartagena food festival. Right: U.S. Soybean Export Council massive cooking class in Bogota.