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Summary

The project team feels that the market is well developed and will continue to expand in the Philippines. Investment in cold storage warehouses in Cebu City and Cagayan de Oro and adding more outlets on inter-island vessels in the Philippines will be feasible given its declining tariffs, market situation, and competition. The level of capacity utilization is critical to the financial returns expected on the cold storage investments.

Cold chain infrastructure in Thailand is basically sufficient to meet the current distribution needs of frozen processed potatoes. Thai consumer acceptance of western-style quick-serve restaurant foods is lower than the level observed in the Philippines. However, it is possible that extra cold storage in Phuket and trucking fleets near ports could help improve the efficiency of distribution if the demand increases in the near future.

Innovative Marketing Opportunities for Small Farmers: Local Schools as Customers

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), the West Florida Resource Conservation and Development Council (WFRCDC), and the Small Farmer Outreach, Training, and Technical Assistance Project, Florida A&M University (FAMU) have worked together over the past 3 years on a pilot project titled: *Innovative Marketing Opportunities for Small Farmers: Local Schools as Customers*. A group of small farmers in the Florida Panhandle organized into the New North Florida Cooperative and established a central location in Marianna, FL, 70 miles west of Tallahassee. The Cooperative recognized a considerable opportunity in serving local school districts with fresh agricultural products.

The Cooperative overcame initial difficulties, including lack of organization, economic difficulties, social attitudes, existing customer preferences, and lack of equipment. Realizing that effective organization was critical, these limited-resource growers formed a management team as a governing body for

the Cooperative. The management team addressed problems and handled day-to-day business activities in a unified, methodical way. The Cooperative acquired capital and purchased necessary startup equipment, such as a refrigerated trailer, cutting machines and wash sinks. The Cooperative developed a good working relationship with the Food Service Director for the Gadsden County School District by providing high-quality produce, prompt deliveries, fair prices, and courteous professionalism. The vending experiences of the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school years were positive steps for the Cooperative in building a long term, reputable business. The Cooperative's main product was fresh-cut leafy greens, but watermelons, strawberries, blackberries, and muscadine grapes were also sold. Word of mouth advertising has portrayed the Cooperative as a reputable vendor and opened doors of opportunity in other school districts, including Jackson, Leon, and Walton Counties.

The project's objectives for the 2000/2001 school year are to expand current marketing and distribution of agricultural and value-added products through additional, non-traditional marketing channels including additional school districts, military bases, and prisons.

Innovative Production and Marketing Systems to Provide Small Farmers with Sustainable Job and Income Opportunities

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Objectives

- Identify markets for various horticultural and value-added products and services
- Develop production scenarios to support identified market demand
- Develop integrated production, handling, and storage systems to support vertical market opportunities
- Estimate cost and revenue streams for selected value-added products and services
- Evaluate project's effectiveness and contribution to small farmer sustainability

This project is a two-year cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and