



**Congressional  
Research Service**

Informing the legislative debate since 1914

---

# **International Food Aid: U.S. and Other Donor Contributions**

**Charles E. Hanrahan**

Senior Specialist in Agricultural Policy

**Carol Canada**

Information Research Specialist

November 12, 2013

**Congressional Research Service**

7-5700

[www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)

RS21279

## Summary

The United States is the world's major provider of international food aid to low-income developing countries. This report provides data on the U.S. contribution to global food aid as reported by signatories of the International Food Aid Convention (FAC) and compiled by the International Grains Council (IGC), as well as data on U.S. and other donor contributions to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP).

The Food Aid Convention (FAC) is an agreement among donor countries to provide a minimum amount of food aid to low-income developing countries. The food aid commitment agreed to by all FAC signatories in 1999 was approximately 4.9 million metric tons (mmt) annually. The United States pledged to provide 2.5 mmt annually, or 51% of the total annual commitment. A new FAC, renamed the Food Assistance Convention, was negotiated in 2012. The United States ratified the new FAC on September 26, 2012. Commitments under the new convention are pending.

Data from the IGC show that U.S. food aid accounted for 56% of food aid shipments by FAC signatories over the period 1995/1996-2011/2012.

A substantial portion of U.S. food aid is channeled through the WFP. Over the period from 1996 to October 20, 2013, around 43% of donor contributions to the WFP came from the United States.

## **Contents**

Commitments Under the Food Aid Convention .....	1
Food Aid Shipments under the FAC .....	2
Food Aid Contributions to the World Food Program.....	3

## **Figures**

Figure 1. Average Annual Food Aid Shipments (%) in Wheat Equivalent by Major FAC Donors, 1995/1996-2011/2012 .....	3
Figure 2. Food Aid Contributions by Donors to the World Food Program, 1996-2013 .....	4

## **Tables**

Table 1. Annual FAC Food Aid Commitments and Annual Average Shipments.....	1
--	---

## **Appendixes**

Appendix A. Annual Food Aid Shipments by FAC Donors, 1995/96-2011/12 .....	5
Appendix B. Annual Food Aid Contributions by Donors to the World Food Program, 1996-2013 .....	6

## **Contacts**

Author Contact Information.....	11
---------------------------------	----

## Commitments Under the Food Aid Convention

The Food Aid Convention (FAC), first agreed to in 1967 during the Kennedy Round of multilateral trade negotiations held under the auspices of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), was an international agreement that constituted a framework of cooperation on food aid among major donors. The food aid commitment under the FAC was a minimum commitment and was intended to be a guarantee of food security for low-income developing countries. The signatories of the FAC were Argentina, Australia, Canada, the European Union and its member countries, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States. Signatories could provide more than their minimum commitment.

Under the FAC, the donors could express their annual food aid commitments either in tonnage or in value. Some donors—the EU, Canada, and Japan—use a mix of commodities and cash. The total commitment under the FAC (negotiated in 1999) was 4.9 million metric tons, or mmt (**Table 1** and **Appendix B**). The United States made the largest annual commitment, 2.5 mmt or 51% of the total. The combined EU commitment (European Commission and EU member countries) was around 27%. Commitments by Canada, Japan, and Australia were, respectively, 8.6%, 6.1%, and 5.1%.

**Table 1. Annual FAC Food Aid Commitments and Annual Average Shipments**  
(metric tons wheat equivalent)

	Annual Commitments	Percent	Average Food Aid Shipments 1999-2012	Percent
Argentina	35,000	0.72%	1,753	0.02%
Australia	250,000	5.11%	222,757	2.83%
Canada	420,000	8.58%	478,940	6.08%
EU	1,320,000	26.97%	2,062,203	26.18%
Japan	300,000	6.13%	529,886	6.73%
Norway	30,000	0.61%	94,310	1.20%
Switzerland	40,000	0.82%	63,091	0.80%
USA	2,500,000	51.07%	4,422,696	56.16%
Total	4,895,000	100.00%	7,875,637	100.00%

**Source:** International Grains Council Food Aid Committee, The Food Aid Convention.

Although the FAC expired in 2003, a working committee of the IGC was established to prepare for its renegotiation. The Food Aid Committee of the IGC meets periodically to review donor food aid contributions in relation to commitments under the 1999 FAC and to global food needs. At their biennial meeting in December 2010, the members of the Food Aid Committee agreed to begin the formal process of renegotiating the Food Aid Convention.<sup>1</sup> Negotiations for a new FAC were completed in 2012. The Food Aid Convention was renamed the Food Assistance Convention

<sup>1</sup> Food Aid Committee, Press Release, December 20, 2010, “Meeting of the Food Aid Committee, London 14 December 2010,” viewed at [http://www.foodaidconvention.org/Pdf/p\\_r/prfacdec10.pdf](http://www.foodaidconvention.org/Pdf/p_r/prfacdec10.pdf).

to reflect the fact that food aid included not only commodities but also cash-based forms of assistance to provide food security.<sup>2</sup> Commitments under the new convention are pending.

## Food Aid Shipments under the FAC

The United States is the major contributor to international food aid, supplying on average, since 1995, around 56% of the annual total food aid donated by members of the Food Aid Committee of the International Grains Council (IGC) and signatories of the 1999 Food Aid Convention (**Figure 1**).<sup>3</sup> U.S. contributions have averaged 4.4 mmt annually, but U.S. food aid shipments have varied from year to year (**Appendix A**).<sup>4</sup> The lowest amount shipped was 2.2 mmt in 2010/2011; the largest shipments, 7.1 mmt, were in 2001/2002. U.S. shipments of commodity food aid were 2.8 mmt in 2011/2012,.

Food aid from the European Union (including food aid provided both by the European Commission and by individual EU member countries) has been more stable and averaged around 2.1 mmt or 26% of average annual food aid shipments. Japan and Canada provided 7% and 6%, respectively, of the total from major donors. Historically, the United States, the EU, Canada, Japan, and Australia have accounted for about 98% of total food aid shipments. The United States and the EU together contributed 82% of shipments under the FAC. The United States contributes U.S. commodities, while the European Union and its member countries and Canada provide a mix of cash and commodities. Japan's contributions are provided primarily as cash rather than commodities.

Because the IGC's food aid data are reported on a July/June marketing year basis, its data for U.S. food aid shipments do not correspond, for example, to fiscal year food aid data reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in annual budget documents or by the U.S. Agency for International Development in its budget documents or annual food aid reports. The source of the data in **Figure 1** and **Appendix A** is the annual report *Food Aid Shipments*, prepared by the Food Aid Committee of the International Grains Council, which has been renamed *Food Aid Operations*.<sup>5</sup>

---

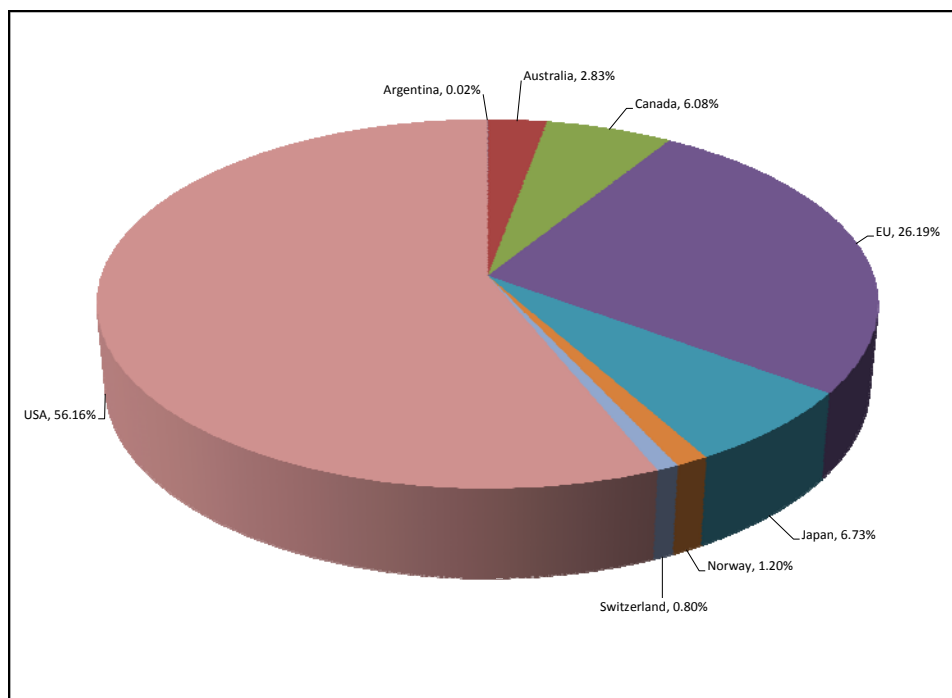
<sup>2</sup> The text of the Food Assistance Convention may be accessed at <http://www.foodaidconvention.org/Pdf/FoodAssistance/FoodAssistance.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Information on the International Grains Council, the Food Aid Convention, and the Food Aid Committee is available at <http://www.igc.int/en/Default.aspx> and at <http://www.foodaidconvention.org/en/Default.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Data on food aid shipments provided by the International Grains Council are reported on a wheat marketing year basis (July-June).

<sup>5</sup> International Grains Council, Food Aid Committee, *Food Aid Operations 2011/2012: Report on Operations by Members of the Food Aid Convention*, September 2013, viewed at [http://foodaidconvention.org/Pdf/annual\\_reports/faoperations\\_1112.pdf](http://foodaidconvention.org/Pdf/annual_reports/faoperations_1112.pdf).

**Figure 1. Average Annual Food Aid Shipments (%) in Wheat Equivalent by Major FAC Donors, 1995/1996-2011/2012**



**Source:** Food Aid Operations 2011/12, International Grains Council Food Aid Committee.

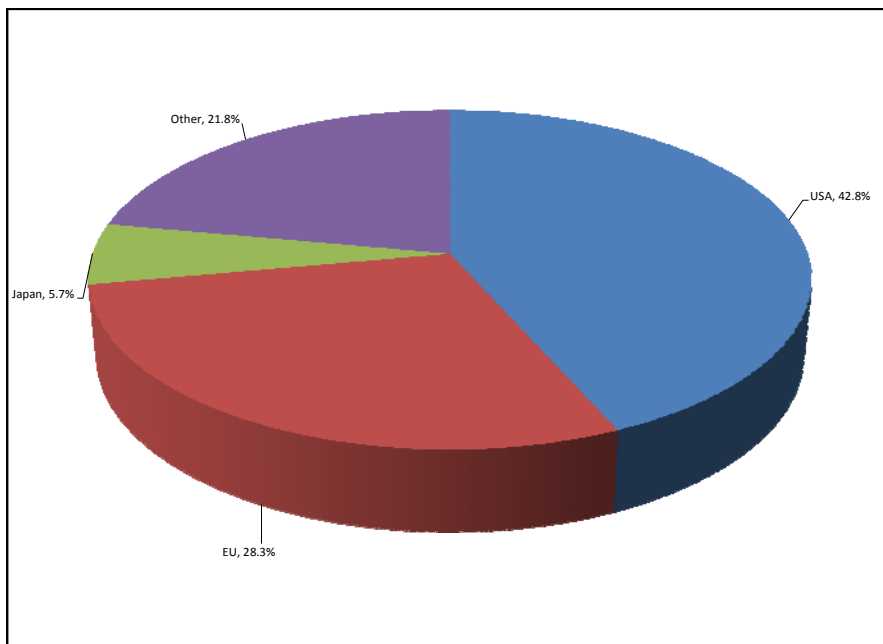
## Food Aid Contributions to the World Food Program

A substantial portion of U.S. food aid is channeled through the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), the intergovernmental agency that provides food aid for development projects and humanitarian relief in low income countries. U.S. and other donor contributions to the WFP are not in addition to, but are included in, the data reported in **Figure 1** and **Appendix A**.

More than 56 donors, mainly countries, but also some non-governmental organizations and private corporations, contribute to the WFP. The United States is the major donor, providing over the last 18 years around 43% of total WFP contributions

**Figure 2** and **Appendix B**). Over that same 18-year period, the EU (European Commission plus EU member countries' contributions) accounted for 28% of total WFP contributions. Japan, whose contributions are in cash, provided around 6%. The remaining donors combined provided 22% to WFP food aid resources.

**Figure 2. Food Aid Contributions by Donors to the World Food Program, 1996-2013**



**Source:** World Food Programme.

**Note:** Data as of October 20, 2013.

## Appendix A. Annual Food Aid Shipments by FAC Donors, 1995/96-2011/12

	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
	(metric tons wheat equivalent)						
Argentina	13,400	0	0	10,135	2,740	0	26
Australia	298,146	305,127	293,221	273,064	296,713	251,865	245,828
Canada	448,764	468,431	417,917	487,095	470,640	293,477	412,082
EU	2,413,991	2,049,691	2,201,162	1,969,892	1,970,768	2,357,778	1,836,717
Japan	474,870	326,835	302,626	561,643	337,357	637,749	531,755
Norway	6,233	32,816	19,306	61,293	75,960	85,876	74,318
Switzerland	75,479	38,636	57,915	38,939	61,295	54,169	58,042
USA	2,849,384	2,553,283	2,818,500	4,734,121	5,692,116	6,798,280	7,124,407
Total	6,580,267	5,774,819	6,110,647	8,136,182	8,907,589	10,479,194	10,283,175
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
	(metric tons wheat equivalent)						
Argentina	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australia	203,820	177,984	168,083	180,667	114,530	216,726	163,857
Canada	499,382	351,168	437,341	448,534	474,438	520,903	551,475
EU	1,980,781	2,218,065	2,151,958	2,853,063	2,488,053	2,178,310	2,263,456
Japan	666,910	580,953	578,261	354,289	318,964	428,301	556,078
Norway	144,927	165,510	145,586	196,034	179,408	102,955	89,382
Switzerland	67,892	69,689	71,854	61,608	71,051	69,872	59,368
USA	6,054,197	5,801,724	5,363,186	4,830,710	3,869,162	3,630,343	4,256,834
Total	9,617,909	9,365,093	8,916,269	8,924,905	7,515,606	7,147,410	7,940,450
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total	Annual	Average	
	(metric tons wheat equivalent)				(percent)	(metric tons)	
Argentina	0	0	0	26,301	0.02%	1,753	
Australia	165,081	185,067	247,094	3,786,873	2.83%	222,757	
Canada	524,148	603,760	732,428	8,141,983	6.08%	478,940	
EU	1,691,765	1,463,241	968,764	35,057,455	26.19%	2,062,203	
Japan	691,326	915,223	744,918	9,008,058	6.73%	529,886	
Norway	62,774	109,885	51,012	1,603,275	1.20%	94,310	
Switzerland	47,861	97,738	71,139	1,072,547	0.80%	63,091	
USA	3,745,514	2,209,249	2,854,828	75,185,838	56.16%	4,422,696	
Total	6,928,469	5,584,163	5,670,183	133,882,330	100.00%	7,875,431	

**Source:** International Grains Council Food Aid Committee, *Food Aid Shipments renamed to Food Aid Operations*, various issues.



## Appendix B. Annual Food Aid Contributions by Donors to the World Food Program, 1996-2013

(thousand dollars)

Government Donors	1996*	1997*	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>United States of America</b>	494,980	408,380	873,051	721,157	795,676	1,201,223	938,185	1,458,638
European Union	603,981	550,522	522,921	465,575	442,999	449,787	563,170	623,956
EU Commission	196,873	237,254	184,645	167,576	117,794	126,833	177,326	200,874
EU Countries	407,108	313,269	338,276	298,000	325,205	322,953	385,844	423,081
Austria	4,774	4,910	3,853	3,710	2,832	1,117	3,302	2,199
Belgium	19,472	17,416	16,908	10,782	6,284	5,342	5,831	8,405
Bulgaria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cyprus			0	0	10	2	0	99
Czech Republic			20	590	37	100	0	175
Denmark	53,064	44,248	43,384	46,900	41,922	39,786	40,158	39,268
Estonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finland	16,045	13,768	13,801	15,345	15,219	14,352	17,444	17,793
France	19,203	21,884	24,742	27,693	26,170	35,957	14,457	14,940
Germany	96,036	68,487	61,779	53,089	46,750	58,228	60,920	46,503
Greece	150	170	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary	0	0	65	74	65	65	65	65
Ireland	3,149	4,284	4,378	5,021	7,644	7,338	10,349	11,815
Italy	34,876	9,112	10,632	20,824	19,936	39,748	41,787	41,074
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	218	0	270	130	1,205	1,748	2,919	4,132
Malta	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	1

<b>Government Donors</b>	<b>1996*</b>	<b>1997*</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Netherlands	78,804	45,972	45,532	55,003	62,801	59,173	58,795	50,422
Poland	0	0	0	684	225	200	215	215
Portugal	0	0	185	2,285	0	358	0	447
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	0	0	25	518	15	15	15	697
Slovenia	0	0	227	141	0	57	36	0
Spain	13,720	12,245	2,725	2,511	3,256	3,952	2,607	6,754
Sweden	33,164	35,985	29,511	28,415	30,778	27,721	31,224	42,341
UK	34,434	34,789	80,212	24,284	60,056	27,694	95,718	135,734
Japan	124,032	98,991	123,757	106,438	260,099	90,592	92,896	130,136
All Others	222,166	253,647	125,027	195,058	135,011	151,707	852,568	760,570
Total Government Donors	0	0	1,720,488	1,509,679	1,682,692	1,916,877	1,833,487	2,541,244
Total Financial Institutions, Pooled Funding, and Private Sector Donors	0	0	4,479	2,833	11,149	4,125	709,050	567,789
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,445,159</b>	<b>1,311,540</b>	<b>1,724,966</b>	<b>1,512,512</b>	<b>1,693,841</b>	<b>1,921,002</b>	<b>2,542,536</b>	<b>3,109,034</b>

<b>Government Donors</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>United States of America</b>	1,065,020	1,173,720	1,123,291	1,184,181	2,070,435	1,767,852	1,552,743	1,239,077
European Union	695,550	868,169	743,215	758,105	1,254,938	1,167,955	975,747	1,054,743
EU Commission	200,501	263,940	265,762	250,437	355,435	343,063	289,928	258,587
EU Countries	495,049	604,229	477,453	507,668	899,503	824,892	685,818	796,156
Austria	2,189	4,093	1,839	3,794	3,935	1,722	1,329	733
Belgium	11,705	13,941	11,132	17,642	24,784	39,111	37,691	36,957
Bulgaria	5	0	10	10	15	0	0	0
Cyprus	5	0	400	656	200	814	690	0
Czech Republic	98	1,236	308	574	817	309	159	237
Denmark	43,436	53,202	43,817	44,731	56,608	41,890	41,112	45,751

<b>Government Donors</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Estonia	0	0	0	42	242	0	240	71
Finland	18,000	23,794	18,319	25,567	28,257	28,799	26,643	29,902
France	30,424	37,809	25,325	32,121	40,369	21,701	20,127	38,269
Germany	65,331	69,533	59,680	65,836	100,752	132,118	95,824	194,777
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary	65	120	65	65	65	65	65	15
Ireland	13,684	19,820	31,005	34,443	39,821	22,549	19,318	27,010
Italy	47,929	45,790	12,392	31,601	101,920	30,058	24,052	27,392
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	0
Lithuania	0	0	112	306	27	0	0	0
Luxembourg	5,413	10,933	15,387	12,207	14,276	12,987	12,789	11,575
Malta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	77,740	115,352	80,023	75,663	117,505	77,594	74,424	73,059
Poland	356	200	1,200	755	1,164	535	691	465
Portugal	723	874	488	111	111	112	0	0
Romania	0	0	0	147	301	75	72	0
Slovakia	25	30	48	44	72	30	15	15
Slovenia	34	97	0	107	135	108	119	196
Spain	17,466	11,552	16,993	29,641	117,460	214,204	82,635	68,024
Sweden	44,540	84,259	58,520	64,754	81,708	72,487	90,660	97,832
UK	115,884	111,595	100,390	66,851	168,961	127,624	157,127	143,877
Japan	135,730	160,472	71,381	118,870	178,323	202,905	214,762	282,026
All Others	774,050	637,996	609,321	638,702	1,835,667	754,309	916,726	1,123,170
Total Government Donors	2,226,391	2,671,577	2,406,395	2,510,582	4,661,191	3,697,813	3,459,400	3,398,247
Total Financial Institutions, Pooled Funding, and Private Sector Donors	559,843	280,374	241,202	256,128	847,132	322,832	357,704	444,646
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,786,234</b>	<b>2,951,951</b>	<b>2,647,598</b>	<b>2,766,710</b>	<b>5,508,324</b>	<b>4,020,645</b>	<b>3,817,104</b>	<b>3,842,893</b>

Government Donors	2012	as of October 20, 2013	Total
<b>United States of America</b>	1,462,478	1,368,718	20,887,505
European Union	1,083,167	1,036,706	13,834,778
EU Commission	386,136	223,930	4,247,909
EU Countries	697,031	812,777	9,586,868
Austria	1,082	1,185	48,598
Belgium	14,448	36,307	333,817
Bulgaria	0	208	248
Cyprus	5	3	2,767
Czech Republic	399	200	4,326
Denmark	43,510	52,638	814,401
Estonia	180	158	787
Finland	25,999	20,397	369,055
France	30,747	22,600	485,045
Germany	150,055	139,831	1,565,019
Greece	0	0	27,958
Hungary	85	10	954
Ireland	20,002	15,964	297,596
Italy	14,592	21,540	532,786
Latvia	0	0	37
Lithuania	0	0	446
Luxembourg	9,920	11,948	127,914
Malta	0	0	29
Netherlands	75,255	57,967	1,280,937
Poland	744	0	7,647
Portugal	99	0	5,792
Romania	40	0	635
Slovakia	18	0	1,581

<b>Government Donors</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>as of October 20, 2013</b>	<b>Total</b>
Slovenia	0	39	1,297
Spain	12,524	811	616,474
Sweden	95,181	86,173	1,029,363
UK	202,145	344,799	2,030,328
Japan	190,749	215,367	2,796,842
All Others	1,139,317	785,664	10,630,857
Total Government Donors	3,663,113	1,936,302	41,805,981
Total Financial Institutions, Pooled Funding, and Private Sector Donors	414,743	270,361	2,738,009
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,077,856</b>	<b>3,751,255</b>	<b>48,845,280</b>

**Source:** World Food Program. See <http://www.wfp.org/about/donors/wfp-donors>.

\* 1996 and 1997 includes both the totals for government donors and financial institutions, pooled funding, and private donors.

If a country contributed to the WFP program before joining the EU then the amounts contributed are shown in this table; however, their contributions were not added to the total for the EU countries or EU total. Instead it was added to all others.

## **Author Contact Information**

Charles E. Hanrahan  
Senior Specialist in Agricultural Policy  
chanrahan@crs.loc.gov, 7-7235

Carol Canada  
Information Research Specialist  
ccanada@crs.loc.gov, 7-7619