

U.S. Embassy Mexico City, Mexico



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Mexico Regional Manager

Elia "Lou" Vanechanos

Lou Vanechanos, originally from the state of New Jersey, has been an employee of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service since 1981. Lou began his career with APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) working at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City. He spent the first ten years of his career as a Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer at JFK until he was promoted to PPQ Officer in Charge of the St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands work unit in 1991.

After three and a half years at the Virgin Islands work unit, Lou moved to Orlando, Florida in 1995 becoming the Port Director for the work unit which employed a total of 40 PPQ Officers and Technicians. In 1999, Lou moved to APHIS Headquarters in Riverdale, MD and served on the Port Operations staff for Preclearance Programs, working closely with International Services staff in the field and at Headquarters. In 2000 Lou joined International Services and was posted to Santiago, Chile as the APHIS Attaché, where he was in charge of the U.S. - Chile Commodity Preclearance Program and covered all APHIS activities in Chile, Peru, and Bolivia. His next assignment was as APHIS Attaché in Taiwan, where he opened the APHIS Office at the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), and was the first permanently posted APHIS Officer to serve on the island.

Lou became Associate Deputy Administrator for the International Services Program Unit, with primary responsibility and oversight for the agency's Action Programs in Mexico and Central America, in January 2009. He remained in that position until reporting to Embassy Beijing in August 2010, where he served until July 2015 as the Asia-Pacific Regional Manager. He currently is assigned as the APHIS Regional Manager for Mexico, providing managerial oversight for APHIS operations within Mexico. He also serves as APHIS' principle officer at post. He has been married to his wife, Maria Alicia for the past 24 years and has two sons ages seventeen and fourteen.