

Make More Beef

In beef export update at Range Beef Cow Symposium, USMEF's Greg Hanes says more beef is needed for foreign markets.

by Troy Smith, field editor

“Keep making more beef. We’re going to need it for growing export markets.”

Greg Hanes delivered that entreaty to cattlemen attending Range Beef Cow Symposium XXV, hosted Nov. 28-30 in Cheyenne, Wyo. Hanes, the assistant vice president of international marketing for the U.S. Meat Export

Federation (USMEF), provided an update on international trade, emphasizing the significance of U.S. beef exports.

“You all should think about beef exports, because you all are global suppliers,” stated Hanes, reminding the audience that 96% of beef consumers reside outside the United States.

Hanes explained how USMEF maintains offices in 20 locations around the world, working in more than 90 countries, first to gain access to foreign markets and then to promote export sales of U.S. product. Promotion efforts include showing how beef can fit these various countries’ cultures, tastes and cooking styles. Foreign consumers are responding, largely due to U.S. beef quality.

Hanes said the value of U.S. beef exports should top \$7 billion in 2017. That represents 7.5% growth compared to the previous year and



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continued growth of 4% to 5% is expected next year. Hanes listed Japan, Mexico, Korea, Canada and China (including Hong Kong) as the top five export markets.

Singling out Japan, Hanes said purchases to that important market have grown by 22% so far this year, even without benefit of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement. Total U.S. beef exports to Japan are close to surpassing Australia, despite higher tariffs than those levied on beef from Japan’s long-favored trading partner. For chilled beef, the United States has already gained a 52% share of the Japanese market.


According to Hanes, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been important to U.S. producers, aiding sales of beef to both Mexico and Canada. Exports to those countries represent 30% of all beef exports and about 3% of all beef produced in the United States.

Noting the huge potential for

beef exports to China, Hanes said access to that market came with certain restrictions against beef produced with growth promotants. Thus, growth of sales to China has been challenging. Chinese consumers want quality U.S. beef; however, prices are higher in that market due to the

production requirements. As more “China-eligible” beef is produced in the United States, prices should continue to decline, resulting in increased exports.

Explaining the impact of U.S. beef exports, Hanes said much of the export volume includes rounds, skirts and variety meats — cuts that bring a premium over their relatively low value in the domestic market. That contributes to added carcass value.

“If you remember only one number today,” stated Hanes, “it should be that exports add \$277 per head to the value of cattle fed in the U.S.” 

Editor’s Note: This summary is part of the Angus Journal’s coverage of the 2017 Range Beef Cow Symposium, available online at www.rangebeefcow.com. Visit the site’s Newsroom for additional summaries, as well as proceedings and PowerPoint presentations provided by the speakers. Audio of the presentations will be added.