Checkoffs Sustain U.S. Beef Export Gains

DENVER, Colo. - U.S. beef exports to Japan continue to climb despite Japan's worst recession since the early 1970s. Much of the credit, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), can be attributed to the U.S. beef checkoff program.

"The beef checkoff program is absolutely vital to expanding U.S. beef sales in the Japanese market,' said Sue Sadinski, USMEF director of beef programs. "Without the beef checkoff program, Japanese consumers would be eating less beef and the U.S. would be losing market share to Australia."

The first checkoff funded programs were initiated by USMEF in the Japanese market in 1988. Since that time, U.S. beef and beef variety meat exports to Japan have increased 45 percent, reaching a record \$1.5 billion in 1992.

As U.S. suppliers have penetrated further into the Japanese market, program emphasis has shifted increasingly to the retail sector, particularly the supermarkets. The results have been dramatic.

According to the latest independent evaluation of USMEF programs, the five largest supermarket chains in Japan recorded a 20 percent increase in U.S. beef purchases in 1992. In this instance, beef checkoff dollars were used to produce point of sale materials and displays for supermarket promotions. They also provided for the development and placement of local advertising to coincide with these retail promotions and attract consumers to the meat counter.

Conducted by International Investment Consultants, Inc., the evaluation also confirmed that shelf space in Japanese supermarkets for U.S. beef has increased significantly since 1988, up 10-40 percent, depending on the supermarket. Sadinski points out that these gains are particularly significant since retail prices for U.S. beef are typically 10-20 percent higher than Australian beef.

We stress the quality and safety attributes of U.S. beef in all of our programs," said Sadinski. "Because we sell quality rather than price, we have to go the extra mile with our programs to distinguish our product from the competition."

Many of these programs would not be possible without support from the beef checkoff program, notes Sadinski. "The important point for cattlemen," she said, "is that checkoff-funded programs are making a difference in foreign markets." The U.S. share of the Japanese beef import market (by volume) increased from 43.8 percent in 1991 to 45.0 percent in 1992. By value, the U.S. share of Japan's beef import market increased from 54.3 percent in 1991 to 57.2 percent in 1992.



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Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. 8 AM to 5 PM; Thurs. 7 AM to 5 PM



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