

USMEF Plans To Sustain Pork Export Momentum

DENVER, Colo. — Illustrative of the teamwork that has brought the U.S. pork industry from a minor player to a headline performer in the global marketplace, U.S. Meat Export Federation officials called in its foreign marketing directors, and invited pork industry representatives, government marketing specialists and leading exporters to Denver last week to discuss plans to sustain the pork industry's export momentum.

Export markets are a top priority for the pork industry. After a record-breaking year in 1994, U.S. pork and pork variety meat exports from January through September 1995 increased 45 percent in volume and 63 percent in value compared to the January-September 1994 period. Total U.S. pork exports came to 280,000 metric tons worth \$710 million in the first nine months of 1995.

"Exports are a major reason why hog prices are much higher this year," says Karl Johnson, Minnesota pork producer and chairman of USMEF's Pork & Allied Industries Committee. "Prices are up even though the industry is marketing about the same number of hogs as last year."

Johnson was joined by other

pork industry representatives in an all-day strategic planning session for pork held by USMEF at its headquarters office in Denver. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service officials and packer/processor representatives also attended the session, in which USMEF foreign directors and Denver staff discussed market conditions, export potential, resources and marketing strategies for U.S. pork in foreign markets.

"We're not resting on our laurels," says Johnson. "We are continuing to pursue new opportunities in emerging markets while developing our trade potential in major export markets such as Japan."

"We see our strategy as a three-pronged offensive," says USMEF Vice President-Pork Operations George Rivers. "To continue to develop existing markets, to bring emerging markets on-line and to explore new opportunities."

USMEF programs are up and running in more foreign markets than ever before, says Rivers, pointing to USMEF's work in exploring new trade opportunities in Central and South America, Eastern Europe and the Asia Pacific.

In addition, we're stepping up

our work in emerging markets such as Korea and Russia, Rivers adds, "where our pork exports have risen from virtually zero just two years ago to more than \$100 million in just the January through September period (1995)."

"And of course, Japan remains key to our marketing goals," he adds. USMEF considers Japan, which has accounted for 64 percent of U.S. pork exports in 1995, to have the greatest potential for additional export sales.

"Japan is a \$3.75 billion pork import market and right now we have but a small portion of it," stressed USMEF Vice President-Asia Pacific Joel Haggard at the planning session. "We think the U.S. pork industry can supply as much as 50 percent of that \$3.75 billion market," says Haggard.

Japanese import statistics show that the U.S. share of Japan's import market increased from 14.7 percent in 1994 to 17.6 percent in the first 9 months of 1995. This 3 percent gain in market share meant an additional \$185 million in U.S. pork exports to Japan from January through September 1995 compared to the same period last year. Overall, U.S. pork exports to Japan reached \$451 million from

January through September 1995.

Manpower is a key component in USMEF's global marketing strategy and three full-time pork managers have been added to USMEF staff in Mexico City, Tokyo and Seoul in just the past several months. Rivers says these managers will help to guide and implement USMEF marketing efforts for U.S. pork in those markets. These additional resources for pork will ensure that U.S. pork exports continue to head in the right direction, adds Rivers.

Rivers says that foreign markets hold tremendous long-term growth potential for the industry. "In 1995, U.S. pork exports should top \$900 million. That's more than double from just five years ago."

Better access to foreign markets, quality products, competitive prices and effective market development programs are behind the industry's export growth, says

Rivers.

But, he adds, "We have our work cut out for us." Existing trade barriers, stiff competition and a general unfamiliarity among foreign customers about what makes U.S. pork a quality product — tenderness, taste, consistency and safety — mean that "we still have a great deal of work ahead of us if we are to reach our export potential."

The U.S. Meat Export Federation is a national trade association responsible for developing foreign markets for U.S. red meat products. USMEF receives funding from USDA and the National Pork Board (through the National Pork Producers Council) to carry out marketing programs for U.S. pork in foreign countries. Additional support for USMEF pork programs comes from state pork councils, packers, processors, purveyors, traders, corn and soybean producers, and agribusiness companies.

Crop Management Assn. To Hold Luncheon

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.)—The Pennsylvania Crop Management Association will hold its twelfth annual luncheon January 22 at the Penn State Scanticon Conference Center Hotel on the University Park campus from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. The state association and local member groups promote sound crop management practices in the commonwealth.

"Tomorrow's Economics From Yesterday's Records" is the topic of this year's luncheon. Speakers will discuss the value of record keeping, the evaluation of farm records, records-based nutrient management practices, and what's ahead for the U.S. agricultural economy.

Guest speakers include State Sen. Roger Madigan, Steve Fales, head of Penn State's agronomy department, and Walt Peechatka, executive deputy secretary of agriculture. Other speakers include Lou Moore, professor of agricultural economics; Jayson Harper,

associate professor of agricultural economics; Marvin Hall, associate professor of forage management; and Elwood Hatley, professor of agronomy.

The Pennsylvania Crop Management Association was established in 1984 to act as a representative body for local non-profit crop management associations (CMAs) in promoting sound cropping practices. Members pay acreage and membership fees in return for agronomic crop consulting services, which include soil sampling, weekly crop scouting, yield checks, field-specific computerized record keeping and assistance in developing nutrient and pest management strategies. Currently, nine local associations are affiliated with 35 Pennsylvania counties.

For more information or to register for the meeting, contact Jan Pruss, manager of Penn State's Crop Management Program, at (814) 863-1020.

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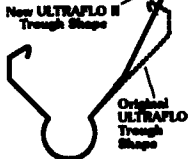
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