

USMEF Partnership Brings North Dakota Beef to the World



By Kylie Blanchard for the N.D. Beef Commission



The North Dakota Beef Commission’s (NDBC) partnership with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) helps to increase the value and profitability of North Dakota beef by bringing it to consumers across the world. With market development activities in well over 80 countries around the globe, the USMEF creates demand for beef through marketing, trade servicing and market access.

“When 96 percent of the world’s population lives outside of the U.S., it is imperative qualified individuals are in these potential markets on a daily basis telling the U.S. beef story and demonstrating the attributes of our outstanding product,” says Mark Voll, an NDBC director.

The USMEF is funded through both state and national beef checkoff dollars, and this partnership helps the NDBC and the state’s beef producers add value to the high-quality beef produced in North Dakota.

Adding Value to U.S. Beef

In 2020, U.S. beef exports grew at a record pace in the first quarter of the year, then COVID-19 caused many disruptions. However, current data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) shows momentum is again growing for U.S. beef exports. The August beef export value averaged \$302.82 on a per-head-slaughtered basis, which was up 1 percent from a year ago.

“A key thing to remember is that many of the beef products consumed abroad are not products consumed regularly in the U.S.,” says Voll. “Tongue, lips, short ribs, liver and tripe are just some of the variety cuts, over \$1 billion dollars’ worth, which are served worldwide and add value to the carcass, which helps bring more dollars to U.S. cattle producers.”

Japan remains the leading volume and value market for U.S. beef, and is a critical destination for both muscle cuts and variety meat, especially U.S. beef tongues. January-August exports to Japan for muscle cuts increased four percent from a year ago. The country also accounted for nearly \$400 million worth of beef variety meat exports in 2019, largely consisting of tongues and skirts, with tongue exports alone equating to about \$13 per-head-of-fed slaughter.

Egypt is the primary destination for U.S. beef livers, with beef livers equating to nearly \$3.50 per head of fed slaughter in 2019. Mexico is the primary destination for beef tripe, exceeding \$100 million in 2019 and equating to \$4.28 for every fed steer or heifer slaughtered.

The USMEF provides a presence in countries outside the U.S. and illustrates the many beef options for consumers

throughout the world, says Voll. “There needs to be a presence in Japan, and other countries to demonstrate the many ways to prepare beef, which fit every culture, and educate consumers on all the nutritional benefits U.S. beef provides,” he notes. “The #1 goal of the new Beef Industry Long Range Plan is to grow U.S. beef exports 17 percent and grow the value of U.S. beef exports as a percent of total beef value to 21 percent by 2025.”

To accomplish this goal, it takes more than just beef checkoff dollars. In addition to beef checkoff partners, USMEF partners with the USDA and receives significant federal matching funds. There is also extensive ag industry organization financial support and significant support from other North Dakota groups. North Dakota crops, feedstuffs and crop by-products contribute to the high-quality beef enjoyed here and abroad. As a result, the ND Soybean Council and ND Corn Utilization Council have joined the NDBC in support of USMEF and understand the benefit reaching consumers worldwide with U.S. beef returns to their respective industries.

Voll says the USMEF is a key partner in building not only the state’s beef industry, but the entire U.S. beef industry. “Our export market annually adds around \$8 billion dollars to our U.S. beef business,” he notes. “USMEF is a key partner in the ongoing advancement and success of our beef industry.”

