

Beef Checkoff At Work in Global Markets

People are going back to work in some parts of Asia as a slow progression toward normalcy is occurring, particularly in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Retail sales are strong in these markets and remain high even in markets still entrenched in their battles with the COVID-19 virus.

The good news is that beef sales, especially in the Asia Pacific region, remain strong from market to market. Demand is holding as international consumers recognize the health benefits of beef, viewing it as essential to boosting immune systems. Retailers and restaurateurs are increasingly utilizing e-commerce, pick-up and delivery services to serve consumers.

With Beef Checkoff support and with offices and representatives around the world, USMEF's team has been working closely with suppliers, importers and distributors on logistical challenges in each market. USMEF is also working to position U.S. beef for new opportunities in all market segments.

Below are a few of the ways the Beef Checkoff is at work in markets impacted by COVID-19:

- **China: Focus on Trade Support** - New provisions now in effect from the U.S.-China Phase One Economic and Trade Agreement have recently created greater access for U.S. beef to China, the largest and fastest-growing beef market in the world. USMEF-China staff has been preparing for expanded access to the market since the Phase One agreement was unveiled earlier this year, working with importers and distributors on new import conditions and assisting them with technical issues such as labeling and product translations.

As markets within China begin to recover from COVID-19, USMEF is scaling up promotional efforts, showcasing the positive attributes of U.S. beef in restaurants, supermarkets, and in the increasingly important e-commerce channels.

- **China: Online Media Campaign for U.S. Beef** - This campaign, already underway, is a precursor to the re-start of retail and foodservice promotions later this spring. The media campaign consists of live streaming and blogging about U.S. beef products by internet foodie celebrities and notable chefs. The first live blogs will take place during the ^{second} week of April.
- **China: Product Development for U.S. Beef** - USMEF-Shanghai has joined a product development team with members of COFCO (importer), and two Shanghai-based chefs to work on the development of some U.S. beef steak options for the YUM China group. The product development sessions will begin by mid-April.
- **Hong Kong: U.S. Chilled Beef Promotions** - In-store promotions featuring U.S. chilled beef have been held sporadically through the epidemic. The second stage of recovery promotions will begin in May with retail target accounts welcome, Sogo and Yata.
- **Japan: Retail Campaign** - The Beef Checkoff is supporting a nationwide "sweepstakes" campaign for U.S. beef that began on April 1, and will extend through June 30. So far, 28 retail chains with 1,900 outlets have joined the campaign, which uses scannable U.S. beef stickers as an easy way for consumers to enter the sweepstakes. With more than 100 winners each month of U.S. tenderloins, striploins and ribeye steaks, the campaign supports USMEF's strategy of promoting thick-cut steak items to consumers.

- **South Korea: Chilled U.S. Beef Promotions** - USMEF has implemented an integrated promotional program for U.S. beef through e-commerce and TV home-shopping programs. Product sales through these channels have shown remarkable growth since COVID-19 began impacting the country. Red meat is a leader, and sales grow as consumer demand grows for healthy and nutritious protein. With Beef Checkoff support, USMEF conducted four sales promotions for chilled U.S. beef during March.
- **Europe: Product Education and Media Outreach** - Working to increase U.S. beef sales in the wake of an expanded duty-free quota in the European Union (EU), USMEF partnered with distributors to reach chefs and foodservice professionals in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania. Funded by the Beef Checkoff, program activities in February and March included masterclasses, cutting demonstrations and media outreach.
- **Dubai, United Arab Emirates: Chef Education about U.S. Beef** - USMEF held a U.S. Beef Barbecue Night event at a top hotel in Dubai in March. More than 150 executive chefs, culinary experts, food and beverage decision-makers from around the UAE attended the Beef Checkoff-funded event, which highlighted the attributes of several different U.S. beef cuts and presented an opportunity for attendees to meet distributors of U.S. beef in the region.