

# US pushing pork for opportunities in China

To keep its position as the No. 1 pork exporter to China, the United States – through the US Meat Export Federation (USMEF) – is turning over every leaf to find opportunities to set American pork apart from its competitors among the 17 other nations that are selling their product in China this year.



The latest USMEF initiative – funded with support of the Pork Checkoff – found US pork taking center stage at the Shanghai Book Fair, a week-long annual event which attracts more than a million book lovers. This year, the only break in the endless rows of booksellers was the U.S. pork booth where local culinary master Mr. Lai offered cooking demonstrations and samples of US pork bone-in butt, spareribs, belly, boneless butts, boneless loins and sausages.

Making the event even more convenient for hungry book-lovers, USMEF partnered with distributor and e-commerce retailer Zhengpu Company Inc., to give shoppers the opportunity to purchase pork for quick delivery to their homes at the push of a button.

“Our goal was to introduce high-quality US pork to this higher-income audience that is very willing to shop online,” said Ming Liang, USMEF-Shanghai marketing director. “Our partnership with Zhengpu was essential to make this work because, in China, relationships matter. They opened the doors for us to have a display and, for four of the five days of the fair, to have our cooking demonstration center stage.” Attendees at the Shanghai Book Fair had never encountered food at the show, one of the largest book fairs in all of China, so USMEF had a captive – and very receptive – audience for its demonstrations. “It is a long show, and the shoppers get hungry,” said Ming. “We were in the right place to get the attention of a lot of consumers who have the resources to not only make purchases on the spot, but to be able to buy high-quality U.S. pork, including some more expensive branded products.”

The presence of top chef Mr. Lai helped keep the attention of the shoppers who were eager to sample his takes on a number of local dishes prepared with US pork, including traditional fried, sliced pork.

“Many of the shoppers said they were amazed by the versatility and deliciousness of US pork,” said Ming. “And the participation of Zhengpu made it very easy to complete the transaction.”

Since many younger Chinese consumers prefer making purchases through e-commerce, the ability to offer them products through this channel was a convenience that can help to attract new customers. USMEF provided information on popular Chinese websites (Weiblog and Wechat) along with the app for Zhengpu’s website.

Through the first seven months of 2013, the US is the leading pork exporter to China, according to the Global Trade Atlas. Even with pork exports to China down this year due to ractopamine-related restrictions, the US still holds a 27.6 percent share of the market when measured by value (25.2 percent by volume) with 198,728 metric tons (438.1 million pounds) valued at \$408.6 million. Germany, Denmark, Canada and Spain round out the top five exporters to China. US exports are expected to benefit going forward as EU prices are on the rise and China’s import demand continues to grow.

Source: **USMEF**

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