

USMEF: Pork exports remain down slightly

US pork exports continue to face a number of challenges including access restrictions in Russia and a lingering downturn in the Japan market, according to statistics released by the USDA and compiled by USMEF.



US pork exports received a boost from sales to the China/Hong Kong region – up 14 percent in volume and 24 percent in value for the month – as well as strong sales to the ASEAN region (up 45 percent in volume and nearly 47 percent in value), but continued access restrictions to Russia and a very competitive market in Japan continued to keep pork exports down 5 percent in value and more than 9 percent in volume for the month and 5 percent in both categories for the year.

"On the beef side, the industry aggressively pursued the opportunities available for US product when market access was expanded in Japan and Hong Kong, and we are seeing exciting growth in both those markets," said Philip Seng, USMEF president and CEO. "On the pork side, we are continuing to face challenges from strong competition in Japan that is driving down our market share, and access issues with Russia continue to hamper our industry, both in pork and beef."

In fact, the decline in pork exports to just Japan and Russia amount to nearly all of the drop-off in pork export volume this year (81,874 metric tons of a total 85,705 metric ton decline) and more than the total dip in export value (\$246.7 million decline from the two markets versus \$213 million overall).

Pork exports for the month (September) totaled 166,650 metric tons valued at \$478.7 million, accounting for 25 percent of total U.S. pork production and 21 percent of muscle cuts (versus 26.7 percent and 23 percent, respectively, last September). The export value per head for the month averaged \$53, down from \$53.43.

Top pork markets

Mexico remains the top volume market for U.S. pork in 2013, with volume up 1 percent to 446,827 metric tons valued at \$849.8 million, a 4 percent increase. Japan is the No. 1

value market at \$1.4 billion, a 6 percent decline year-over-year, while volume is down 8 percent to 317,710 metric tons.

Boosted by a strong September, exports to China/Hong Kong were even in volume (313,379 metric tons) and up 6 percent in value (\$670.4 million).

Other key pork export markets for 2013 include:

- Canada: down 1 percent in volume (171,091 metric tons) but up 1 percent in value (\$637.5 million)
- Central/South America: up 32 percent in volume (79,880 metric tons) and 29 percent in value (\$199.4 million) led by strong growth to Colombia, Honduras and Chile
- South Korea: down 33 percent in volume (70,776 metric tons) and 36 percent in value (\$194.9 million)
- ASEAN: up 44 percent in volume (50,456 metric tons) and 39 percent in value (\$121.6 million) led by strong growth to the Philippines and Singapore.

by Pig Progress Nov 28, 2013