

US: Pork exports increase sharply in March

The pace of US beef and pork exports increased sharply in March, driven by double-digit increases to leading markets Mexico, the China/Hong Kong region and South Korea, according to statistics released by the USDA and compiled by the US Meat Export Federation (USMEF).



US pork exports reached their highest monthly total since October 2012: 209,704 metric tons (mt) valued at \$606.7 million, increasing 29 percent in both volume and value over March 2013.

Exports of US beef rose 12 percent in volume to 93,380 mt valued at \$516.2 million, an increase of 17 percent.

When measured in proportion to overall US beef and pork production, March exports also showed gains. Total pork exports (muscle cuts plus variety meat) equated to 31.5 percent of total US pork production in March (26 percent of muscle cuts alone) versus 28 and 23.5 percent, respectively, a year ago. Beef exports accounted for 14 percent of total production and 11 percent of muscle cuts – up from 12 and 9 percent in 2013.

The export value per head slaughtered set a new record of \$69.93 for pork in March, topping the \$60 per head mark for the first time and up from \$50.38 last year. The export value per head of fed slaughter for beef was \$271.57, up from \$222.20 a year ago.

"Even with high prices and supply concerns, we are working to keep the visibility of U.S. beef and pork high in our key export markets, and they continue to respond positively," said Philip Seng, USMEF president and CEO. "Among the many encouraging signs are the continued strength of the Mexican market in both pork and beef, and the rebound of South Korea, which has been an area of focus for USMEF as that market has been challenged over the past year by an over-supply of domestic product."

PEDV

Porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) has been a factor both in the United States and in a number of export markets, creating supply concerns going into the summer. But exports remained strong in March to virtually all key markets, despite a 4 percent decline in U.S. pork production for the month. Thus, the export increase likely reflects the fact that some product was shipped out of cold storage from previous months' production.

- Mexico: up 38 percent in volume (54,284 mt) and 75 percent in value (\$121 million).
- Japan: up 22 percent in volume (45,358 mt) and 8 percent in value (\$175.3 million). This was the largest monthly sales volume to Japan since May 2011, driven by growth in chilled

and ground seasoned pork exports.

- Hong Kong/China: up 49 percent in volume (41,295 mt) and 59 percent in value (\$93.6 million) – the largest monthly total since February 2013, reflecting growth in muscle cut sales.
- South Korea: up 73 percent in volume (16,104 mt) and 83 percent in value (\$46.4 million) – the biggest export month since March 2012.
- ASEAN: up 90 percent in volume (9,703 mt) and 93 percent in value (\$25.4 million).
- Central/South America: up 29 percent in volume (10,985 mt) and 32 percent in value (\$28.5 million), driven by record exports to Colombia (5,049 mt, up 193 percent; valued at \$12.6 million, up 177 percent).

For more info on beef and lamb: [USMEF](#)

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