

Recio-Colombia-Beef-V2

SPEAKERS

John Herath, Homero Recio

John Herath 00:00

U.S. beef exports to Colombia were up 23% in volume and 77% in value in 2025. As U.S. Meat Export Federation Latin America Representative Homero Recio explains, USMEF had to work to reclaim market share after U.S. beef was restricted in the country for much of 2024 over the finding of avian influenza in dairy cattle in the U.S,

Homero Recio 00:21

We did suffer quite a hit because of avian influenza and the Colombian government shutting down exports. And we had some pretty good momentum going at the time. And then so with the market closing, it created an avenue for another competitor, the Canadians, to come in and fill the market that we were supplying. Once we were able to get back into the market, we started to tear into the Canadian share, and we've ultimately regained our share. And what drove that is our ability to work with the trade and work with them closely to educate the wait staff on what those differences were and how and why they should be promoting American beef. And so that's one of the keys, is working with the people that face the consumers and suggesting to them and teaching them, educating them why they should be choosing American.

John Herath 01:08

He gives a lot of the credit for that recovery to a team of experts funded through support from USDA and the Beef Checkoff Program. The meat merchandisers team was instrumental in reclaiming U.S. market share.

Homero Recio 01:18

These are four gentlemen that are across Colombia, and their job is to go and knock on doors and find people and show them how they can use U.S. beef. And so these gentlemen were critical in getting new customers and getting existing customers to try new items. And I think that's what got us back to where we gained back to 70% market share.

John Herath 01:39

USMEF worked closely with USDA to resolve the trade restrictions in 2024. Recio says the free trade agreement with Colombia played a key role.

Homero Recio 01:48

Because we have a free trade agreement our two governments were able to engage, and we engage very closely with our embassy to provide information to them about what was going on. But without that free trade agreement, you know, we could have been out of the market a lot longer.

John Herath 02:01

For more, please visit USMEF.org. For the U.S. Meat Export Federation, I'm John Herath.