

Halstrom-East-Gulf-Ports-2025

SPEAKERS

John Herath, Dan Halstrom

John Herath 00:00

A new contract deadline is looming for port workers on the East and Gulf coasts as talks have stalled. As U.S. Meat Export Federation President and CEO, Dan Halstrom, explains, another work stoppage could have significant impacts on red meat exports if a new agreement isn't reached by January 15.

Dan Halstrom 00:15

On the pork side, 45% of our waterborne exports go off the East or Gulf Coast, and on the beef side 30% of our waterborne exports originate from either the Gulf or the East Coast ports. For every week of a potential shutdown, it would be a loss in excess of \$100 million just on beef and pork exports.

John Herath 00:37

The impasse is already impacting the industry.

Dan Halstrom 00:42

We already have exporters, I'm sure, diverting cargo, or planning to divert cargo. Ocean carriers are anticipating that, so we already have surcharges in place, and probably there will be more in place between now and the 15th of January. And a lot of our cargo is refrigerated, so there's also the very real possibility that prior to January 15, a lot of these ports may stop accepting refrigerated cargo just because of the uncertainty around the contract.

John Herath 01:10

A port strike could impact U.S. beef and pork's advantage as a reliable supplier.

Dan Halstrom 01:15

That's the ultimate concern is our ability to supply to our customers. Our customers in regions like the Caribbean and regions like Central America, into Europe, into South America, even into the Middle East, a lot of that originates off the east coast. So yeah, being able to supply our buyers on a regular basis in a reliable manner is definitely at risk. So this encourages them to look at alternative sources of supply, be it from South America, be it from Australia. In the end, one of the biggest things is our ability to keep our reputation as a reliable supplier. And with this sort of situation and the possibility of a shutdown that puts us at risk.

John Herath 01:57

For more, please visit [USMEF.org](https://usmef.org). For the U.S. Meat Export Federation, I'm John Herath.