

# Halstrom-East-Gulf-Port-Labor

## SPEAKERS

John Herath, Dan Halstrom

### John Herath 00:00

The labor contract for longshoreman working East and Gulf Coast ports expires later this year, and right now the two sides are not even at the bargaining table. U.S. Meat Export Federation President and CEO Dan Halstrom explains why this is a growing concern for meat exporters and for all of U.S. agriculture.

### Dan Halstrom 00:16

The five year labor contract for the East Coast and Gulf Coast longshoremen is expiring this September, and it's disappointing that recently the negotiations have broken down. September 30 sounds like a long way away, but for a complex agreement like this, we're definitely coming down to crunch time. While the West Coast ports are probably a little bit more critical to our business with all the Asian traffic, the East and Gulf ports are still critical as well for the rest of the world. About 45% of our waterborne pork exports go through the Gulf and East coasts, and I think it's around 25 or 30% on the beef side, so that is a significant portion of our business. While most of these products are frozen, going through the Gulf and East Coast, there is some chilled product, especially on the beef side, going into places like Europe and the Middle East and there's also beef and pork that goes into Central and South America out of the Gulf. Obviously chilled products are more time sensitive, which makes this even more urgent.

### John Herath 01:16

Unlike some past negotiations, the Longshoreman's union has said its members will not continue to move cargo past the September deadline.

### Dan Halstrom 01:24

When the West Coast contract negotiations started in 2022, both parties agreed to continue even though they may not get it done by the deadline of the contract. There still was an agreement to work beyond the expiration of the contract. The situation we have now with the Gulf and the East Coast longshoremen is that recently they've made it very clear that they're only going to work up till the deadline of September 30. Hopefully cooler heads will prevail and they make some progress on this, but right now it's a real concern.

### John Herath 01:52

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