

Spronk-Spring-Conference

SPEAKERS

Randy Spronk, John Herath

John Herath 00:00

All sectors of the U.S. red meat export business gathered in Kansas City for the U.S. Meat Export Federation Spring Conference. USMEF Chair Randy Spronk, a pork producer from Minnesota, says the industry has a positive outlook for 2024.

Randy Spronk 00:12

You know, I think there's optimism. You know, I'm a pork producer, we've come through a very difficult 12 to 14 months, there's a return to profitability here, so very much an optimism. You look at the first three months of this year, volume's up 6% value's up 7%. here. There's still continued demand here. One of the interesting statistics that was pointed out here today that, you know, we've expanded the sow herd in the United States over the last five years and really all that expansion has gone towards export., So very favorable for what we do within the U.S. Meat Export Federation. I think everybody in the beef side is looking well, when are we going to start retaining heifers and so a lot of discussion and opinions on you know, whether that's occurring right now or when that's going to be able to occur here because that's a that's an important aspect to think about here, too.

John Herath 00:50

In his remarks to the attendees, Bronk voiced a need to prioritize market access

Randy Spronk 00:54

When we look at those countries that we have free trade agreements, we lower tariffs, and we lower non-tariff trade barriers, U.S. products, they maintain access because of their healthfulness, because of their taste, because of their cost effectiveness. American agriculture is good, but we do need a level playing field, and I think that's the position we just need to keep verbalizing in agriculture here. We look at the past when Korea and Colombia, two phenomenal markets that we've just shown continued growth here. We need some new markets here. I'd make reference to Vietnam. Vietnam could have been within TPP here, they're in CPTPP. We're on the outside looking in here. We're at a tariff disadvantage on our products that go into that country at a timeframe when they could really use our product. The Philippines would be another example. So just great opportunities for continued free trade agreements, and we just want to make sure our administration and our Congress hears that.

John Herath 01:43

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