SAUDI ARABIA BEEF SEPT 2026

SPEAKERS
Ashley Michels, Dan Halstrom, Germán Navarrete

Ashley Michels 00:00:00:00 - 00:00:15:05
Earlier this year, technical barriers that had been in place for more than a decade were lifted on U.S. beef exports to Saudi Arabia. U.S. Meat Export Federation President and CEO Dan Halstrom says this allows the U.S. beef industry to capitalize on one of the world's fastest growing markets.

Dan Halstrom 00:00:15:05 - 00:00:51:11
Our forecast is that this is a $150 million opportunity, so we're planning accordingly. Saudi Arabia has held a lot of promise for a long time. It's a very young demographic. One of the youngest in the world under 30 years of age. And the prospects for future growth are just huge. The total global imports were over $1 billion of beef globally into Saudi Arabia, which we had a very, very small portion of less than $10 million. But there was an Export Verification, EV program, which really had some overly restrictive feed traceability requirements and a few other things that complicated the supply chain.

Ashley Michels 00:00:51:11 - 00:01:03:21
With a much greater share of U.S. beef production now eligible. USMEF chef Germán Navarette traveled to Saudi Arabia this summer to reintroduce U.S. beef to potential buyers, thanks to support from the USDA and the Beef Checkoff program.

Germán Navarrete 00:01:03:21 - 00:01:40:09
We had the chance to do one-on-one workshops with some of the importers in the region, and they were extremely excited. We also had the chance to work with culinary students, who are the future leaders in hotels and restaurants of the region. That was extremely important for them to learn about U.S. beef so they will be able to use it. So we had a cutting demonstration and then we had some tasting. They were absolutely convinced that this is the right product. Now with the market opened again, now people are willing to import U.S. beef and it's a very, very exciting market because of the number of people in the country, and because they're growing in the tourism area as well.

Ashley Michels 00:01:40:09 - 00:01:45:11
Hallstrom says while building the business back up will take time, right now is the right time to do it.

Dan Halstrom 00:01:45:11 - 00:02:04:13
Even though it's been ten years, there's still buyers that know about U.S. beef and there's a lot more that want to learn about it. The family-style dining sector has absolutely been booming. $30 gourmet burgers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. These are the sorts of things that are different in the last ten years, which is a perfect fit for U.S. beef.

Ashley Michels 00:02:04:13 - 00:02:07:09
For the U.S. Meat Export Federation, I'm Ashley Michels.