Theiler-Japan-Buyers

SPEAKERS
John Herath, Jay Theiler

John Herath 00:00
A team of buyers from major Japanese beef importers recently visited Colorado, Kansas and Idaho to learn about the beef supply chain, from ranch and feedlot to processing and retail. One of their hosts was Jay Theiler of Agri Beef, the U.S. Meat Export Federation chair-elect.

Jay Theiler 00:13
We had about a dozen buyers that represented four of the major beef importing companies in Japan come to visit us here in Idaho. We had the great opportunity to show them all the steps in the beef supply chain, starting with ranching, going to a ranch operation, and then a feedyard Agri Beef's feedyard out in Parma, Idaho. And then we took them to the producer owned plant, True West Beef in Jerome, Idaho, and showed them that. So they really got to see a good overview of all the steps in our U.S. beef supply chain, and see the focus that we put on quality. The buyers were able to see one of the newest plants in the United States. This True West beef plant in Jerome, Idaho, opened in June of 2023 so it's a good example of a new facility, and it's a plant that is also partially owned by producers here in the Northwest. That's a little bit different for the Japanese to see a model that's a little bit different than all the other plants in the United States.

John Herath 01:10
Maintaining that relationship with Japanese buyers is key for the beef industry.

Jay Theiler 01:15
There's not enough beef in Japan, per se, for all domestic consumption, so they rely on trading partners. And like I said, with the U.S., it's been such a long relationship that they really do appreciate the quality that we produce here. The Japanese markets are critical to Agri Beef. There's a lot of items that go over there that are not necessarily consumed here, domestically. And if you look at as an industry, exports in total are around $415 a head, but $75 of that actually comes from Japan. So it's actually a critical market. It's the number one volume market, and second only to South Korea and the value

John Herath 01:51
The tour was supported by the Beef Checkoff Program, USDA and Idaho and Washington state beef organizations. For more, please visit USMEF.org. For the U.S. Meat Export Federation, I'm John Herath.

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