Halstrom-LA-Ports-V2

SPEAKERS
Dan Halstrom, John Herath

John Herath 00:00
A union representing about 250 security workers at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach is threatening to go on strike if a new contract is not reached in the coming days. U.S. Meat Export Federation President and CEO Dan Halstrom explains why that's a concern for the U.S. red meat industry.

Dan Halstrom 00:14
And while this is just a small fraction of the total workforce, other union employees such as longshoremen and marine clerks will likely not cross picket lines. So the two parties need to reach an agreement on a new contract, or we could be looking at a widespread shutdown affecting the entire port complex. As you all know, the L.A. Long Beach port complex is tremendously important to the U.S. red meat industry. About two thirds of our waterborne beef exports and about half of our waterborne pork exports pass through the West Coast ports. And while the Port of Oakland handles the highest volume of red meat shipments, the Southern California ports account for about 25% of our total waterborne exports. So USMEF is hopeful that the impasse can be resolved quickly and a new contract can be agreed to. However, we are already seeing congestion build up at the Southern California ports, and the last thing we need, especially at this time of year, is a work stoppage to make the situation worse.

John Herath 01:14
If congestion worsens in the Southern California ports, shipments scheduled to depart through that key Oakland port could also be delayed.

Dan Halstrom 01:21
The reasons for this is that vessels that exporters are rely on to take red meat shipments to Asia and to other key markets around the world, call the port of Oakland after they have come through Los Angeles or Long Beach. So when operations in L.A. or Long Beach are slowed or suspended, these vessels can't reach Oakland on schedule, and that's a huge concern for our exporters. The vast majority of our chilled production, beef and pork, passes through the port of Oakland. While it's important for frozen product as well, obviously from a shelf life standpoint around chilled beef and pork, it's paramount that we get this situation resolved soon.

John Herath 01:57
Over the weekend, the two sides agreed to extend talks through Wednesday. For the U.S. Meat Export Federation, I'm John Herath.

Transcribed by https://otter.ai