5-28-23-Spring-Conf-Recap

SPEAKERS
John Herath, Kenneth Smith Ramos, Collin Peterson, Dan Halstrom

John Herath 00:00
While the U.S. red meat industry is facing challenges in 2023, exports provided some optimism at the U.S. Meat Export Federation Spring Conference in Minneapolis, according to USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom.

Dan Halstrom 00:11
We're in an environment with a lot of headwinds, be it Proposition 12 on the pork side, we have a bit of a declining beef supply. Despite all that, I think there's a real sense of optimism around demand. Demand's been strong for the last few years. And even in the midst of higher pricing on beef, for example, demand is still very, very good and very strong. It's always good to get the membership together, the nine sectors of membership, but I kind of came away with some renewed optimism amongst our constituents that we can carry into the rest of 2023.

John Herath 00:42
One particular region of optimism is Mexico, which has seen growth in both pork and beef purchases this year. Keynote speaker Kenneth Smith Ramos who served as Mexico's chief negotiator for the U.S. - Mexico - Canada Agreement says it's a relationship that politicians should not take for granted.

Kenneth Smith Ramos 00:57
There' s $800 billion in trade overall between Mexico and the U.S. And in the ag sector, it's over $72 billion bilaterally. We really should send the message to the leaders that free trade in agriculture strengthens food security in the region, and that we should not going forward cause any disruptions in this flow of trade in both directions.

John Herath 01:17
Also at the Spring Conference, former House Ag Committee Chairman Collin Peterson urged attendees to push trade to the front of the agenda for the next Farm Bill.

Collin Peterson 01:25
My experience when people come into my office, they would talk about the Farm Bill, and they would talk about crop insurance, they'd talk about Title One, they talked about conservation, talk about rural development, and then at the end of the meeting and they'd say, 'Oh, by the way, we've got to do something about trade.' That was the extent of it. So you've got to get to these members of Congress and it should be the first thing you talk to them about, not the last thing. And I think if you approached it that way you can get some people to the table that are going to put this on the top of the agenda and not the bottom.

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John Herath 01:56
For more on the U.S. Meat Export Federation and highlights from the Spring Conference, visit USMEF.org. For USMEF, I'm John Herath.

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