

Canadian Beef IS the Best in the World – Top Influencers International Meat Trade

As a major beef exporter, arguably no opinions of beef quality are more important for Canada than those held by meat experts in key international markets.

These are the meat company directors, beef importers and distributors and meat purveyors who have the dollars and powerful market influence to drive demand.

That's why when the Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF) prepared to conduct benchmark surveys of beef quality perceptions, the focus quickly honed in on auditing the perceptions of these top-level players of the international meat trade.

"These people are the movers and shakers – collectively, they represent millions of dollars in trade," says Michael Young, CBEF vice president of international programs. "These folks are in the business of buying what sells in their marketplace, and they can buy beef from anywhere in the world. How they perceive beef quality and Canadian beef has a huge impact on the success of our industry."

Targeting top influencers

With funding support from the National Beef Industry Development Fund (NBIDF), the Federation undertook a Beef Quality Perception Audit (BQPA) in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong/Macau and Mexico, to understand the current perceptions of beef quality and how the specific attributes of Canadian beef measure up. Over 700 meat experts took part in the BQPA study. A similar audit of over 200 US meat experts was also conducted in 2004 by the Beef Information Centre.

"The focus was asking the opinions of meat experts, of what they think and what their experience is with the imported beef they purchase to resell to their customers," says Young. The purpose was not only to gauge these opinions, but to provide a basis for identifying key knowledge and opportunity gaps that could be leveraged to improve the competitive position of Canadian beef.

"We believe Canadian beef is the best in the world and we believe that the value proposition that Canada brings to the world's table is what the customer is looking for. Export success and prosperity depends on our ability to communicate this story and deliver the quality and service standards the customer is demanding. This research was important for us to find out how well our story is getting through, and in what areas we can strengthen our message.

(Meristem Land & Science – BeefScience 02/07)