



Sales Force Training Targets Growing Honduran Retail Sector

Sales force training is a very effective tool for enhancing awareness of U.S. beef in Western Hemisphere markets. As retail and foodservice outlets in these countries grow in sophistication, a well-educated sales force is needed to educate consumers about the quality and value of U.S. products and help them choose cuts that will meet their needs.

With producer support from the Beef Checkoff, USMEF recently conducted a sales force training seminar in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Honduras has the second-largest population (to Guatemala) in Central America of nearly 8 million. About 20 percent of the population lives in and around San Pedro Sula, considered the country's main economic and trade center.



Sales personnel in Honduras receive hands-on meat-cutting experience as part of their comprehensive training on U.S. beef

About 80 percent of the meat consumed in Honduras is purchased at wet markets and butcher shops, but the retail sector is steadily evolving. For example, Walmart now operates about 80 supermarkets in Honduras. The U.S. is second in market share with 27 percent, while Nicaragua is the market leader with 56 percent. A critical factor in growing the U.S. share is to familiarize Honduran consumers with alternative beef cuts that offer value and affordability.

Participants in the training seminar were not only from the retail sector, but also represented the foodservice companies and meat processors which import and sell 90 percent of the red meat imported by Honduras.

The objective of the seminar was to present the sales force personnel with technical and trade knowledge that strengthens their ability to sell U.S. beef. Specific areas of instruction included:

- Structural composition of beef
- Alternative U.S. beef cuts developed by the Beef Checkoff Program
- Merchandising strategies

"These seminars are very popular and they are an excellent way to develop commercial relationships with potential and current customers," said Chad Russell, USMEF regional director for Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Central America. "Once sale force personnel are well-trained and convinced of the quality of U.S. beef, they become more effective promoters of our products each working day at the point of purchase. The multiplier impact of these seminars is very significant."

Through May, U.S. beef/beef variety meat exports to Central and South America totaled 6,939 metric tons (15.3 million pounds) valued at \$16.3 million, an increase of 48 percent in volume and 64 percent in value over last year.

Another USMEF training seminar is planned for August in Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras.

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The U.S. Meat Export Federation (www.USMEF.org) is the trade association responsible for developing international markets for the U.S. red meat industry. It is funded by USDA; the beef, pork, lamb, corn and soybean checkoff programs, as well as its members representing nine industry sectors: beef/veal producing & feeding, pork producing & feeding, lamb producing & feeding, packing & processing, purveying & trading, oilseeds producing, feedgrains producing, farm organizations and supply & service organizations.

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