

# 5-16-22-Middle-East-Bassam BouSaleh

## **SPEAKERS**

John Herath, Bassam BouSaleh

### **John Herath**

As pandemic restrictions ease U.S. beef is seeing new growth in the Middle East through grocery sampling, restaurants and hotels, and a surge in e-commerce Bassam BouSaleh, the U.S. Meat Export Federation representative in the Middle East says the region's grocers are allowing food sampling again, and tasting demos, conducted with support from USDA and the Beef Checkoff Program, which are important for U.S. beef sales.

### **Bassam BouSaleh**

During the COVID time, sampling in the retail sector was not allowed. But now, the government they're giving us special permission to do it again. The chef is allowed to do live cooking and do a tasting for U.S. beef cuts. Customers like such demonstration because they taste U.S. beef properly prepared, and they can ask questions to chefs and communicate with them the proper cooking tips and methods.

### **John Herath**

High end restaurants in the Gulf region often feature U.S. beef so the return of hotel and food service business has been key.

During COVID time food service was suffering in the region because visitors to the country were very minimal. But now the food service sector in Dubai and other Gulf states is going back to normal. Occupancy in the hotels is around like 70 to 90% and for sure, U.S. beef in this situation is getting better market. Steak houses are now ordering more quantities. Customer used to know only the prime costs like tenderloin, strip loin, ribeye, T-bone steaks, but we promoted cuts at less cost in the market like the short rib, hanging tenders, brisket, chuck. Chefs find them very profitable for their menu and they can use with a reasonable price.

### **John Herath**

BouSaleh also says the pandemic increased interest in U.S. beef meal sales through e-commerce, a trend that is continuing to boost sales even as restrictions have been lifted. For more visit [USMEF.org](https://usmef.org). For the U.S. Meat Export Federation. I'm John Herath.