

# 8-15-22-Dan-Japan

**John Herath** 00:00

Japan, one of the largest export markets for U.S. pork and beef, is just starting to emerge from COVID restrictions. U.S. Meat Export Federation, President and CEO Dan Halstrom, recently returned from his first trip to the country in more than two years, and he says the residents are still pretty cautious

**Dan Halstrom** 00:15

On my way in it was the most empty I've seen it ever, I think it'll take a little bit of time for the consumer in Japan to get used to the post COVID environment because the government definitely does not want to shut down again, they want to keep things open. But the consumers, it's going to take a little bit of time for them to adjust and get used to that I think. I was a bit surprised that food service hadn't recovered any more than it had. People are fully masked inside and outside. The family style dining sector, especially the yakiniku sector, is seeing some rebound. But that isn't true for the whole food service sector. And while food service is up, it's from a very low base a year ago, so I think there's a lot of upside later in the year for food service. Meanwhile, retail and online e-commerce activity continues to boom.

**John Herath** 01:02

U.S. beef is very strong in Japanese food service, but Halstrom says he talked with buyers who expressed growing interest in pork for retail.

**Dan Halstrom** 01:10

From the standpoint that certain cuts are maybe a little cheaper than beef, and also the fact that poultry prices are so high in Japan the chicken prices. So I think pork is well positioned in that regard. So there was a bit of optimism at retail in particular around pork. So that was encouraging.

**John Herath** 01:30

The U.S. red meat industry has a long commitment to Japan that will be celebrated next month,

**Dan Halstrom** 01:35

We are celebrating our 45th anniversary of our Japan office established in 1977. And we will be holding a trade seminar on September 16 In Tokyo, and we're expecting to have upwards of 200 people. And this will be the first large business venture of this sort in a post COVID environment. So it's not only a chance to celebrate the 45th anniversary but more importantly to tell our story, remind people of the strength of U.S. beef, pork and lamb for that matter.

**John Herath** 02:07

For more, visit [USMEF.org](https://usmef.org). For the U.S. Meat Export Federation. I'm John Herath.