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Good news out of beef exports



FARM VOICE

Ric Swihart

Ric Swihart is The Herald's veteran agriculture journalist. His opinion column appears each Monday.

"To Russia with Love" was a hit in Hollywood.

Now, the Canada Beef Export Federation has taken a page from tinsel town with some glowing predictions on enhanced beef exports to a big part of the former Soviet Union.

CBEF has developed a special beef export seminar series, and the last for the 2010 season to build demand for Canadian beef earned high praise from more than 100 key buyers from all segments of the Russian beef market. It was so highly held in Russia it generated more than 30 media reports.

All that good news isn't lost on the federation.

Headed by former Picture Butte farm boy Ted Haney in Calgary, the federation

expected to end 2010 with more than 8,000 tonnes of Canadian beef shipped to Russia. That would be up from 4,800 tonnes it supplied in 2009.

"The seminar was one of the best organized events I have attended in quite some time," said Nathan Hunt, Moscow representative for CBEF export member Ronald A. Chisholm Limited and acting president of the Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association in Russia.

"The presentations were all spot on, the audience was interested, and the informal interaction was

lively and relevant," he said. "The informational packets had all the right information and translation was done professionally. I have heard very positive things from a number of participants. Our company has received at least three serious inquiries for Canadian beef as a direct result of the seminar."

Haney and the CBEF organization earned praise for bringing strong professionals who know how to convey their message.

Canadian beef and veal exports in the first 10 months of 2010 were up 52 per cent in volume to 4,200 tonnes and 186 per cent in value to \$13.5 million.

Not only are volumes increasing, but the proportion of high value beef and veal cuts is increasing rapidly.

"It is clear that our business is no longer based on liver exports for sausage production," said Haney. "Russia is becoming a key market for Canada. Our export members had originally planned to take beef and veal exports to Russia to 11,000 tonnes by 2020. We may still surpass that in 2010 – and they are rethinking their plans."

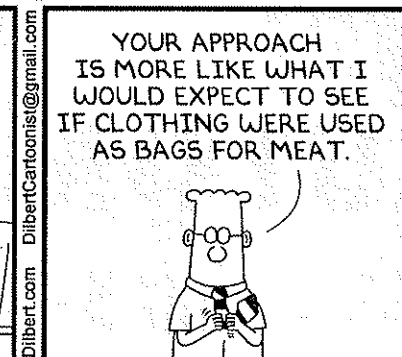
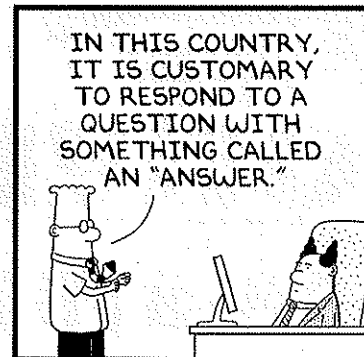
Ted is good. His knowledge of the beef industry is second to none, and he is a people person who hires similar folks — ideal combinations when trying to win converts, in this case, to Canadian beef.

That news is simply gold for an industry which has seen too many ups and downs in recent years, a real confidence builder.

"What have you done for me lately?" is not a politically correct question.

Better to ponder what the federation can do for beef producers next.

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