

1-15-23-Bison-Japan

SPEAKERS

John Herath, Jim Matheson

John Herath 00:00

U.S. bison is seeking access to the Japanese market. The industry recently had an opportunity to make the case to Japanese officials in a visit to some U.S. bison processing facilities, according to Jim Matheson, Executive Director of the National Bison Association.

Jim Matheson 00:14

We've been lobbying Japan for access for bison imports for some time now, working with the Foreign Ag Service primarily. And we started the process years ago, and so happened that when we were in DC in September for our fly-in, we were sitting down with the Foreign Ag Service and they let us know that there's a Japanese delegation that was coming to Colorado in December. They expressed interest to tour a bison processing plant, which as I understand it is kind of the first step for their consideration of opening up for our products. So fortunately, we have our biggest bison processor based here in Colorado in Rocky Mountain Natural Meats. We met up at Brush Meat Processors in Brush, Colorado, which is their kill plant, and had a great tour of the bison slaughter facility there in Brush. We were able to see some animals being processed.

John Herath 00:14

The group also toured a bison fabrication facility in Henderson, Colorado and enjoyed some bison ribeyes. Matheson says there is strong interest on both sides of the Pacific in opening up bison trade.

Jim Matheson 01:20

We are a relatively small sector of American agriculture. We processed about 75,000 head of bison last year here in the U.S., which was a record year for us. That said, you know, we do have members in our association that are seeking to export actively to Japan. At the same time we have folks in Japan that are seeking bison imports. So we're trying to connect those folks of course and show the governments, both US and Japan, that there is significant demand there. There's virtually no competition for bison from these other countries. You know bison is uniquely American. Literally all the product you'll see in the marketplace was born and raised in North America.

John Herath 01:59

For more about USMEF and our work to promote beef, pork, lamb and bison around the world, visit UMEF.org. For the U.S. Meat Export Federation, I'm John Herath.