

Black Ink

Reputation Beef



MIRANDA REIMAN

WOOSTER, OHIO

There's Midwestern nice and Southern charm. New York has its bright city lights and there's the West Coast sunshine.

Every region is known for something. When you dial down into the agriculture world, certain states or areas

seem to have a stronghold. Wisconsin and dairy go hand in hand. Then you have Florida oranges, Kansas wheat, Georgia peaches – and who could think about the great expanses of states like Texas and Montana without also thinking of cattle?

Move outside the U.S. borders and you may not see as clearly what American cattle producers are connected with around the world. Luckily for the beef industry, but not just by chance, that image overwhelmingly has been built on quality.

For the most part, global consumers hear U.S. beef and they think marbling, corn-fed, unique flavor. In a word: tasty.

That's a prestigious reputation to own. But there's an old adage, "It takes years to build a reputation and seconds to destroy it."

If you're a Middle Eastern beef consumer, who has just paid a pretty penny (or whatever currency might be involved) for your American beef, that's undoubtedly true. After all, there are extra costs for freight, inspections, and repackaging already built into that beef. It costs more across the ocean and through the Strait of Hormuz than it does just raised down the local dirt

road. So that foreign consumer has shelled out some big bucks for a special meal out or to entertain in style and it all comes down to those first few bites. Is it moist? Tender? Tasty?

It better be, because it has to live up to that reputation.

The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) – a trade group that represents all domestic red meat production – says it promotes American beef as the high-quality player. These folks build demand on the fact that the U.S. can consistently provide the best to five-star hotel and restaurant establishments.

As cattlemen and women it's your job to protect that reputation – build on it, grow it.

A family in South Korea or tourists in Barbados are probably not the first things you're thinking about as you sit down to pencil out a new breeding or management strategy, but you have to remember that those very people are adding dollars to your bottom line.

Last year, USMEF estimated that exports added more than \$153 per head to each animal. No matter what prices are doing in this often-low-margin business, you can't afford to give that up.

The good news is those international consumers aren't really that different than a domestic beef eater. Sure, they might take a few more livers, tongues or short plates than any given U.S. market buys, but everybody wants the same thing: a good eating experience.

If you let that focus define your farm or ranch, you'll be in good shape for keeping that reputation on solid footing.

Δ
MIRANDA REIMAN: Industry Information Specialist for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB)



Link Directly To: **RICETEC**