



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hispanic Retailers Leverage the Canadian Beef Advantage

Canadian beef exceeds expectations to maximize retailers' profitability

Calgary, AB (February 24, 2010) – U.S. Retailers servicing the Hispanic market are increasingly choosing Canadian beef products to differentiate themselves in the marketplace and deliver on customer satisfaction. The Beef Information Centre (BIC) is working with these retailers to build branded programs designed to deliver on the quality and consistency the Canadian Beef Advantage offers.

Marty Carpenter, Sr. Director, U.S. Marketing for BIC says that Canadian beef delivers specifically on characteristics the Hispanic market finds desirable. "The Hispanic consumer prefers bright red meat color and white fat, two attributes that are unique to Canada's grading system and part of the attributes we call the Canadian Beef Advantage which are found in our top grades, Canada Prime, AAA, AA or A."

Over the past three years, BIC has made significant inroads in the Hispanic market in the U.S., more than doubling their client list. Beef sales to each client also increased over the same time period. To achieve this success, BIC first identifies companies that capitalize on the attributes of Canadian beef. BIC aligns retailers with Canadian packers and distributors and then helps retailers build customized beef programs. This includes consumer-based research, development of promotional and point of sale materials, advertising and merchandising support, customer seminars and staff training.

Merit Foods is one retailer working with BIC who is using Canadian beef products in order to stay competitive and differentiate their company in the marketplace. Based in Tucson, Arizona, Merit Foods is a Foodservice distributor selling to smaller Hispanic retailers in addition to mainstream customers.

Since beginning its partnership with BIC this past summer, Merit reports a 30 percent increase in the volume of beef sales as a result of new growth related to the availability of Canadian product.

"The growth of our beef sales has exceeded our expectations," says Scott Butler, General Manager, Merit Foods. "We were able to improve the value and consistency of our service and in turn, customers recognize the quality of the Canadian brand and now request it."

Merit allowed its customers to use the new products, test the quality and consistency of the new brand and then provided them with details on the new Canadian supplier. By then customers recognized the brand, asking for additional cuts and increasing their orders.

“Canadian suppliers tend to raise a small variety of cattle types, resulting in a consistent carcass, specifically in terms of trim ratio, product size, meat color and quality,” says Carpenter.

According to a recently-completed study of U.S. consumers, the reaction of the Hispanic retailers working with Merit was not unique. The research found that Canadian beef is judged acceptable by significantly more American beef buyers than beef from any other listed country.

The study also found that the most important purchase motivator for the American consumer was freshness, color, price, leanness, tenderness, flavor and safety - all important attributes that Canadian beef can consistently deliver. The Hispanic consumer placed an even greater emphasis on the quality and freshness of the meat as demonstrated by the visual cues in the meat cooler.

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