

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Beef Jerky is Back in Tokyo!

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events
and Shows

Agricultural Trade Office Activities

Livestock and Products

Retail Foods

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Snack Foods

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Report Highlights:

After an absence of more than eleven years, the first shipment of U.S. processed beef products arrived in Japan on March 4, 2015. FAS/Japan facilitated entry of a shipment of beef jerky just in time for the largest food tradeshow in Asia.

Executive Summary:

On January 23, 2015, Japan and the United States concluded nearly two years of negotiations to re-open the Japanese market to U.S. processed beef products. FAS/Japan was understandably excited to learn that Colorado-based *Perky Jerky* was interested in bringing its beef jerky to FOODEX 2015, a USDA-endorsed trade show that included more than 70 U.S. companies. FAS/Japan worked closely with *Perky Jerky*, logistics firms, and the Government of Japan to achieve “the near impossible” in less than two weeks: bringing the first processed beef products to enter Japan in over a decade to the largest food tradeshow in Asia.

General Information:

On January 23, 2015, Japan and the United States concluded nearly two years of negotiations to re-open the Japanese market to U.S. processed beef products under the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Less Than 30 month Age Verification (LT30) Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program for Japan. These efforts ensured that for the first time since late 2003, [1] all products from LT30 cattle would be eligible to export to Japan, the United States’ largest beef export market, valued at nearly \$1.6 Billion in 2014. AMS announced the first U.S. establishments approved for the manufacture of “processed products” on February 3, 2015. As market access for processed beef products was only effectively realized well after access for beef cuts and offals (February 2013), ground beef (June 2013), and several minimally processed offals (April 2014), the first shipment of U.S. processed beef products to arrive in Japan in over a decade drew significant attention from the Government of Japan (GOJ).

On February 17, 2015, FAS/Japan learned that Colorado-based *Perky Jerky* was interested in bringing its beef jerky to FOODEX 2015, the largest food tradeshow in Asia drawing almost 3,000 exhibitors from 79 countries. The value of exhibiting at FOODEX is considerable, as over 75,000 trade professionals from Japan, North Asia, Southeast Asia, and around the world would attend the show. The only problem was that FOODEX was scheduled to begin in less than two weeks, and the beef jerky hadn’t even been produced yet. Bringing a new-to-market product to Japan in less than two weeks would be a daunting task under normal conditions, but late February was anything but normal as Japanese customs and quarantine officials were busy clearing an enormous volume of products for the nearly 2,300 other international exhibitors from 79 countries participating at FOODEX.

FAS/Japan immediately reached out to the GOJ and to the intended import quarantine station to provide advanced notice of the shipment’s scheduled arrival. In addition to answering a number of additional questions related to the first shipment of a U.S. processed beef product under the LT30 QSA, FAS/Japan’s actions allowed the GOJ to conduct a preliminary review of the products’ ingredients lists and manufacturing processes. Over the following two weeks, FAS/Japan was able to effectively counsel the *Perky Jerky*, the import agent, and the freight forwarders as they progressed through the product registration and importation process, including the decision to ultimately split the shipment into two separate consignments: one for display purposes only and one for distribution. This last decision was ultimately responsible for ensuring *Perky Jerky* had product to display on the first day of the show, while receiving the product packaged for distribution (the majority of the export shipment volume) in time for the third and fourth days of the show.

Perky Jerky Chairman of the Herd Brian Levin noted, “For the past several years, we have been targeting our premium jerky products for the Japanese market, which has a very high rate of jerky

consumption. When the ban on U.S. processed beef was finally lifted, we were ready to be first in the market with our premium *Perky Jerky*. The FAS staff in Japan was instrumental in assisting us at all levels during the process, and with their help, we were able to accomplish the near impossible in just two weeks. The response to our products has been amazing, and we expect Japan to be a multi-million dollar market for us in 2015 and beyond.”

FAS/Japan played a critical role in ensuring that a U.S. small business not only successfully cleared quarantine, but did so in time to provide free samples of U.S. beef jerky to the more than 40,000 people that attended the final two days of FOODEX 2015.

^[1] Japan closed its market to U.S. beef and beef products in late 2003 in response to a detection of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States. U.S. access to the Japanese market resumed in late 2005, but remained significantly restricted until the LT30 QSA program began in February 2013.