

MARKET ENTRY STRATEGIES

Some commercial buyers report that they like Canadian pork, but do not know where to get it.

Many of the industry experts interviewed for this study express surprise that Canada has not been more persistent in promoting its pork products in Mexico. They regard Canadian pork as superior to American products, and believe that it would do well in Mexico if it were effectively promoted. Some observers believe that Canada could claim half of the import market.

Some of the buyers interviewed complained that they knew of no source of Canadian pork and others noted that Canadian forays into the market have been sporadic and not followed up with a permanent presence.

CULTURAL CHALLENGES

Culturally, Mexico presents a variety of challenges to Canadian companies wishing to enter the market. Mexican buyers require a high level of attention and follow-up. Informality prevails and personal contacts, especially in the retail and food service sectors, are essential.

Dishonest “extra fees” may be demanded and Canadians must learn to refuse without being intimidated. The current economic crisis has made financial concessions and flexibility a key to securing deals. Canadians must be accessible, socially graceful, yet hard-nosed if they expect to succeed in Mexico.

Canadians wishing to establish business relations with Mexican firms must have personnel with a working knowledge of Spanish. Although most Mexican firms have English-speaking personnel, a foreigner who speaks Spanish demonstrates interest and respect.

PRODUCT PROMOTION

Mexican buyers for retail and food service companies regard Canadian pork products as superior, but note that this is not necessarily perceived by consumers. This suggests a need for Canadian suppliers to promote their products.

Point-of-sale product promotion is common in Mexico, and retailers usually expect suppliers to support these efforts. Canadian companies can promote the quality, taste, leanness and reputation of their products by helping retailers to convey these qualities to consumers. Handing out samples in retail stores is a common way to do this.