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# U.S. Meat and Poultry Trade: China



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## Meat Institute Position:

We support an ambitious and comprehensive trade agenda that expands foreign market access, including by addressing non-tariff and trade-restrictive regulatory barriers, promoting science-based trade rules, and reducing and eliminating tariffs on U.S. meat and poultry exports.

## Why Trade Matters:

International trade is critical to the growth of the U.S. meat and poultry industry. **Approximately 25% of U.S. pork, 15% of U.S. poultry, and 13% of U.S. beef production are exported annually**, and exports add value to every animal produced, in turn increasing demand for U.S. livestock, poultry, corn and soybeans. In 2024, U.S. meat and poultry exports exceeded \$24.6 billion.

## Priorities for Trade with China

### Background:

- The Meat Institute appreciates President Trump's leadership to secure the U.S.- China Phase One Agreement during his first term, which provided significant market access gains for the U.S. meat and poultry industry, including increasing the number of U.S. beef, pork, and poultry products and establishments approved for export to China, as well as reducing other non-tariff barriers precluding trade in these products. China's failure to uphold provisions in the Agreement, particularly those related to establishment registration, undermines U.S. meat and poultry export potential.
- Ensuring China complies with and enforces all provisions in the Phase One Agreement, including those pertaining to establishment registration, presents the second Trump Administration with an important opportunity to strengthen the Agreement's landmark achievements on agriculture in defense of American farmers, ranchers, and meat and poultry companies so that the Agreement's intended gains can be fully realized.
- On Feb. 19, 2025, six U.S. red meat establishments and 71 poultry establishments expired in China's CIFER system (the online database that lists all eligible export facilities from countries that trade with China). On March 16, 2025, another 390 beef and 364 pork establishments, accounting for the majority of U.S. production, were set to expire, effectively closing China's market to U.S. red meat. China has since renewed the eligibility of all U.S. pork and poultry establishments. However, approximately 411 U.S. beef establishments remain ineligible to export to China, with more set to expire this year.
- Through the Phase One Trade Agreement, China recognizes USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) as the competent authority, where FSIS provides China with the U.S. meat and poultry establishments that are eligible to export to China. China is then expected to add facilities and update establishment information in their CIFER system within 20 days of receiving the details from FSIS. However, China's General Administration of Customs (GACC) has not been updating U.S. facility details since July 2024 (including address updates and additional facility listings), and although GACC renewed the U.S. pork and poultry establishments that expired through January 2026, they have failed to renew the eligibility of U.S. beef establishments, which account for the majority of beef production exported to China.

- China's CIFER system attaches five-year expiration dates to each eligible facility, but these artificial expiration dates are not supposed to impact U.S. export eligibility – U.S. establishments should remain eligible as long as FSIS deems them so and they have not been suspended by China for any import violations

### Principal asks:

- ***Restore the export eligibility of all expired U.S. beef establishments (approx. 415) and secure a more permanent solution in negotiations with Chinese authorities to prevent future protracted plant renewal issues.*** U.S. beef exports to China add approximately \$160 per head to the value of cattle. The U.S. beef industry is expected to lose between \$3.7 to \$4.13 billion as long as establishment expirations remain in effect. The \$1.6 billion in U.S. beef exports to China supports more than 14,000 American jobs. Total beef exports support nearly 92,000 jobs, based on the USDA/ERS Ag Trade Multiplier.
- ***Negotiate a path to reinstating suspended U.S. meat and poultry facilities.*** Several U.S. beef plants have been delisted due to detections of ractopamine and melengestrol acetate (MGA), a synthetic progestin used as a feed additive to promote growth and suppress estrus (heat) in heifers, despite these suspensions violating the Phase One Agreement. Each plant was suspended for ractopamine and MGA detections upon their first offense, as opposed to demonstrating a pattern of violations, per the Agreement's requirements. China must also reverse its zero-tolerance policy for ractopamine in line with the Agreement. A clear, transparent, enforceable process must be implemented to ensure establishments suspended for MGA and ractopamine-related findings are not indefinitely barred from exporting to China. U.S. industry currently supports applying the MGA Codex MRL for fat (18 ppb) to muscle tissue as well.
- ***Secure the removal retaliatory tariffs on U.S. meat and poultry exports to China, which are hindering U.S. competitiveness in that market.*** China initially announced it would not accept or approve new Section 301 tariff exclusion applications for U.S. meat and poultry products as of October 30, 2025, and existing approvals would expire after December 13, 2025. China, in November, agreed to extend these exemptions for one year following bilateral negotiations with the Trump Administration. If these exemptions expire in 2026, tariff rates on U.S. beef exports would rise from 32% to 62% and duties on U.S. pork exports would increase from 57% to 87%, although, as already described, most U.S. beef exports are currently shut out of the market. The pork tariff rate also includes a 25% Section 232 retaliatory tariff.

### Market significance:

In 2024, China was the U.S.'s third largest market, by value, for beef, pork, and poultry exports. U.S. beef exports to China in 2024 exceeded \$1.5 billion, while U.S. pork exports were valued at more than \$1.1 billion. U.S. poultry export value to China surpassed \$499 million in 2024. China is the U.S.'s largest market for pork variety meat, by value. There are few alternative markets to send products, like intestines, that would not sell at comparable levels domestically.