



Nourishing Today
Sustaining Tomorrow

Beef Exports to China: Yielding Lower Beef Prices for Americans



Summary

China has been largely closed to U.S. beef exports since March 2025. Rather than renew the export eligibility of U.S. beef establishments – as required by the U.S.-China Phase One Agreement – Chinese authorities have allowed the eligibility of **more than 415 U.S. beef establishments to expire** over the past year, while increasing testing on U.S. beef imports, which has resulted in the suspension of numerous facilities.

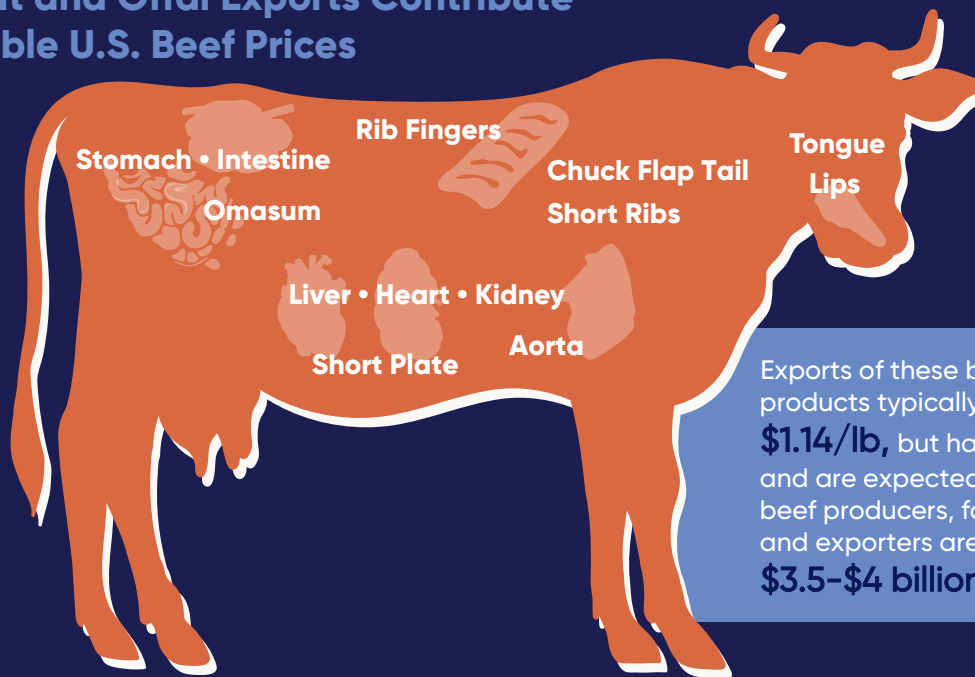
Importantly, U.S. beef exports to China support higher carcass values and reduce price pressure on domestic cuts, contributing to more stable beef prices for American consumers. Strong export demand drives higher carcass value, which encourages cattle producers in the U.S. to rebuild the herd.

Beef products exported to China have limited consumer demand in the U.S. Products such as short plate (beef belly), short ribs, chuck short ribs, chuck flap tail, rib fingers, omasum, aorta, and other offal and beef variety meats are not preferred by American consumers, and **Chinese customers pay higher prices for these products** that contribute to the stability and vitality of the American meat and poultry industry. Without China, these products would be sent to other markets at lower prices or be **rendered for cents on the dollar**; these products do not increase domestic supply of steaks or ground beef for American consumers, nor do they reduce the supply of beef products American consumers prefer.

In short, U.S. beef exports to China complement, rather than compete with, domestic production and consumption.

Industry analysis indicates that the closure of the China market adds approximately **8%** or about **\$0.30 per wholesale pound** to the cost of cuts commonly consumed by Americans. This is partly driven by **declines of 40% in the value** of beef offal and variety meats like omasum, livers, hearts, and kidneys that have been shut out of China for the last year.

Variety Meat and Offal Exports Contribute to More Stable U.S. Beef Prices



Exports of these beef variety meat and offal products typically receive a premium of **\$1.14/lb**, but have **declined to \$0.69/lb**, and are expected to fall even more. American beef producers, farmers, ranchers, processors, and exporters are projected to lose between **\$3.5-\$4 billion annually**.



What would help in negotiations with China to stabilize beef prices for American consumers?

- 1) **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.** The \$1.6 billion in U.S. beef exports (2024 data) 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.
- 2) **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.