

**Although they have licenses to export to Saudi Arabia, the meat industry has not yet realized it, and it is not even certain when it will happen because the livestock fund is too small to be able to do it.**

**Dnevnik** writes that after 40 years, Serbia can once again place in Saudi Arabia, and the Ministry of Agriculture assessed this as an excellent opportunity for domestic growers, especially now that food prices are reaching record levels.

Cattle breeders and agroeconomists agree with this position, but also state that this foreign trade exchange cannot be realized immediately, but in the following period, if and when Serbia has beef cattle for export, because currently the livestock fund is small and sufficient for domestic needs.

The Director of Meat Industry "Srem Šid" Bratislav Bogatić tells **Dnevnik** that, although domestic beef and beef have not yet reached the Arab market, this type of meat is still exported. According to him, frozen beef and veal are exported to the Chinese market, and the quantities depend on demand, so sometimes one to two containers are exported per week, and sometimes five.

"The fact that Saudi Arabia has approved the import of beef and sheep meat, milk and dairy products from Serbia is good news for Serbian livestock farmers and represents a step forward in foreign trade arrangements with a country that has a demanding and high-paying market. After this agreement, the next step is the harmonization of veterinary certificates and the implementation of the Halal standard, which is necessary in trade arrangements with Muslim countries and which is very demanding and is renewed every year", said Nenad Budimović, the secretary of the Association for Livestock Breeding and Processing of Livestock Products of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce.

He points out that the domestic price of beef and beef is high for buyers in Saudi Arabia, and since there are not too many fattened beef in Serbia, the meat here cannot be cheaper than it is now, but only more expensive.

"Livestock breeders cannot sell cattle below the production price just so that the beef is exported to Saudi Arabia. We have already been visited by traders from Saudi Arabia, but we have not closed a deal. We are expecting more buyers next week, so we will see if we can work together", said Bogatić.

A kilogram of beef in Serbia costs about 10 euros, that is, about 1,200 dinars, and on average it is 6.5 euros.

"Our meat is of better quality than beef and beef from Argentina, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand, where Saudi Arabia is supplied, but we don't know how much it costs in those countries", said Bogatić.

"Đurđević" meat industry has also not yet started exporting meat to Saudi Arabia. Milenko Đurđević tells **Dnevnik** that there are currently no conditions for that because there are no livestock on the domestic market.

“Our barns are empty and until they are filled, there is no export. We have no cows or bulls, so there is no meat for foreign markets”, said Đurđević and added that it is good that our meat can be sold in Saudi Arabia, but that now is not the time for that because the livestock fund needs to be restored first.

Agrarian analyst from Novi Sad Čedomir Keco stated that our country could export around 30,000 head of beef in two rounds.

“Now our livestock fund is small and we could only export 20 tons of meat to Saudi Arabia per month. However, this trade could increase significantly if incentives per head of livestock were increased from 15,000 dinars to 20,000 dinars next year,” said Keco, 021 writes.