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Bored by sushi- Domestic meat industry awaits for blessing for export to this Far East market

Prosciutto and kulen from next year in Japan

Export to Japan is a long procedure; it started four years ago and includes exchange of numerous documents

The market of Japan could widely open to domestic meat industry next year. Unless some unexpected problems arise, Japanese government could until then give a green light to the import of fresh meat and meat products, especially prosciutto and kulen*, into the land of the rising sun.

Japanese Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia, **Keiji Ide**, revealed for ***Poslovni dnevnik*** that two ladies, employees of Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, finished their visit to Croatia at the end of March and their task was to investigate whether Croatian meat industry meets the demanding criteria for export to the Far Eastern market. They were in inspection supervision at the Croatian Veterinary Institute, in pig and cow farms, border veterinary stations, slaughterhouses, regional veterinary offices and objects for production and processing of meat products.

“After the visit, expert team informed us that Croatian side was well prepared for the supervision and they were very satisfied. In general, they didn’t have any major complaints on Croatian system, but there is still some work to be done before the bringing of the final decision” said Ambassador Ide.

The key complaint, as he explained, is related to the appearance of swine fever in Croatia and all data related to this pig disease will be examined in details. The time when the process could come to an end depends from country to country.

“We would like to say to our Croatian friends that we will seriously consider the request but we still need more time. The Japanese people want to enjoy your meat products but we need to be responsible to them” he said.

The Assistant Minister for Veterinary and Food Safety, **Ms Mirjana Mataušić Pišl**, said that the procedure related to the export to Japan started after her Directorate, through mediation of the Croatian Chamber of Economy, received requests from several companies with intent to export meat products to Japan. The activities include the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs as well as Embassy of Croatia in Tokyo, which took over the contacting with Japanese Ministry of Agriculture.

“Export to Japan is a long and complicated procedure; it includes the exchange of a large number of documents which describe the complete systems of production, processing and distribution of meat products, as well as proving that these activities are being implemented in accordance with high standards of food safety and hygiene that are valid in Japan. Special task in the procedure of export approval was to proof the efficiency of official controls carried out by veterinary inspection in meat production process in Croatia” said assistant minister.

“The export procedure to Japan is very complicated, the complete procedure lasts on average ten years, in our case it should be completed within four years” said Mataušić Pišl who does not hide her satisfaction over this fact and the data that Tokyo sent a gratitude letter for presented efficiency. It is expected that the latest within one year, in March 2016, Croatia will receive the final report on export approval of meat products to Japan.

Table: Export to Japan, Top five products in 2014

Product	1,000 USD
Fish	39.793
Processed wood	2229
Heterocyclic products	2123
Antibiotics	785
Yachts	501

*Kulen- Slavonian salami

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