

# MANITOBA MAY GET NEW KOSHER MEAT SUPPLIER

By Myron Love, Prairies Correspondent

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**WINNIPEG** — The Jewish community here may soon be able to purchase locally slaughtered and processed fresh kosher meat again.

## **Gustavo Zentner**

“We are in discussions with producers about re-establishing fresh kosher slaughter,” said Bob Freedman, the longtime executive director of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg.

“The province is behind us. Shochets and mashgichim are available. We think we have a couple of retailers who would sell the meat under appropriate supervision. We hope to have something more concrete to report within the next six months.”

The key here is that the producers who are interested are looking not only at the Winnipeg market for kosher and halal meat but also nationally and internationally. A report commissioned by the provincial government and authored by Interpoc, a company headed by Gustavo Zentner (who is also a member of the Federation board,) notes that the kosher beef market in Canada is worth an estimated \$130 million a year, while kosher beef sales in the United States are about \$1.35 billion.

The figures for halal beef sales are \$80 million and \$705 million respectively.

About one-third of Canadian supply is produced within Canada with the bulk of the beef coming from the United States and elsewhere.

Currently, most of the kosher beef produced in Canada is supplied by four processors in central Canada.

Worldwide consumption of kosher and halal beef stands at \$600 billion and \$1.2 trillion respectively per year.

The authors recommend that potential Manitoba producers would be best served by establishing traders, importers and distributors dealing in kosher and halal beef.

“North America presents an opportunity for Manitoba producers to attack a niche market where the supply pipeline is dominated by very few large operations that completely meet consumer demands, purchasing preferences or product interest,” the report states.

“Results from direct interaction with industry players and consumers indicate that there is a vast and growing segment interested in innovative beef products at peak seasons, and that concerns such as origin, certification and quality surpass the sensitivity of price at the time of purchase.

The opportunity for Manitoba producers is to tap into the existing supply channels with fresh high quality products, value added new products and deli segment meats.”

“The report provides a lot of information, much of which we were already aware of,” says Freedman. “The Government of Manitoba sees the kosher and halal consumer as important market segments. And it would certainly help the cattle industry in Manitoba that has seen better times.”

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