



ARGENTINES SEEK TO BOOST BEEF SALES

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Argentina is looking to increase its exports of high-quality chilled beef into the UK by up to 20% over the next year.

While the short-term aim is to continue supplying the foodservice sector, a longer-term goal may be to move more substantially into the consumer market by dealing with more supermarkets.

At the moment, Argentina only supplies Tesco. Speaking at the Royal Show, Argentine Beef Promotion Institute chairman Dardo Chiesa said he would be "happy" with a 10-15% increase in sales and "very happy" with 20%.

He acknowledged, however: "We have to manage the growth, because it will affect the internal [domestic] market."

Chiesa said Argentina was not seeking to replace British supplies, but if consumers were looking for alternatives, it wanted Argentine beef to be the first option. Britain is the second-biggest consumer of Argentine beef in Europe after Germany, taking about 23,000t a year.

Being primarily from Aberdeen Angus and Hereford stock, the Argentine product is very similar to the British offering, it is claimed.

The first promotion of Argentine beef in Britain was launched at IFE in March and was followed by an 'Argentine Beef Day' in May, where chefs demonstrated how the South American beef could be adapted to British cuisine. "We want Argentine beef to be seen more than just for the barbecue," said Chiesa.

Two more UK days are planned, as well as promotions at Anuga and at the World Food Exhibition in Moscow later in the year.

Similar promotions to the one in Britain are being held in Spain and Italy.
