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Worldwide Demand for Kosher Beef Soars Even as Shortages Continue



London...The supply of kosher beef in the US has survived Covid-19, several major Jewish holidays, and a shutdown of some South American production facilities. Sources tell Kosher Today that the failure of Passover programs to open worldwide was mitigated by the tens of thousands who stayed home. Israel and Europe have faced spot shortages and the sources say that rising demand may result in endemic shortages. Europe recently lost a meat processing plant in Ireland. One Charedi media source quoted Motti Gershon, the owner of the Shefa Mehadrin chain stores in London and Manchester, who supplies meat to Europe: “There’s a beef shortage. Our main shechita takes place at a plant in Ireland and we stopped the shechita there before Pesach.” The Irish plant closed when several employees contracted the Corona virus. “We reached a point where we were lacking 200 workers at the plant. Several workers caught the virus and each one caused 40 workers to go into quarantine. Eventually, instead of the plant being open for five days a week, it was open only three mornings a week and eventually we closed it completely.”

Israel got some relief from its chronic shortage of beef when production was stepped up in Argentina. A team of 98 rabbis were recently flown into the country from Israel after the government waived travel restrictions aimed at slowing the corona virus pandemic. Argentina is the world’s fifth-largest beef exporter and Israel is the No. 3 buyer of its famously succulent cuts. Argentina will ship 24,000 tons of beef to Israel in 2020, for a value of about \$170 million. US kosher beef producers continued to produce in the US and in countries like Mexico during the pandemic which gave it an ample supply of beef to its US customers. Sources said that even while there were chronic shortages of beef, there were no shortages of lamb and poultry.

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