

GLOBAL
OUTLOOK

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Shipping accounts for 85% of global transport, with expenditure on sea freight a significant contributor to our world economy. Yet shipping faces a mixed outlook, with freight rates anything but stable over the coming months.

For those shipping meat, there are many factors which affect price and delivery reliability.

Over-capacity and high fuel costs are key drivers in rate fluctuation. The world's largest ship – the 19,224 teu* *MSC Oscar* – on the cusp of being launched, is only slightly larger than China Shipping's *CSCG Globe*, recently declared at 19,100 teu. Predicted global container fleet increases are set to create over-capacity of 8.8% (with demand estimates predicted to increase just 6-7%).

The current collapse in crude oil prices (a 60% fall in seven months) may be a positive for shippers, but must be weighed against green considerations as eco-friendly transportation gathers momentum.

New IMO environmental regulations which address emissions for sea freight (of sulphur/nitrous oxides, particulate matter and greenhouse gases like CO₂) are coming into force. Today, sulphur emissions in the Baltic Sea region are restricted; by 2020 they will apply to shipping globally.

The battle between the green and the 'speed' lobbies is yet to play out, as environmental credit can also be gained by slowing ship speeds from 26 to 22 knots. Maersk, for example, currently extols the benefits of very slow ship speeds for environmental and cost reasons, whereas Seaspan advocates some acceleration.

Port congestion – not helped by the arrival of super ships – is another factor that may affect deliveries. It remains to be seen whether these factors will drive shippers to choose new routes or slow journey time more?

*TEU: twenty foot equivalent units

Retailers line up for 2015 SuperMeat battle



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Tesco will be hoping to defend its crown against rivals from across the supermarket sector as the industry gears up for the year's most hotly contested contest in meat – the SuperMeat & Fish Awards 2015.

Several retailers will be competing to knock Tesco off the top spot in this year's awards, which tests products and stores to declare the best in supermarket retailing of meat and fish.

These stand-out awards, organised by *Meat Trades Journal*, will see Asda, Morrisons, Tesco and Marks & Spencer competing for the title of Meat & Fish Retailer of the year, while Aldi and The Co-operative Group will also be looking to gain recognition for their products.

Ed Bedington, editor of *MTJ*, said: "These awards culminate in one of the best nights out in the meat

industry calendar, and this year will be no exception. The fight to take the top titles is always intense and the retailers are already circling each other, hoping to gain that spot."

The competition recognises excellence across the multiple retail meat and fish sector and will see the retailers compete across both product and store categories to take home awards. Products are exhaustively judged by a panel of expert and consumer judges, while stores are visited the length and breadth of the UK and assessed against their rivals. Participants are also given an authoritative feedback report on how their products and stores have performed.

"Awards should not just be about handing out meaningless gongs and baubles," added Bedington. "Our

awards are recognised by consumers and they give the trade the tools to help it to keep moving forward, aiming for continuous improvement. The feedback we provide from this process is as important as winning, and marks this competition as head and shoulders above the rest."

The results will be revealed at a prestigious black tie awards evening at the Park Lane Hilton, London, on 2 July, and the awards are kindly sponsored by Bpex, Eblex, Hybu Cig Cymru and Weidemark Fleischwaren (Tönnies Fleisch).

For details on entry to the awards, contact Helen Law on 01293 846587 or send her an email on helen.law@wrmb.com. For sponsorship opportunities contact Martin Goult on 01293 846572, or email martin.goult@wrmb.com.

Eblex reveals Best Steak finalists

The finalists in Eblex's inaugural 'England's Best Sirloin Steak' contest have been announced following significant interest from businesses.

Eblex's foodservice manager Hugh Judd said he was "delighted" with the level of interest in the competition. 'England's Best Sirloin Steak' is one of three competitions to make up the newly launched Quality Standard Mark Excellence Awards 2015, along with 'England's Best Innovative Steak' and 'England's Best Steak Pie'. Each one recognises products that deliver excellent eating quality and customer satisfaction.

Judd was impressed with the standard of entries: "First-round judging was incredibly difficult as the quality of entries quickly became

evident. Just over half of the sirloin steaks entered achieved Gold Award status and, from those, the three top-scoring products in each category were selected as finalists."

The finalists include:

INDEPENDENT BUTCHER:

- Owen Taylor & Sons of Alfreton, Derbyshire with 'Larder Trim Sirloin'
- Barlows of Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts with 'Sirloin'
- Breeding Vision of Dunstable, Beds with 'Wagyu X Sirloin'

MULTIPLE RETAILER OR MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER:

- Musgrave Retail Partners GB with 'Budgens "Discover the Taste" Sirloin Steak'

- Buitelaar Production (UK) with 'Buitelaar Select Sirloin'
 - Linden Foods with 'Chef's Larder Premium Extra Mature Sirloin'
- CATERING BUTCHER OR FOODSERVICE OPERATOR/SUPPLIER:**
- Mitchells & Butlers with 'Miller and Carter Sirloin Steak'
 - Walter Rose & Son with 'Sirloin Steak'
 - Solent Butchers with 'Southern Pride Sirloin Steak'

The category winners and Overall Winner in all three Quality Standard Mark Excellence Awards competitions will be announced at a ceremony to be held at the Underglobe in London on 22 April 2015.