



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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Friday, March 3, 2006

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BAUCUS WELCOMES MALAYSIA'S STEPS TO PARTIALLY LIFT BEEF BAN

*Senator Supports Launch of Free Trade Negotiations,
Is Urging Malaysia to Remove Remaining Restrictions on Beef Imports*

Washington, DC - U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, today welcomed the decision of Malaysia to lift its ban on boneless beef from cattle less than 30 months old. Malaysia imposed its ban after the discovery of a dairy cow with bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE, in Washington state in December 2003.

"The government of Malaysia is doing the right thing by following sound science and lifting its ban on U.S. boneless beef. Now consumers in Malaysia can again enjoy the best, highest-quality beef in the world," said Baucus. **"Malaysia still needs to go a step further and lift its ban on bone-in beef – as does Korea. But other Asian countries like Japan and China should take a cue from Malaysia today, and move to lift their own restrictions on U.S. beef immediately."**

Several Asian countries continue to ban – wholly or partially – imports of U.S. beef. China retains its ban on U.S. beef products, other than bovine semen and embryos. Japan re-opened its market in December 2005 but again suspended beef imports in January after a technical violation, which posed no risk to human health, in the U.S.-Japan import protocol. Recent actions by Korea and Malaysia to resume U.S. beef imports apply only to boneless, not bone-in, beef.

Press reports have indicated that the United States and Malaysia expect to begin negotiations for a U.S.-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement in the near future. Baucus has long been a supporter of such talks.

Baucus commented, **"I have long urged the Administration to negotiate free trade agreements with commercially meaningful trading partners in Asia that have the potential to create jobs here at home. Ambassador Portman made the right decision last month to begin FTA negotiations with Korea. He should do the same with Malaysia."**

"Malaysia is our 10th largest trading partner and an important destination for U.S. manufacturing exports. It is also a growing market for U.S. agricultural products. Just last year, agricultural exports to Malaysia grew by 40 percent."

"Our trade agreements must enhance U.S. competitiveness and create new opportunities for U.S. exporters to sell their goods and services. Trade agreements with very small countries of little economic significance do not fit that bill. Rather, agreements with countries like Korea and Malaysia have the potential to make a difference to U.S. exporters. I look forward to working with Ambassador Portman to conclude the best deal possible for Montana and for the United States – including a fully open market to U.S. beef, bone-in and boneless alike."

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