



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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For Immediate Release  
Monday, October 10, 2005

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**Baucus Says U.S. Agriculture Offer Must Be Met By Stronger Commitments From U.S. Trading Partners**

*Senator Stresses Congress's Role in Farm Policy*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) Senator Max Baucus, ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, today issued the following statement in response to the announcement by Ambassador Rob Portman, United States Trade Representative, concerning the U.S. conditional offer in the World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture negotiations:

“The U.S. offer today is an important step in attempting to unblock the WTO agriculture talks, which have remained stalled for far too long.

“However, today’s offer represents a level of ambition unmatched by our trading partners, including in the developing world, where tariffs and supports remain far higher than our own. India’s average allowed agriculture tariff is 114 percent. Korea’s is 66 percent. Japan’s is 51 percent. And the European Union, whose allowable domestic supports are over 4 times greater than our own, also maintains an unacceptably high average tariff of 31 percent.

“Our farmers cannot be asked to reduce support payments unless the EU, Japan, India, and others in the developed and developing world make deep cuts to agriculture tariffs and, where applicable, domestic supports.

“I urge the Administration to consult closely with Congress in developing proposals in the WTO negotiations that affect U.S. farm programs. It is the Congress in Washington – not the world’s trade negotiators in Geneva – that will write the Farm Bill in 2007. Domestic priorities, not the Doha Round, will determine how we move forward in the United States on agriculture.”

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