



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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BAUCUS WELCOMES END OF JAPAN'S BAN ON U.S. BEEF IMPORTS

Senator Says There is More Work to Do to Fully Open Asian Markets

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, today welcomed the end of Japan's two-year-old ban on U.S. beef. Japan's decision to lift the ban comes on the heels of a ruling from that country's Food Safety Commission (FSC) that U.S. beef carries no more risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE, than Japanese beef. As a leading opponent of the Japanese ban since its inception in 2003, Baucus last month encouraged the FSC to recommend an end to the unfair prohibition. Japan first blocked imports of U.S. beef after a Canadian-born dairy cow in Washington tested positive for BSE.

"I applaud Japan's first steps to fully reintroduce U.S. beef into its market. After two long years, Japan – the most important export market for American beef producers – is once again open to the safest, most delicious, and highest quality beef in the world," Baucus said. **"But we still have work to do, because Japan has decided to lift its ban only on U.S. beef from cattle 20 months old or younger. All U.S. beef is safe to import and eat."**

Current World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) guidelines ensure the safety of beef exports in cattle less than 30 months of age. To be consistent with international guidelines, Japan must at least open its market to U.S. beef from cattle under 30 months.

A number of other U.S. trading partners continue to unfairly ban imports of U.S. beef as well. Those countries cite similarly unfounded BSE concerns. Baucus said today he will work just as hard to reopen those markets to U.S. producers.

"Too many other countries still ban U.S. beef on the basis of sham science," Baucus said. **"I will continue to push our trading partners – like Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan – to follow the lead of Japan and Thailand, which lifted its ban in October, and reopen their markets to U.S. beef."**

In 2004, Baucus traveled to Japan to meet with Japan's trade and agriculture ministers to argue for lifting the ban. Baucus also brought senior officials from Japan and other Asian countries to Montana – and fed them Montana beef on a Montana ranch – to encourage them to lift the ban. Baucus filed his comments to the Japanese Food Safety Commission (FSC) in Japanese during its four-week public consultation period last month. He underscored the steps producers in America have taken to ensure the safety and quality of U.S. beef.