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BAUCUS COMMENTS ON U.S.-KOREA BEEF CHANGES

Finance Chairman has championed scientific standards for allowing American imports

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) commented today following news that Korean beef importers and U.S. beef exporters reached an agreement to resume shipments of U.S. beef. The agreement limits shipments to beef from cattle aged 30 months and younger for an unspecified transition period. Although it is characterized as a voluntary commercial agreement, the Korean government will apparently have authority to reject shipments of American beef from cattle over 30 months of age. This effectively changes the April 18 accord struck between Korea and the United States, in which Korea agreed to accept imports of bone-in as well as boneless beef, beef products and offals, regardless of age. International scientific standards affirm the safety of all such U.S. beef.

“I’ve been very clear that Korea should accept imports of all U.S. beef, whether it’s bone-in or boneless, regardless of the age of the cattle, and international scientific standards say I’m right,” said Baucus. **“The implications of this agreement set an unfortunate precedent for U.S. beef trade with Korea and other countries. I will review it closely.”**

Korea first closed its market to U.S. beef imports in 2003, following reports of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE, from cattle that originated in Canada. Prior to the ban, Korea was the third largest U.S. beef export market. Korea partially opened its market in September 2006 to boneless beef imports from cattle under the age of 30 months.

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