



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Grassley Fights for U.S. Agriculture in Meeting with Japanese Leaders

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, this week expressed disappointment with Japan’s “go slow” approach to liberalizing agricultural trade. Grassley’s comments came during a meeting yesterday afternoon with four members of the Japanese Parliament on the progress of agricultural negotiations at the World Trade Organization. Included in the delegation was Yoshio Yatsu, the former minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

“Unfortunately, Japan is leading efforts to block reforms at the WTO that would expand world agricultural trade and economic growth,” Grassley told the Japanese legislators. “Too many of Japan’s proposals put forward in WTO agricultural negotiations mirror those of the European Union. Unless Japan commits to further liberalize its agricultural policies, I’m concerned that WTO agricultural talks might fail. It’s in the interests of U.S. farmers, as well as Japanese consumers, to conclude agricultural talks at the WTO that will bring down barriers. Moreover, if WTO agricultural talks are unsuccessful, I believe that the Doha Round will not progress any further.”

Among its proposals at the WTO, Japan is advocating maintaining trade-distorting “blue box” domestic support. Under the guise of non-trade concerns, Japan is seeking to develop even more market protections. The Japanese are calling for the establishment of new safeguard measures to restrict imports. Japanese negotiators are also resisting efforts to harmonize agricultural tariffs.

“I made it clear to the Japanese delegation that any deals that emerge from the WTO talks must improve market access and achieve harmonization for U.S. farmers,” Grassley said.