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BAUCUS HAILS INTERNATIONAL RULING ON U.S. BEEF

Finance Committee Chairman insists that Korea and other partners must open markets

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today hailed the decision of the World Organization for Animal Health (the “OIE”) that ends once and for all questions regarding the safety of U.S. beef. At its annual meeting in Paris today, the OIE unanimously adopted a resolution classifying the United States as a “controlled risk” country for BSE. The scientific classification, effective immediately, means that all U.S. beef and beef products, bone-in and boneless, regardless of age, are safe and healthy as long as specified risk materials are removed – a practice already followed by U.S. beef processors.

“Today, the world authority on animal health unanimously confirmed what we already know: that U.S. beef is perfectly safe,” said Baucus. **“With today’s ruling, it is abundantly clear that lingering restrictions maintained by Korea, Japan, China, and other trading partners have no scientific basis and must be lifted immediately.”**

Korea maintains restrictions on bone-in beef, as well all beef from cattle over 30 months of age. China maintains a de facto ban on all U.S. beef. And Japan only permits imports of U.S. beef from cattle 20 months of age or younger.

“Countries can no longer use the age of cattle as a restriction,” said Baucus. **“Such restrictions aren’t supported by science and, therefore, run counter to international trade rules.”**

The OIE is recognized by the World Trade Organization as standards-setting body for the health and safety of animal products.

Senator Baucus and U.S. Senator Jon Tester (D-Mont.) will celebrate the OIE ruling at a steak-and-eggs breakfast for visiting constituents. The event will take place at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 23, in Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 215.

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