



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release
Thursday, May 18, 2006

Contact: Carol Guthrie
(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS CALLS ON KOIZUMI TO ADDRESS BEEF BAN NOW *Japan's current prohibition on U.S. beef not based on sound science;* *agricultural delegations will meet before prime minister's U.S. trip in June*

Washington, DC — U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, today urged Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to end swiftly Japan's unfair ban on imports of U.S. beef. Japan lifted its two-year old ban on U.S. beef from cattle less than 20 months of age last December, but suspended imports again in January after a shipment of Japan-bound veal was found to contain a backbone that posed no risk to human health. Baucus has been a leader in the fight against Japan's beef ban, meeting with Japanese leaders in Japan and bringing them to his own home state of Montana to sample the highest-quality beef in the world. Today Baucus encouraged Koizumi again to base Japan's import rules on sound science. International standards recognize the safety of beef from cattle less than 30 months of age.

The text of the Senator's letter follows:

May 18, 2006

His Excellency Junichiro Koizumi
Prime Minister of Japan
1-6-1 Nagata-cyo Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 1008968 Japan

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I am pleased that you will be visiting the United States in June. I have worked hard for many years to strengthen the relationship between our two countries and hope that your visit to this country will be a productive one.

As a longtime friend of Japan, I write to alert you to an issue of serious concern – one that threatens to undermine seriously our economic ties. Japan's continued refusal to resume imports of beef from the United States has become a significant irritant in our trade relationship.

As Senator from Montana, a major beef producing state, I have a particular interest in this matter. I personally visited Japan in 2004 to meet with your trade and agriculture ministers. I hosted a delegation of senior Japanese officials in Montana. And I submitted comments in Japanese to the Japanese Food Safety Commission (FSC) during its four-week public consultation period last December.

-- more --

The scientific evidence is absolutely clear: U.S. beef is safe. As all of Japan's food safety and animal health concerns have been addressed, many Americans are beginning to conclude that other motivations lie behind the continuation of the ban. Pressure, therefore, is building for the U.S. government to step up action to address this matter – in the World Trade Organization or otherwise.

A delegation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture is meeting with Japanese officials in Tokyo this week. It is critical to our bilateral relationship that these discussions produce good results and demonstrate clear progress toward the quick resumption of imports of U.S. beef.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. I look forward to your visit to the United States next month and to the resumption of trade in high quality beef from the United States, particularly from Montana.

Respectfully yours,

Max Baucus

cc: Ambassador Ryozi Kato

###