



For Immediate Release  
May 14, 2008

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## **BAUCUS CONDEMNS DELAY IN OPENING KOREAN BEEF MARKET, SAYS SAFETY OF U.S. BEEF BEYOND QUESTION**

*Washington, D.C.* – Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D.-Mont) today criticized Korea’s decision to again delay lifting Korea’s ban on U.S. beef products. According to press reports, Korea will delay implementation of a new protocol struck by the U.S. and Korean governments last month, which would have resumed U.S. beef exports to Korea and ended Korea’s 5-year ban on U.S. beef products. Korea closed its market to U.S. beef imports in 2003, and has maintained its unscientific ban despite international certification of the safety of U.S. beef.

**“The beef that America will export to Korea is the same safe, delicious meat we enjoy here at home. I respect Korea’s political process but there’s no legitimate reason to delay importation of U.S. beef any longer,”** said Baucus. **“The facts on U.S. beef are clear. U.S. beef is safe and meets international scientific standards. Delaying implementation of this protocol is unhelpful to our countries’ economic relationship.”**

Prior to the ban, Korea was the third largest U.S. beef export market. Korea partially opened its market in September 2006 to deboned beef imports from cattle under the age of 30 months under a restrictive agreement that has seriously restricted U.S. exports. International scientific guidelines of the World Animal Health Organization (OIE) support the safety of U.S. beef – whether deboned or bone-in – regardless of age, as well as offals, variety meats, and processed products.

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