

3/11/2005 Moran Meets with Japanese Ambassador

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Presses Japan to Open Market to U.S. Beef

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today met with Japanese Ambassador Ryozo Kato at the request of the Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. Joining Moran in the meeting to discuss the importance of opening the Japanese markets to U.S. beef were U.S. Senate Agriculture Chairman Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) and Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) and other senators concerned about this issue.

"The battle to reopen the Japanese markets to U.S. beef continued today," Moran said. "I met with Ambassador Kato and pressed him for a firm date when Japan would resume importing beef from the United States. Japan simply cannot have it both ways-selling products to the U.S. market while refusing to purchase U.S. beef."

The embassy's request for a meeting came after Moran introduced a resolution calling for immediate retaliatory economic sanctions to be used against Japan if it fails to abide by its agreement to reopen its border. The agreement was reached with U.S. trade negotiators on October 23, 2004. Since Japan closed its markets to U.S. beef in December 2003, the U.S. has lost an estimated \$2 billion in sales.

"There is no basis-scientific or otherwise-for keeping the Japanese beef markets closed to U.S. beef," Moran said. "I can respect the Japanese governments desire to keep their food supply safe. However, the reality is that there is no legitimate reason that the Japanese consumer should be denied access to U.S. beef, but the delays continue. The time for Japan to reopen its market is now, the patience of the American cattle ranchers is wearing thin."

The Japanese markets have been closed since the U.S. discovered a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), in a Canadian dairy cow. Since that time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has aggressively implemented additional safety checks in the beef system to guarantee the safety of American beef. The result is that U.S. standards now exceed international beef safety standards.

In 2003, the First Congressional District produced nearly five billion pounds of beef, making it the largest beef producing congressional district in the nation.

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