

1/20/2004 Moran Encourages Countries to Reopen Beef Markets

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U.S. Must Work to Open Foreign Markets Banning American Beef

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today encouraged the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Ann Veneman, and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick to push countries that have banned the importation of U.S. beef to open their markets. Japan, South Korea and Mexico - three of the U.S.'s largest beef importers - and 47 other nations stopped imports of U.S. beef after a Canadian dairy cow in Washington state tested positive for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

"There is no reason these export markets should remained closed," Moran said. "The United States' detection and response programs continue to ensure the health of our entire livestock population, as well as assuring consumers at home and abroad that the U.S. food production and processing system is safe."

DNA testing has since confirmed that the cow originated in Canada, not the United States. For this reason, the Office of International Epizootics (OIE) has said that the U.S. should retain the BSE-free status it had prior to December 23, 2003. OIE represents a global consensus of scientific opinion regarding animal food safety and disease control.

"The beef industry is a critical economic component in our state and to our entire nation," Moran said. "We must do all we can to ensure stability in the marketplace, which includes reopening these foreign markets as soon as possible."

Later this week, Moran and the House Agriculture Committee will hold a hearing with Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman to discuss BSE and the actions taken by USDA.

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