

11/01/2004 This Week In Congress

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November 1, 2004

Dear Friend,

Working to Restore Kansas Beef Trade with Japan

This week the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that meetings with Japanese officials have been going well and that they are cautiously optimistic that beef trade with Japan could resume in the near future, although a timeline was not released. I continue to work toward the reopening of these markets to U.S. beef, which before closing, was a \$1.7 billion industry. Japanese and other Asian markets were closed to U.S. beef following the discovery of a single case of BSE, which occurred in December of 2003.

Prior to trade resuming with Japan, the Japanese and U.S. governments must revise their trade restrictions, including modifying BSE testing requirements and exporting only animals 20 months old and younger. This is a positive step for our Kansas farmers and ranchers, and I will continue working on their behalf to reopen these markets.

Visiting Kansas Communities

Clay Center

On Monday, I visited Clay Center and walked the downtown business district. I stopped by the county courthouse, the local accounting firm, and visited with patrons of the Tasty Pastry Donut Shop and folks along the courthouse square. During my time in Clay Center, I was able to speak with area residents about the issues facing their community.

Marysville

After visiting Clay Center, I traveled to Marysville to speak to around 40 Rotary Club members, before joining the Marshall County Commissioners for their weekly meeting. I provided an update to the commissioners and others from Marshall County about what is happening in Washington, D.C. and what still needs to take place when Congress goes back into session later this month. We discussed rural development, healthcare and various agriculture issues facing Kansas.

Seneca

On Monday afternoon, I joined Koch Company Manufacturing General Manager Jeff Conner for a tour of their facilities in Seneca. Koch Company Manufacturing is a 15-year-old company that now generates \$18 million in annual sales and employs over 200 from the area. The company manufactures building supplies such as cabinets and house doors.

Sabetha

Following my visit to Seneca, I met with Brad Wenger of Wenger Manufacturing in Sabetha. The company is a leading supplier for agriculture equipment for the feed and food processing industries. The tour allowed me to see the work being done at the plant and gave me the chance to discuss issues and concerns facing workers.

Norton

On Friday, I visited Norton and stopped by K and S Cafe, the local barber shop, the courthouse and the local optometrist, Dr. Karen Aldridge. Those that I visited with were concerned about a number of things including tomorrow's election, fall harvest and the rising costs of health care.

Phillipsburg

Later on Friday, I visited Phillipsburg, where I spoke to a number of Kansans at Midwest Energy, Witmer Rexall Drug Store, Rankin Drugs, Third Street Bakery, the courthouse and along main street. Many of the conversations centered around the rising costs of prescription drugs. This remains one of my top priorities in Congress, and I feel strongly that we must do something about prescription drugs and the rising cost of health care. Congress must act soon; our communities cannot afford to wait any longer for action.

Plainville

On Friday afternoon, I visited Plainville's Arnhold's Furniture, Prairie Heritage Auction and Gary's Western Auto. I also visited the Plainville City offices, where I discussed grants for the park and recreation areas and local hospital issues and stopped by the recently reopened cafe at the sale barn, where I had lunch with my parents.

LaCrosse

On Saturday, I stopped by LaCrosse to visit local residents and listen to their concerns about the issues facing our state and nation. While I was there, I visited with a number of businesses, including Nekoma State Bank and Farmers Bank and Trust, Rick's IGA, Barrows Health Mart and the Four Corner Restaurant. The discussions focused on shopping at home to help improve the local economy and the increasing cost of prescription drugs and health care.

Manhattan

On Saturday, I joined many Kansas State alumni for the annual Kansas State University Agriculture Alumni Round-Up. This event gives agriculture graduates from around the state an opportunity to discuss farm issues. I provided an update on drought assistance and wheat sprout and listened to their concerns and advice on what can be done at a federal level to be of assistance.

Like many parents, my wife Robba and I are going through the process of looking at colleges for my daughter, Kelsey, to attend after high school. This weekend, I had the opportunity to spend Saturday with Kelsey at the Kansas State vs. Texas Tech game where she was able to visit the school and see what it has to offer.

In the Office

In for a tour of the U.S. Capitol this week were Sharon Quinn of Lyons and her two daughters, Kristen Quinn of Washington, D.C. and Brandy Quinn of Hesston. Elected officials and other community leaders from Junction City visited this week. Mayor Mick Wunder and his wife, Barb; City Manager Rod Barnes; Vice-Mayor Ken Talley and his wife, Sarah; Larry Cope; Terry and Peggy Helstab; Jack Taylor; Carolyn Gaston and Leon Osborne all visited, along with Cheryl Lyn Higgins of the Junction City Chamber of Commerce.

Also visiting my Washington, D.C. office and the U.S. Capitol was Cindy Guttery of Kansas City, the aunt of Jennie Guttery, who works in my office. Renae Hughes of Hutchinson, Katherine Yates of Hutchinson and Cheryl Walter of

Colby were in town taking part in the Marine Corps Marathon. Also in were Ken Schulte of Assaria, Marcia Feighny of Salina, Jim and Cela Lee of Tescott, Rita Mankin and her daughter Arrin Arensman of Overland Park, Janie Clemow and daughter Sara Morrison of Overland Park and Janet Vonada and her daughter, Jenna, of Sylvan Grove.

Very truly yours,

Jerry