

7/27/2006 Moran Comments on Japan's Announcement to Resume Imports of U.S. Beef

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today commented on Japan's decision to resume imports of U.S. beef from cattle 20 months of age and younger. Japan was the largest importer of U.S. beef prior to the closing of its border in December 2003.

"Beef producers have long awaited this announcement," Moran said. "No congressional district in the country has as much to benefit from the resumption of beef trade with Japan as that of the First District of Kansas. Our ranchers produce nearly five billion pounds of beef a year, making it the largest beef producing congressional district in the nation."

Japan closed its market to U.S. beef in December 2003 when a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was discovered in Canadian-born dairy cow. Since that time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) aggressively implemented additional safety checks in the beef system to further guarantee the safety of American beef. U.S. standards have and continue to exceed international beef safety standards. American producers experienced a brief reprieve from the ban in December 2005 when Japan reinstated U.S. beef imports. The door again closed, however, when ineligible veal was discovered in a January shipment from New York.

"Americans never imagined the safety of our beef would still be in question more than three years later," Moran said. "This has been a long and frustrating process. Japan, like many other countries, looks for reasons to not allow our products, but the persistence of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and the constant pressure of Congress left them with little choice but to resume beef trade."

As a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee, Moran spearheaded ongoing efforts leading up to the Japanese announcement. In March 2005, he introduced H. Res. 137 to impose retaliatory trade sanctions on Japan as long as the beef ban remained in effect. More than 80 of Moran's colleagues joined the effort by cosponsoring his resolution. Moran met with the Ambassador of Japan on several occasions and also with President Bush and former U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman to discuss this issue. In addition to speeches before the U.S. House and testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, he led more than 100 Members of Congress in asking President Bush to make restoring market access for U.S. beef to Japan his highest economic priority.

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