

## October 2005 - Where is the U.S. Beef in Japan?

Where is the U.S. Beef in Japan?

Given on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives

by Congressman Jerry Moran

October 19, 2005

Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to discuss the economic harm that U.S. farmers and ranchers have experienced as a result of the Japanese embargo of U.S. beef. This issue has gone on far too long, and we in Kansas have lost our patience.

Mr. Speaker, Japan has prohibited the imports of beef from the United States since December 2003 when a single case of BSE was found in a Canadian-born animal.

Since that time, the United States has undergone rigorous and thorough surveillance programs for BSE testing and has implemented safeguards to protect human and animal health. These safeguards have far exceeded internationally recognized standards promoted by the World Organization for Animal Health, of which Japan is a member.

While the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement provides that members of the WTO have the right to take measures to protect human, animal and plant health under principles of sound science, the SPS Agreement does not allow WTO members the right to discriminate and restrict trade arbitrarily.

The U.S. State Department, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and the United States Department of Agriculture have worked tirelessly to reopen this market for U.S. beef, and I commend them for their efforts.

On October 23, 2004, nearly a year ago, the United States and Japan concluded an understanding that established a process to lead to the resumption of beef imports from the United States. Despite this agreement a year ago, the Government of Japan continues to delay imports of beef from the U.S. on a basis and factors not grounded in science or consumer safety.

Losing the export market to Japan is having a significant impact upon our entire industry, and it also puts at risk a well-established bilateral trading relationship. This 2-year delay has now almost totaled \$3.4 billion in losses to American agriculture. Whether you are a farmer or a rancher, a beef processor or a retailer, this loss of market is having a detrimental effect upon that business, upon our rural communities, and upon the agriculture economy. The U.S. cattle and beef industries are losing \$100 million each month that Japan remains closed to U.S. beef markets. Since December 2003, the U.S. meat industry has lost 10,000 jobs, mostly attributed to a loss of the export markets.

In March this year, Mr. Speaker, I introduced House Resolution 137, which currently has more than 80 co-sponsors. I encourage my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this legislation. The resolution is a sense of the House of Representatives that if the Government of Japan continues to delay in meeting its obligations under the understanding reached last October, then the United States trade representative should immediately impose retaliatory trade sanctions against Japan.

While I do not wish for the U.S. and Japan to enter into a drawn out trade dispute, the reality is that Japan cannot have it both ways, and they must be required to uphold their agreement. The United States works to promote free trade agreements throughout the world, and it is important for our trading partners to honor the current agreements and international standards; and without those assurances, support for trade agreements will clearly erode.

Recently, I was joined by over a hundred Members of Congress in writing President Bush asking him to make restoring this market of U.S. beef to Japan his highest economic priority in his discussions with the Japanese Prime Minister. I support our government's efforts to reopen our beef exports to Japan; but, again, Japan continues to unjustifiably delay the process.

Last month I testified before the House Committee on Ways and Means and urged the committee to bring this resolution to the floor and show Japan the serious nature of this trade issue. I appreciate very much the gentleman from California (Mr. Thomas) for holding the hearing and for allowing me to testify.

Many members of that committee during the hearing agreed that this action needs to be taken to address this issue.

Mr. Speaker, Japan cannot have it both ways. They cannot benefit from exports to the U.S. while denying our imports such as beef with no scientific evidence to support their actions. Congressional patience has been exhausted. It is time that House Resolution 137 be brought to the floor and a clear message be delivered to Japan. Let us allow the will of the House to be heard. Patience is a virtue no longer.