

U.S. Senate Committee on Finance

For Immediate Release

Friday, April 1, 2005

Grassley, Baucus Thank President for Work on U.S.-Japan Beef Trade

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, and Sen. Max Baucus, ranking member, have thanked President Bush for his direct involvement in encouraging Japan to lift its ban on U.S. beef exports and encouraged his continued involvement. For months, the senators have urged Japan to lift its ban, saying the prohibition lacks scientific basis and harms cattle producers in Iowa, Montana, and elsewhere in the United States.

The text of the senators' letter thanking President Bush follows.

March 31, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for your direct involvement in encouraging Japan to lift its ban on U.S. beef exports, including your telephone call to Prime Minister Koizumi earlier this month. We appreciate your willingness to work personally on this important issue.

The reopening of the Japanese market will benefit not only U.S. cattle and beef producers, but also Japanese consumers. According to a press report, some 1.2 million Japanese recently signed a petition asking that Japan lift its prohibition on imports of U.S. beef. Many Japanese apparently realize that the United States produces safe, high quality beef, and do not understand why they are being denied access to a product that is consumed daily by millions of Americans.

As you know, Japan earlier this week moved one step closer to lifting its ban on U.S. beef exports by agreeing to exclude cattle younger than 21 months from BSE testing. This is a positive development, but we cannot afford to become complacent. Japan has for too long maintained a ban that cannot be scientifically justified. We fear that without continuing to make Japanese authorities aware of U.S. concerns, they will feel less urgency about resuming imports of U.S. beef.

Regardless of the Washington Post's opinion as stated in its editorial "Wag the Cow", cattle producers in Iowa and Montana and across the country agree with you that being unjustifiably locked

out of what was until recently the United States' largest beef export market is an important issue that deserves your personal attention. We thank you for your efforts and look forward to working with you in resuming beef trade with Japan.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley

Max Baucus