



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Release

Friday, May 21, 2004

Grassley Urges Continued Effort to Resume Processed Egg Exports to Japan

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today urged the Secretary of Agriculture to continue pressing Japan to lift its partial ban on U.S. processed egg exports, citing the safety of the U.S. products and the lack of scientific evidence to justify disease-based trade restrictions.

The text of Grassley's letter to Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman follows.

May 21, 2004

The Honorable Ann M. Veneman
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing with regard to the partial trade ban on processed egg products imposed by Japan earlier this year when a single case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (AI) was detected in Texas.

Japan is the U.S. egg processing industry's most important foreign market, and U.S. egg processors and egg producers have been negatively impacted by Japan's actions. As Iowa is the leading egg producing state, and as several egg processing operations are located in Iowa, the full resumption of trade with Japan is of particular interest to my state's egg industry.

I appreciate the efforts that you and others at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have made to see that Japan's restrictions are lifted. I am aware that officials from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service have met with their Japanese counterparts to discuss Japan's partial import ban and scientific matters related to it. USDA officials were helpful in providing the Japanese government with scientific evidence – including a recently completed USDA study – that demonstrates that pasteurization inactivates the AI virus. Along with current U.S. measures to ensure against cross contamination, the fact that all egg products in the United States are pasteurized by law should remove any need for trade restrictions.

Given the scientific evidence provided by USDA, I am hopeful that Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) will agree to permit immediately the unrestricted trade of pasteurized liquid, frozen, and dried egg products, including the trade of shipments that have been blocked over the past months due to Japan's trade measures. If Japan does not agree immediately to remove its restrictions, I encourage you to keep working with MAFF officials on this issue until it is resolved. In addition, I support your efforts to ensure that pasteurized egg products are excluded from future protocols that would permit trade restrictions related to AI, inasmuch as scientific evidence demonstrates that the AI virus is inactivated by pasteurization.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley
Chairman