



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Grassley Welcomes Agreement to Re-open Japan to U.S. Beef,
Encourages Science-Based Discussions to Further Expand U.S. Access

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today welcomed the announcement of a framework agreement between the United States and Japan that promises to reopen the Japanese market to imports of U.S. beef. Under the agreement, Japan will permit the importation of U.S. beef from cattle aged 20 months or younger.

“I applaud the Bush Administration for keeping this issue so high on its agenda,” Grassley said. “This positive outcome demonstrates the commitment, and the success, of President Bush in standing up for U.S. agricultural producers.”

Following the detection of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in one imported cow in Washington State in December 2003, Japan suspended sales of U.S. beef. Under the agreement, Japan will no longer require that 100 percent of cattle be tested for BSE, a requirement that in effect blocked U.S. beef exports to Japan. Japan has agreed to drop this testing requirement for cattle aged 20 months or younger.

“The announcement of this agreement is an important step forward,” Grassley said. “While I’m very pleased with the agreement, I strongly encourage Japan to expand upward the age of cattle from which it will accept beef as the science backs up the safety of such beef. From what I understand, terms of the agreement will be reviewed for possible modification in July 2005, and the cut-off age for testing will be revisited at that time.”

Given required changes in Japanese regulations, it will take several weeks – at a minimum – for sales of U.S. beef actually to occur. “I’m confident that U.S. officials will remain engaged with their Japanese counterparts so that the regulatory approval process can move forward expeditiously,” Grassley said. “Iowa cattle producers, as well as Japanese consumers, will benefit from resumed exports of U.S. beef to Japan.”