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MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Meeting with Korean ambassador
Da: Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2007

Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, today told Korea's ambassador to the United States that Korea should stop refusing U.S. beef imports – including an Iowa shipment – for invalid reasons, and contrary to Korea's commitments through the World Trade Organization. Grassley was one of 11 senators who met with Ambassador Lee Tae-Sik to discuss the beef issue. He made the following comment after the meeting.

“I told the ambassador that it looks like Korea is going out of its way to find excuses to reject U.S. beef, including Iowa beef. Korea is rejecting U.S. shipments over alleged findings of bone chips and even over the detection of tissue that covers bone, but neither of these materials poses health risks. I made it clear to him that unless our beef exports start flowing again to Korea, the prospects of the United States' implementing a free trade agreement with Korea are very low. The ambassador asked that his comments remain off the record, so I can't describe what he said. My impression is that he understands our position, and he wants to keep the discussions ongoing. But we need more than discussions. We need to see the Korean market re-open. It was very good for him to see 11 U.S. senators face-to-face, from beef-producing states all over country. We showed solidarity in our position that this is a serious issue, and that Korea needs to adopt science-based policies on imports of U.S. beef and stop finding excuses to block this product. U.S. beef is safe, and millions of Americans eat it every day.”