

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to finally achieve full access to the Japanese beef market during your April 2007 summit with Prime Minister Abe.

As you know, American ranchers and meat processors produce the healthiest and safest beef in the world. Nevertheless, current Japanese import standards severely restrict U.S. beef imports contrary to international scientific standards. These restrictions cost the U.S. cattle and meat processing industries over a billion dollars every year.

For the nearly four years since Japan first banned American beef, we have worked tirelessly to open the Japanese market, but progress has been incremental and frustrating. As you know, Japan banned U.S. beef after a dairy cow in Washington State tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE, in 2003. In October 2004, the United States and Japan signed an agreement to resume imports. Only in December 2005 did shipments to Japan finally resume, but restricted to U.S. beef from cattle 20 months and younger.

International trade depends on transparent, rules-based guidelines to facilitate the fair exchange of goods. World Trade Organization rules require sanitary restrictions be science-based, and the world's scientists agree that U.S. beef is safe, whether boneless, bone-in, or offals, regardless of the age of the cattle. The health and safety of our beef was again confirmed by an expert panel of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) earlier this year, and we anticipate that our status as a 'controlled risk' country will be recognized by the OIE late next month. In our view, all trading partners, including Japan, should bring their import requirements for U.S. beef into line with the OIE standards and allow trade in beef from animals over 30 months.

Mr. President, we urge you to tell Prime Minister Abe that America's ranchers and beef processors have been patient and flexible for four years. Yet today, our patience has run out. Sound science, international trade rules, and the Japanese consumer all demand U.S. beef and beef products achieve full access to the Japanese market without delay.

Thank you for your efforts on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to resolve this problem.

Sincerely,

Max Buccico      Craig Thomas

Bob      Patty Murray

John      Muri Carbonara

Hent Carroll      Ker Seligson

Michael B. Enzi      Quinn G. Tatch

Sam Brownback      E. Benjamin Johnson

Blanch R. Lincoln      Wayne Allard

Bob Bly

Marcel Poyar

Jon Trest

Chuck Haber

Noam Coleman

Jim Lapp

Sally Chambliss

Mike Croy

Amy Klobuchar

John Thune