

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 22, 2010

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to ask that you include the issue of beef trade on the agenda for your meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan later this week.

As you know, Japan closed its market to U.S. beef in December of 2003, after the discovery of one cow infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States. At that time, Japan was the largest export market for U.S. beef, valued at \$1.4 billion.

Since then, Japan has had restrictions in place on U.S. beef imports, and currently only allows imports of beef from cattle aged 20 months and younger. These restrictions are not based on sound science nor are they consistent with international guidelines. The United States has spent years putting in place an effective system of interlocking safeguards that has led to the virtual elimination of BSE in our country. Because of these efforts, the U.S. has been classified as a controlled risk country by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), which indicates that U.S. beef products are completely safe for export and consumption.

Japan and the U.S. share an important friendship and trade relationship, and we were pleased to see that you arranged to meet with Prime Minister Kan this week. However, Japan's actions with regard to beef trade are not consistent with fair trade practices, or with U.S. treatment of Japanese imports. We encourage you to discuss U.S.-Japan beef trade with the Prime Minister. At the very least, Japan should agree to immediately relax its age restrictions to 30 months as an interim step on a pathway that would amend its import protocol to be consistent with OIE guidelines, and reopen its market to all U.S. beef products, regardless of age or boneless status.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mike Johanns".A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sam Brownback".

to Benjamin Nelson

Mike Enzi

Mike Crago

Blanche L. Linahan

Patty Murray

John Barrasso

M. F. B. &

Cine McCasill

Mark Udall

Sam Altmann

Pat Roberts

Chuck Grassley

Sayby Chamblin

John G. Hatch

Jeff Bond

Mimi Corns

John Thune

Bill Nelson

Jan E. Rinal

REDA