

Wayne Allard

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ALLARD URGES SECRETARY OF STATE RICE TO PUT BEEF IMPORT EMBARGO AT TOP OF ECONOMIC AGENDA DURING VISIT TO JAPAN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) said Wednesday that he has asked U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to press the Japanese government to lift its embargo on beef imports from the United States during her visit to Japan this week.

“I have urged the Secretary to make the case for beef produced by America’s farms and ranches, and to put it at the top of her economic agenda during these talks with the Japanese,” Senator Allard said.

“The State Department has reviewed my February 18 letter to the Japanese ambassador, and has been briefed on our meeting with Ambassador Ryozo Kato last week,” the Senator said. “I have made the Secretary aware of the growing unrest in Congress regarding the Japanese beef embargo, and requested that she take our message to Tokyo.”

Last week, Senator Allard met with the Japanese Ambassador to the United States to discuss how to bring the Japanese beef embargo to a quick conclusion. Thirteen other senators and congressmen participated in that meeting as well.

In a letter to Secretary Rice, outlining the situation, Senator Allard wrote that, “...continuation of the beef ban could possible result in retaliatory economic sanctions. While I hope such measures can be avoided, I ask that you convey this sentiment so that policymakers in Japan realize what is at stake.”

In December of 2003, a single, foreign-born, cow tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Washington-state. As a result of this finding, Japan immediately closed its markets to U.S. beef. After much negotiation, the U.S. and Japan have agreed in principal to the resumption of trade. Unfortunately, an independent body of the Japanese government, the Food Safety Commission, has yet to approve this decision, keeping the market of what used to be the largest importer of U.S. beef closed.

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