



## **Johanns presses Japanese ambassador on lifting U.S. beef ban**

**By Agri-Pulse Staff**

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Washington, March 5 – In a meeting Friday with Japanese Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki, Sen. Mike Johanns (R-NE) continued to urge Japan to lift its partial ban on U.S. beef. Johanns highlighted the inconsistency between Japan’s continued ban on safe U.S. beef and beef products compared to America’s fair treatment of Japan after reports of faulty Toyota vehicles and parts.

“The Japanese ban on U.S. beef has devastated our beef industry and many producers throughout Nebraska for almost seven years,” Johanns said. “Japan’s position, for which there is absolutely no scientific justification, has cost American producers billions of dollars and created a double standard that defies rationalization. I am not suggesting any sort of ban on Japanese products; I am asserting that the Japanese ban on American beef is entirely unfair, without merit, and should be lifted immediately.”

Earlier, in a Senate hearing, Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS) suggested banning all Japanese auto exports to the U.S. until all safety issues are resolved in response to Japan’s banning U.S. beef over safety concerns (see [www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/Mar0310H2.pdf](http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/Mar0310H2.pdf)).

### **Background:**

- Japan originally closed its borders to all American beef products in 2003 over Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) concerns.
  - Japan currently limits its imports of U.S. beef to only boneless beef from cattle aged 20 months and younger.
- Before the ban, Japan was the largest market for U.S. beef, with exports valued at \$1.4 billion.
  - Since the ban was enacted, from 2004-2009, U.S. beef exports to Japan averaged approximately \$196 million, less than 15 percent of 2003 level.
- According to the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Japan’s ban on U.S. beef results in approximately \$1 billion in lost exports annually for American producers.
- The internationally recognized authority, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), has classified the United States as a controlled risk country for BSE, which means that U.S. beef is safe for export and consumption.