



## **Ag Secretary Addresses Trade Issues**

*News release provided by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association*

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***Ag Secretary Mike Johanns says he plans to resolve trade situation "directly" and "expeditiously."***

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DENVER, CO (Feb. 3, 2006) — Despite a recent setback in trade with Japan, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns says the world is showing confidence in the safety and quality of U.S. beef, and "USDA will do everything to maintain that confidence."

The U.S. government and beef industry have made tremendous progress in recent weeks toward reopening export markets that closed following the Dec. 23, 2003, BSE case. Within the last month, partial trade has been restored with some of the United States' key export markets, including Mexico, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Johanns expressed regret over Japan's reinstated ban on U.S. beef since Jan. 20 when a bone-in veal shipment failed to meet the agreed upon terms announced Dec. 12, 2005, to resume trade of U.S. beef to Japan.

Speaking to nearly 5,000 cattle producers and members of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), Johanns called the ban a "temporary setback," and emphasized, "this shouldn't have happened."

Regarding when trade might be restored, the Secretary said he aims to complete the FSIS and OIG investigations and implement the necessary recommendations expeditiously.

Citing results of USDA's Expanded BSE Surveillance Program, Johanns said, "We know our herd is healthy thanks to the largest BSE surveillance program ever undertaken."

To date, the program has tested more than 600,000 animals and found only one case of BSE.

Johanns remains committed to taking a science-based approach and following international guidelines to the letter.

"International standards in regards to BSE and trade are very clear, and we are committed to making decisions based on those standards," Johanns said.

"However, in the case of Japan, we have actually gone beyond that."

But Johanns is firm about wanting to avoid sanctions. "We're going to do everything we can to resolve the situation with Japan," Johanns said. "I hope we don't need sanctions."



**Editor's Note** This release is adapted from a news release distributed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. For the original release, go to [www.beefusa.org](http://www.beefusa.org).