



**NATIONAL MEAT ASSOCIATION®**

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January 22, 2006

The Honorable Mike Johanns  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

The shipment of beef product to Japan by a U.S. company that failed to meet the requirements of the agreement made by the United States for the resumption of trade is a setback to the relationship of trust which you have worked so hard to develop with the Japanese government. It is also a setback and a great embarrassment to the many companies in the industry that have worked diligently to support our government's efforts to reopen this important market to U.S. beef products.

National Meat Association would like to apologize to you for this serious failure on the part of our entire industry, which has an obligation to meet the requirements of the Export Verification program. The shipment of bone-in product to Japan by one small company that failed to meet the requirements is a major breakdown and is inexcusable.

We take this failure very seriously, and we will do everything possible to support compliance with the requirements of the agreement that you negotiated for the resumption of trade with Japan. We earnestly ask that you convey our apologies to Japanese government officials as you seek to re-open this market again. Further, we would like to cooperate with you and the USDA agencies that provide international confidence in our nation's export requirements to restore and increase that confidence.

I will accompany Chief Executive Officers of firms that have been approved to export beef to Japan to the meeting you have called on Tuesday, January 24.

With deep appreciation for your efforts,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary Mucklow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "M".

Rosemary Mucklow  
Executive Director