



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NMA APPLAUDS USDA CANDOR ON JAPAN

OAKLAND, CA – National Meat Association strongly commends the efforts of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns this morning to be clear and certain about the results of the official investigation into the ineligible shipment of veal to Japan that caused the suspension of beef exports in January. The report has been completed and delivered to the Japanese government today.

In making his announcement this morning, Johanns reaffirmed that the veal that was shipped was unacceptable product, according to the agreement the U.S. had with Japan, but that it did not pose a danger to human health. The U.S. meat industry nevertheless recognizes how this unfortunate mistake, made by a single company, has dampened its exemplary reputation.

“We applaud the Secretary’s forthright presentation, and appreciate his approach to work with the Japanese to meet their specifications,” said NMA Executive Director Rosemary Mucklow.

“Furthermore, NMA pledges to assist the industry to win back the trust of consumers in Japan when exports resume.”

The Secretary likewise noted the seriousness of violating the agreement and again expressed regret. He also noted the thoroughness of the investigative report that combines reports from the Food Safety Inspection Service and the Office of the Inspector General. The report is online at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Japan_Export_Investigation_Report.pdf.

Although the Secretary provided a framework for the resumption of exports by all of the plants that have met the USDA’s Export Verification requirements, he could give no timetable as to when exports might resume. He did, however, reaffirm that he and his team are ready to respond to any questions that Japan officials may have, and that the Department has instituted additional training and strict requirements to ensure that beef sent to Japan indeed meets the specifications that have been agreed upon.

National Meat Association is a non-profit trade association. Since 1946, NMA has represented meat packers and processors, equipment manufacturers and food suppliers who provide services to the meat industry. The association has members throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia and Mexico.