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TEXAS CATTLE GROUPS REQUEST SANCTIONS ON JAPANESE

The Bush Administration should impose economic sanctions on Japan due to Japan's unwillingness to open their market for U.S. beef, say the leaders of Texas' two largest cattle organizations. "Efforts by the Bush Administration and industry have gone the extra mile in proving U.S. beef is free from BSE, but our trading partners continue to drag their feet on this issue," said Bob McCan, president of Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.

"Japanese consumers are expressing a desire and need for safe and wholesome U.S. beef," said Texas Cattle Feeders Association Chairman Charlie Sellers. "The time has come for us to take these efforts to a new level, especially in light of the significant trade deficit with Japan," he continued.

The two leaders, in a letter sent today to the Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico delegations in Washington, D.C., requested congressional support in helping the cattle industry resume international beef trade.

It has been over a year since the United States' only case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was discovered in a Canadian cow. Japan immediately closed its border to imports of U.S. beef, and negotiations to reopen that crucial market have apparently stalled in spite of continued efforts by top Administration officials in the ensuing months. Since the major export markets for U.S. beef closed December 23, 2003, cattle producers have suffered an economic loss of \$3.1 billion.

Sellers, McCan and the members they represent now believe the time has come to impose economic sanctions. "We don't take economic sanctions lightly," the two leaders said. "Japan is an important trading partner, which only underscores the need to restore common sense to BSE import rules now."

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