

## **FEATURE – USDA WORKS TO OPEN ASIAN MARKETS FOR U.S. FARMERS**

**INTRO:** With the recent agreement to reopen the Chinese market to U-S pork, USDA officials are hopeful about increasing trade with Asia. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:47)

U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS SAY ASIA OFFERS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR U-S FARMERS AND RANCHERS. AFTER VISITING CHINA LAST OCTOBER, AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK IS HEADING TO JAPAN SAYING HE WANTS TO FOCUS ON THE BENEFITS OF THE JAPAN-U-S RELATIONSHIP.

Tom Vilsack, Agriculture Secretary: Obviously we'll get an opportunity to talk about beef. I know that's an issue that's important to our producers, but it's also important that it be discussed in the proper framework for the Japanese and we look forward to those conversations.

JAPAN LIMITED IMPORTS OF U-S BEEF OVER MAD COW DISEASE CONCERNS. U-S-D-A UNDER SECRETARY JAMES MILLER SAYS HE IS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN CAN RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES TO REOPEN THE JAPAN MARKET TO U-S BEEF.

Miller: It could be a ways off, but I believe that there was a sincere willingness on the part of the Japanese to want to engage on this issue.

MILLER RECENTLY RETURNED FROM CHINA WITH AN AGREEMENT FOR CHINA TO RESUME IMPORTING U-S PORK. CHINA CURRENTLY RESTRICTS U-S BEEF IMPORTS BUT MILLER IS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE CHINESE MARKET CAN BE REOPENED TO U-S BEEF AS WELL.

Miller: They have made some indications that they are willing to consider some changes to the beef export regime that they currently have in place.

MILLER SAYS CHINA OFFERS A POTENTIALLY HUGE MARKET FOR U-S FARM PRODUCTS.

Miller: The Chinese are seeing a very rapid growth in the number of middle class families in China, which means they are going to be consumers of a much better diet. We believe that diet is going to include higher valued products, including more animal protein.

IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.