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Japan to resume US beef imports

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13 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Japan to resume US beef imports

Japan will start buying beef from America again following the lifting yesterday of a two-year ban. The Japanese government gave the green light for US cattle under the age of 21 months to be sold in Japan's stores. Agricultural safety experts decided young cows were free from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle with mad cow disease can be deadly to humans. US beef was banned by Japan in December 2003. This caused major damage to America's beef exports, valued at \$1.7 billion. Japan was America's largest importer of beef. US producers must now keep to very strict guidelines.

While this is good news for American farmers, it is very bad news for Australia's cattle industry. Aussie beef replaced US beef in Japan after BSE was discovered in US cattle. However, the Australian meat didn't appeal to Japanese diners as much as American beef, which is fattier. Japanese people prefer US beef to be served in one of the country's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice topped with fried beef. Unhappy diners wanted back the vital missing ingredient in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain rose 1.7 percent yesterday on the news – a five-year high.

WARM-UPS

1. BEEF TALK: Talk to as many other students as you can to find out what they know about beef. After you have talked to lots of students, sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. Tell each other what you thought was interesting or surprising. Are you a big fan of beef?

2. FOOD SAFETY: Do you ever worry about the safety of the food you eat? Can you trust your government and producers to provide the safest quality food? In pairs / groups, talk about which of the following you worry about most and why.

- Chicken
- Beef
- Hamburgers
- Cabbage
- Pork
- Japanese puffer fish
- Fresh cream cakes
- Fried cockroaches

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Japan / beef / bans / safety experts / BSE / exports / damage / strict guidelines / good news / diners / toppings / missing ingredients / share prices / restaurants

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. PRODUCERS: Do you prefer to buy things made or grown in your own country? What things would you only buy if they were produced or grown in your country? In pairs / groups, talk about this. Talk also about the following countries and what you think of the food they produce.

- America
- The U.K.
- Australia
- Brazil
- China
- South Africa
- Russia
- Japan

5. FOOD OPINIONS: Discuss these opinions with your partner(s). Do you agree with them?

- a. We can only be sure of food safety with what we grow in our gardens.
- b. My government is great at telling us about food safety.
- c. Eating beef and chicken is too dangerous these days.
- d. People panic too much over food safety. It's more dangerous to cross the road.
- e. I will never stop eating the food I love.
- f. I blame modern farming methods and keeping animals too close together.
- g. If we were all vegetarians, there wouldn't be Bird Flu and BSE worries.
- h. Beef is the most delicious food in the world.

6. BEEF: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with beef. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. US beef has been banned in Japan for seven years. | T / F |
| b. Only cattle less than 21 months old can now enter Japan. | T / F |
| c. US beef exports are valued at \$1.7 billion. | T / F |
| d. Japan has relaxed its guidelines on the importing of US beef. | T / F |
| e. The easing of the beef ban is also good news for Australian farmers. | T / F |
| f. Japanese people much prefer US to Aussie beef. | T / F |
| g. Aussie beef is leaner and less fatty than US beef. | T / F |
| h. Shares in Japan's largest beef bowl chain rocketed 17% yesterday. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. lifting | follow |
| b. green light | interest |
| c. cattle | lethal |
| d. deadly | essential |
| e. keep to | increased |
| f. replaced | go-ahead |
| g. discovered | took over from |
| h. appeal | removing |
| i. vital | found |
| j. rose | cows |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. the lifting yesterday of a | largest importer of beef |
| b. gave the green | to Japanese diners |
| c. Eating beef from cattle with mad | high |
| d. Japan was America's | Australia's cattle industry |
| e. US producers must now keep | topped with fried beef |
| f. it is very bad news for | two-year ban |
| g. the Australian meat didn't appeal | vital missing ingredient |
| h. a bowl of rice | light |
| i. Unhappy diners wanted back the | to very strict guidelines |
| j. a five-year | cow disease can be deadly |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Japan to resume US beef imports

Japan will start buying beef from America again _____ the lifting yesterday of a two-year _____. The Japanese government gave the green light for US _____ under the age of 21 months to be sold in Japan's stores. Agricultural safety experts decided young cows were _____ from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle with mad cow disease can be _____ to humans. US beef was banned by Japan in December 2003. This caused _____ damage to America's beef exports, _____ at \$1.7 billion. Japan was America's largest importer of beef. US producers must now keep to very _____ guidelines.

free
cattle
strict
following
major
valued
ban
deadly

_____ this is good news for American farmers, it is very bad news for Australia's cattle industry. Aussie beef _____ US beef in Japan after BSE was discovered in US cattle. However, the Australian meat didn't _____ to Japanese diners as much as American beef, which is _____. Japanese people prefer US beef to be served in one of the country's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice _____ with fried beef. Unhappy _____ wanted back the vital missing _____ in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain _____ 1.7 percent yesterday on the news – a five-year high.

ingredient
appeal
topped
rose
while
fattier
replaced
diners

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Japan to resume US beef imports

Japan will start buying beef from America again following the _____ yesterday of a two-year ban. The Japanese government gave the _____ light for US cattle under the age of 21 months to be sold in Japan's stores. Agricultural safety _____ decided young cows were free from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle with mad cow disease can be _____ to humans. US beef was banned by Japan in December 2003. This caused major damage to America's beef exports, _____ at \$1.7 billion. Japan was America's largest importer of beef. US producers must now keep to very _____ guidelines.

_____ this is good news for American farmers, it is very bad news for Australia's cattle industry. Aussie beef _____ US beef in Japan after BSE was discovered in US cattle. However, the Australian meat didn't _____ to Japanese diners as much as American beef, which is fattier. Japanese people prefer US beef to be _____ in one of the country's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice _____ with fried beef. Unhappy diners wanted back the vital missing ingredient in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain _____ 1.7 percent yesterday on the news – a five-year high.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'beef'** and **'bowl'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "FOOD SAFETY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about beef and food safety.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| • lifting | • news |
| • light | • replaced |
| • experts | • appeal |
| • December 2003 | • prefer |
| • \$1.7 billion | • topped |
| • strict | • high |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of beef?
- c. Do you trust your government with food safety standards?
- d. If you were Japanese, would you try the first imported US beef?
- e. Do you think the beef from one country is any different from that in another country?
- f. Do you think beef is safe to eat in Britain, where lots of cows had BSE in the early nineties?
- g. Do you worry about the safety of the food you eat?
- h. What do you think of the argument that it is safer to be a vegetarian and better for the environment?
- i. Do you prefer to buy food grown or produced in your own country?
- j. Do you think all American food is safe to eat?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What kinds of toppings do you like on your food (pizza, ice cream, etc.)?
- d. Are you fussy about the food you eat or will you eat anything?
- e. Would you eat food that has been genetically modified?
- f. When was the last time you received some very good or very bad news?
- g. What are the best-selling fast foods in your country?
- h. Have you ever had to use alternative products you didn't like because you couldn't find the food you wanted?
- i. Have you ever had *gyudon* – the Japanese beef bowl?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

IMPORTS: You are the Chief Import Officer for your country. In pairs / groups, you must decide on the rules for imports from various countries. Choose five countries and write them in the table below. In the middle column, write the goods that you import from those countries. In the right hand column, note down your rules.

COUNTRY	GOODS	RULES
Country A _____		
Country B _____		
Country C _____		
Country D _____		
Country E _____		

- Change partners. Explain your rules. Give each other feedback on the fairness of and need for these rules.
- Return to your original partner(s) and compare the feedback you received. Discuss whether it is good or not.
- Change partners again. Role play a meeting between you (the Chief Import Officer) and the Chief Export Officers from the countries on your list. See how many times you can agree on different points.
- After the role plays, discuss what was said while in your roles. Were your discussions successful?

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on mad cow disease. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. NEGOTIATIONS: Write about a time you negotiated something. How did you prepare? How did you perform? What was the result? Show what you wrote to your classmates. Did you all have similar experiences?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to your government asking them what they do to about the safety of your food. Give advice on how to make food safer to eat and what controls to put on imports. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. F e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. lifting | removing |
| b. green light | go-ahead |
| c. cattle | cows |
| d. deadly | lethal |
| e. keep to | follow |
| f. replaced | took over from |
| g. discovered | found |
| h. appeal | interest |
| i. vital | essential |
| j. rose | increased |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. the lifting yesterday of a | two-year ban |
| b. gave the green | light |
| c. Eating beef from cattle with mad | cow disease can be deadly |
| d. Japan was America's | largest importer of beef |
| e. US producers must now keep | to very strict guidelines |
| f. it is very bad news for | Australia's cattle industry |
| g. the Australian meat didn't appeal | to Japanese diners |
| h. a bowl of rice | topped with fried beef |
| i. Unhappy diners wanted back the | vital missing ingredient |
| j. a five-year | high |

GAP FILL:

Japan to resume US beef imports

Japan will start buying beef from America again **following** the lifting yesterday of a two-year **ban**. The Japanese government gave the green light for US **cattle** under the age of 21 months to be sold in Japan's stores. Agricultural safety experts decided young cows were **free** from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle with mad cow disease can be **deadly** to humans. US beef was banned by Japan in December 2003. This caused **major** damage to America's beef exports, **valued** at \$1.7 billion. Japan was America's largest importer of beef. US producers must now keep to very **strict** guidelines.

While this is good news for American farmers, it is very bad news for Australia's cattle industry. Aussie beef **replaced** US beef in Japan after BSE was discovered in US cattle. However, the Australian meat didn't **appeal** to Japanese diners as much as American beef, which is **fattier**. Japanese people prefer US beef to be served in one of the country's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice **topped** with fried beef. Unhappy **diners** wanted back the vital missing **ingredient** in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain **rose** 1.7 percent yesterday on the news – a five-year high.