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Japan to resume US beef imports

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THE ARTICLE

Japan to resume US beef imports

Japan is poised to start the limited importing of American beef again following the lifting of a two-year ban. The Japanese government gave the all clear yesterday after agricultural safety experts deemed US cattle under the age of 21 months to be free from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle infected with mad cow disease can cause a fatal human brain disorder called Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. The ban was imposed on all US cattle in December 2003, inflicting major damage on US beef exports, valued at $1.7 billion. Japan had been America's largest importer of beef. Delicate negotiations have ensued over the last two years with representatives from US farmers desperate to assure the Japanese their meat was safe. US producers must now adhere to extremely strict guidelines.

While the resumption of beef imports from America is good news for American farmers, it is a huge blow for Australia's cattle industry, which had been filling the void in the wake of BSE being discovered in US cattle but didn't quite cut it with Japanese diners. American beef is deemed best to be served in one of Japan's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice topped with fried beef. The nation's largest *gyudon* stores suffered badly after the US beef ban and had to resort to alternative toppings to try to satisfy their customers, including the leaner, less fatty Aussie beef. However, discerning customers constantly rued the vital missing ingredient in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain operator 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 governments and producers to provide the safest quality produce? 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 / negotiations / 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 domestically? In pairs / groups, talk about this. Talk also about the following countries and what you think of the food they import.

- 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 guaranteed food safety with what we grow in our gardens.
b. My government is spot on when it comes to informing us on food safety.
c. Eating beef and chicken is just 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 commercial 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 $17 billion.   T / F
d. Japan has eased 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 have much preferred Aussie to US beef.   T / F
g. Aussie beef is generally leaner and less fatty than the US varieties.   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. the all clear   discriminating
b. inflicting   tricky
c. delicate   succeed
d. ensued   hole
e. adhere   imposing
f. blow   lamented
g. void   the green light
h. cut it   setback
i. discerning   taken place
j. rued   stick

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

a. following the lifting   fatal human brain disorder
b. The Japanese government gave   to extremely strict guidelines
c. mad cow disease can cause a   toppings to try to satisfy their customers
d. Delicate negotiations have   blow for Australia's cattle industry
e. US producers must now adhere   it with Japanese diners
f. it is a huge   of a two-year ban
g. filling the void in the   rued the vital missing ingredient
h. didn't quite cut   the all clear yesterday
i. had to resort to alternative   wake of BSE being discovered
j. discerning customers constantly   ensued over the last two years

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 is _____ to start the limited importing of American beef again following the _____ of a two-year ban. The Japanese government gave the all clear yesterday after agricultural safety experts _____ US cattle under the age of 21 months to be free from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle infected with mad cow disease can cause a _____ human brain disorder called Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. The ban was _____ on all US cattle in December 2003, inflicting major damage on US beef exports, valued at $1.7 billion. Japan had been America's largest importer of beef. Delicate negotiations have _____ over the last two years with representatives from US farmers _____ to assure the Japanese their meat was safe. US producers must now _____ to extremely strict guidelines.

desperate

deemed

imposed

poised

adhere

lifting

fatal

ensued

While the _____ of beef imports from America is good news for American farmers, it is a _____ blow for Australia's cattle industry, which had been _____ the void in the wake of BSE being discovered in US cattle but didn't quite cut it with Japanese _____. American beef is deemed best to be served in one of Japan's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice _____ with fried beef. The nation's largest *gyudon* stores suffered badly after the US beef ban and had to _____ to alternative toppings to try to satisfy their customers, including the leaner, less fatty Aussie beef. However, discerning customers constantly rued the _____ missing ingredient in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain operator rose 1.7 percent yesterday on the news – a five-year _____.

resort

filling

high

resumption

topped

huge

vital

diners

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Japan to resume US beef imports

Japan is _____ to start the limited importing of American beef again following the lifting of a two-year ban. The Japanese government gave the ___ _____ yesterday after agricultural safety experts _____ US cattle under the age of 21 months to be free from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle infected with mad cow disease can cause a fatal human brain _____ called Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. The ban was imposed on all US cattle in December 2003, _____ major damage on US beef exports, valued at $1.7 billion. Japan had been America's largest importer of beef. _____ negotiations have ensued over the last two years with representatives from US farmers desperate to _____ the Japanese their meat was safe. US producers must now _____ to extremely strict guidelines.

While the resumption of beef imports from America is good news for American farmers, it is a huge _____ for Australia's cattle industry, which had been filling the _____ in the _____ of BSE being discovered in US cattle but didn't quite _____ ___ with Japanese diners. American beef is _____ best to be served in one of Japan's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice topped with fried beef. The nation's largest *gyudon* stores suffered badly after the US beef ban and had to _____ to alternative toppings to try to satisfy their customers, including the leaner, less fatty Aussie beef. However, discerning customers constantly _____ the vital missing ingredient in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain operator rose 1.7 percent yesterday on the news – a five-year _____.

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:

- poised
- clear
- free
- inflicting
- delicate
- adhere

- blow
- void
- cut
- resort
- vital
- chain

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 to adopt strict safety standards over food?
d. If you were Japanese, would you try the first batches of 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 cattle suffered badly from 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 produce from 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. Do you have a discerning taste when it comes to food or will you eat anything?
e. Would you eat food that has been genetically modified?
f. Have you ever received a huge blow to your plans or activities?
g. What are the best-selling fast foods in your country?
h. Have you ever had to resort to less than satisfactory alternatives 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 what kind of regulations apply to 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 regulations.

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

- Change partners. Explain your regulations. Give each other feedback on the fairness and validity of your regulations.
- 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. Engage in delicate negotiations to see how many compromises can be reached.
- After the role plays, discuss what was said while in your roles. How did the negotiations go? Did you cut it as a Chief Import Officer?

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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. DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS: Write an account of a time you entered into delicate negotiations. How did you prepare? How did you perform? What was the outcome? 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 ensure the safety of your food. Give advice on how to make safety precautions tighter 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. F   d. F   e. F   f. F   g. T   h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. the all clear   the green light
b. inflicting   imposing
c. delicate   tricky
d. ensued   taken place
e. adhere   stick
f. blow   setback
g. void   hole
h. cut it   succeed
i. discerning   discriminating
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PHRASE MATCH:

a. following the lifting   of a two-year ban
b. The Japanese government gave   the all clear yesterday
c. mad cow disease can cause a   fatal human brain disorder
d. Delicate negotiations have   ensued over the last two years
e. US producers must now adhere   to extremely strict guidelines
f. it is a huge   blow for Australia's cattle industry
g. filling the void in the   wake of BSE being discovered
h. didn't quite cut   it with Japanese diners
i. had to resort to alternative   toppings to try to satisfy their customers
j. discerning customers constantly   rued the vital missing ingredient

GAP FILL:

Japan to resume US beef imports

Japan is **poised** to start the limited importing of American beef again following the **lifting** of a two-year ban. The Japanese government gave the all clear yesterday after agricultural safety experts **deemed** US cattle under the age of 21 months to be free from BSE (mad cow disease). Eating beef from cattle infected with mad cow disease can cause a **fatal** human brain disorder called Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. The ban was **imposed** on all US cattle in December 2003, inflicting major damage on US beef exports, valued at $1.7 billion. Japan had been America's largest importer of beef. Delicate negotiations have **ensued** over the last two years with representatives from US farmers **desperate** to assure the Japanese their meat was safe. US producers must now **adhere** to extremely strict guidelines.

While the **resumption** of beef imports from America is good news for American farmers, it is a **huge** blow for Australia's cattle industry, which had been **filling** the void in the wake of BSE being discovered in US cattle but didn't quite cut it with Japanese **diners**. American beef is deemed best to be served in one of Japan's biggest-selling fast foods – *gyudon* – a bowl of rice **topped** with fried beef. The nation's largest *gyudon* stores suffered badly after the US beef ban and had to **resort** to alternative toppings to try to satisfy their customers, including the leaner, less fatty Aussie beef. However, discerning customers constantly rued the **vital** missing ingredient in their bowls – American beef. Shares in Japan's largest *gyudon* restaurant chain operator rose 1.7 percent yesterday on the news – a five-year **high**.