



Intertribal Agriculture Council

100 North 27th Street, Suite 500, Billings, Montana 59101-2054 (406) 259-3525

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
US Senate Finance Committee
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus:

On behalf of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, I forward this correspondence addressing an issue of importance to Indian cattlemen in Montana and across the country. The 962 Montana Indian cattlemen sell 44,228 head of cattle annually and nationally Indian cattlemen market in excess of 2.4 million head.

We are very concerned that the US Department of Agriculture is considering the import of Argentine beef. The US Department of Agriculture had had an extended presence in Argentina trying to control Foot & Mouth Disease through vaccination. It is our belief that Congress should request reports from Animal Plant Health Inspection Service on their activities in that country as it would reflect a clear picture of the manifestation of the disease. Of course this inquiry should take place before any further consideration of import.

The very agency that represents the USDA in Argentina has yet to protect our cattle from Mad Cow Disease, has yet to implement disease contingency plans or has yet to fully implement any animal identification process here in the US. Do Indian cattlemen want this same agency vouching for the health of cattle know to be infested with FMD? I think not.

We thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ross R. Racine
Executive Director