

ZENSHO CERTIFIES SPECIAL U.S. ORIGIN BEEF AS ZENSHO SFC (Safe-Feed Cattle)

Japanese BBQ customers will soon be able to enjoy Zensho certified SFC American beef when dining at Zensho's *Gyuan* and *Takarajima* Restaurants.

TOKYO -- Zensho Co. Ltd. has begun importing American beef that meets strict and proprietary food safety assurance standards imposed by the company. The new product is branded as Zensho SFC beef. Zensho SFC beef is certified to be free from any feed containing potential BSE-responsible material. Zensho SFC beef is imported by Zensho Group's Global Foods.

Zensho SFC beef is processed under an agreement with JBS USA, America's largest beef processor. The feed for Zensho SFC cattle is traceable and regularly tested for BSE-responsible materials by Zensho's independent laboratory partner and JBS USA is required to prepare and maintain program compliance records of SFC cattle from birth through harvest and shipping.

The Zensho SFC program will soon bring safety assured, tender, sweet and juicy U.S.-origin beef to customers at over 100 of its *Gyuan* and *Takarajima* restaurants.

Background

In December 2003 Zensho suspended the use of US-origin Beef when the first case of BSE was found in the U.S. At that time Zensho began using beef from Australia where no case of BSE has been identified. In September 2004, *Sukiya*, Japan's leading Beef Bowl restaurant chain, introduced an Australian-origin Beef Bowl.

After the Japanese government lifted the embargo of U.S.-origin beef in 2006, Zensho continued its suspension, based on the results of its own on-site inspections. At that time, Zensho scientists determined that the U.S. government's enforcement of a ruminant feed ban, its BSE blanket-testing program and the regulations and procedures for handling of specified risk materials (SRMs) did not meet Zensho's safety requirements.

Meanwhile, in 2005, Zensho created its Food Safety Pursuing Unit for independently conducting research and scientific review of food safety. Also, in 2007, Zensho became the member of TAFS (International Forum for Transmissible Animal Diseases and Food Safety) and has continuously followed the latest scientific information available.

As a result of Zensho's rigorous scientific review and its own proprietary testing and processing protocols, Zensho concluded that it can certify the safety of beef from (1) a country with no BSE cases or (2) a country with BSE cases that fully enforces a ruminant feed ban and properly prescribes and monitors the removal of specified risk materials during processing.

Based on this policy, Zensho began importing beef from New Zealand in 2008 and from Mexico in 2009, following Australia.

In addition, Zensho has been working hard to find beef which meets its own strict standards around the world including countries with reported BSE cases. As a result, it was determined in November of 2009 that beef from a selected packer in Quebec, Canada could be certified by Zensho for its customers in Japan.

When the U.S. government enhanced its ruminant feed ban's regulations and enforcement procedures in October 2009, Zensho initiated research on the potential for securing American beef to meet its high safety standards. As a result, Zensho designed a special system for certifying U.S. cattle and the beef from those cattle – this is the Zensho SFC program. Earlier this year JBS USA, a very safety-conscious company, agreed to source, harvest and process cattle according to the rigorous Zensho SFC program's standards.

Zensho makes food sourcing decisions based solely on whether it can ensure the safety of the product and not necessarily on the point of origin. Zensho will continue to follow and incorporate the latest scientific knowledge into its acquisition methods and to search around the world for safe and tasty foodstuffs meeting Zensho's own strict standards.

(Notes)

What is the Zensho SFC ?

The Zensho SFC is healthy cattle satisfying the following conditions:

- (1) The age and the place of origin are established; and
- (2) The feed is free from potential BSE-responsible materials throughout the feeding period.

About the agreement with JBS USA, America's Largest Beef Processor:

In order to ensure the safety of Zensho's SFC - U.S. origin beef, it is necessary to fully control, manage and document the origin and age, feed and feeding and processing and shipping of cattle and beef. Zensho's partner JBS USA has now put the Zensho SFC system into operation and is managing the entire supply stream including maintaining thorough records of Zensho SFC cattle and beef from birth through harvest and shipping. Furthermore, JBS USA strictly segregates Zensho SFC cattle during the transportation, finishing and processing stages and Zensho SFC cattle are processed in the JBS USA plant only at the beginning of a production shift and only after all equipment and facilities have been sanitized and inspected.

Zensho's newly founded SFC Control Unit in the Food Safety Pursuing Department is now continuously monitoring the entire process.

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