



**PRIME MINISTER**

JAPANESE BEEF QUOTAS

The Prime Minister said today that the 25% increase in beef quotas announced by the Japanese Government was very encouraging and would significantly assist the Australian beef industry.

Mr Fraser said that the next 6 months quota would be 50,000 tonnes compared with the present quota of 40,000 tonnes.

The Prime Minister recalled that he had discussed beef quotas with the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Fukuda, while in Kuala Lumpur early in August for the Post-ASEAN meetings. In his discussions with Mr Fukuda, Mr Fraser had stressed that Australia sought greater predictability of access to the Japanese market and proposed further negotiations to achieve this. Mr Fukuda had agreed that officials from both countries should work closely together to find ways of stabilising the trade.

Accordingly late in September Australian officials visited Tokyo for discussions which were not immediately successful. Mr Fraser said he then wrote to Mr Fukuda expressing disappointment, and hoping that the Japanese Prime Minister would take a personal interest in ensuring progress took place and offered to send a senior Australian minister to Tokyo for further talks.

The Prime Minister said that Mr Fukuda had replied agreeing to Ministerial discussions and suggesting that officials continue to hold discussions.

Mr Fraser said that only days ago the Government sent the Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, Mr McKay, to Tokyo for further negotiations.

The Prime Minister said that the Government was pleased with the results which had now been achieved and would continue to pursue stable access and growth for beef exports to the Japanese market.

Mr Fraser said he wished to thank Mr Fukuda for the role which he had personally played in achieving the present outcome and added that the resolution of the sugar problem and the initial progress achieved in increased access for beef would do much to enhance the overall relationship between Japan and Australia.

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