

Poultry Ban Is Lifted for Most U.S. Plants

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A farmer holding a free-range chicken. U.S. officials say Moscow is holding up a deal to resume poultry exports. **Caroline Blumberg**

The Agriculture Ministry said Friday that it would lift a ban on poultry imports for more than three-quarters of U.S. facilities now blocked, acknowledging that the plants satisfy its requirements for meat treatment and production processing.

Presidents Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama struck a deal in June to allow U.S. producers to import poultry meat that has been processed with substances other than chlorine. Implementation has been held up, however, by what Moscow has described as "technical" issues.

Of the 87 plants on a list proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 68 will be allowed to resume poultry supplies to Russia on Monday, ministry spokesman Oleg Aksyonov said Friday. The remaining 19 facilities failed to meet the sanitary norms set by the Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection Service, he said.

But the USDA complained that the plan was not "an acceptable implementation" of the agreement reached in June. Russia will accept meat from only eight of the 27 slaughter and processing plants determined by the USDA as eligible to ship to the country, it said.

"The remaining 60 plants that Russia is listing are cold storage facilities that can only handle poultry if there is poultry to handle," the USDA said in an e-mailed statement Friday, Reuters reported.

The U.S. side said it would "continue to press Russia" to implement the agreement in full.

Russia, which spent more than \$750 million on U.S. poultry last year, froze imports Jan. 1 after long-planned regulations that forbid the import of poultry treated with chlorine — a production method used by many U.S. producers — went into effect.

Moscow made new demands earlier this month, saying the United States should provide guarantees that the plants authorized to supply meat have been inspected properly.

Russia is halting pork imports from plants in Missouri and Iowa owned by Smithfield Foods starting Aug. 27, the USDA said Friday without providing a reason for the bans.

The country was the fifth-largest buyer of U.S. pork last year, according to the USDA.

(Bloomberg)

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