The Moscow Times
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Watchdog Renews Concerns for U.S. Chicken

By The Moscow Times

August 24, 2010

John Roberts, of Iowa, looking at eggs after half a billion were recalled. **Charlie Neibergall**

The U.S.A. Poultry and Egg Export Council on Tuesday assured Russia that U.S. poultry is safe and not affected by the salmonella outbreak that has forced the recall of more than a half billion table eggs.

"The poultry meat and egg segments of the U.S. poultry industry are completely separate entities," the group's president, Jim Sumner, said in a statement.

"The products never come in contact with each other and are produced at separate facilities remotely located from one another, which fully excludes any possibility of cross-contamination," Sumner said.

Russia's agricultural safety service said Monday that it was "seriously concerned" about salmonella bacteria found in a large quantity of chicken eggs sold in the United States.

The Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection Service asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service for the names of the "contaminated" eggs' producers, the cause of contamination, as well as the measures taken by the relevant U.S. authorities to stop a further spread of the illness, the body said.

The United States has recalled more than a half-billion eggs that may contain salmonella bacteria linked to illnesses in at least 15 states.

Salmonella can cause fever, abdominal cramps and severe diarrhea, and may require hospitalization, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

U.S. chicken producer Sanderson Farms said it expected "spectacular" demand from Russia to give it a boost after it reported fiscal third-quarter profit that missed analysts' estimates.

Sanderson chief executive Joe Sanderson told investors during a conference call that the poultry market in Russia was reopening to U.S. producers.

Sanderson said a plant in Mississippi has been approved to ship products there.

(Reuters, Bloomberg)

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