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Onishchenko Warns of 'Outbreak' of Horse Meat From Europe

By The Moscow Times

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The "outbreak" of horse meat under the guise of beef in meat products that is spreading through stores in the European Union is a cause for serious concern, head of the Federal Consumer Protection Service Gennady Onishchenko said Tuesday.

"In order not to take drastic measures and avoid closing our borders to meat and processed food from the EU, we have to ask for additional guarantees of compliance with health requirements," Onishchenko told Interfax.

He also noted the growing scale of the problem, citing new cases of horse meat found in beef products in Germany, a country known for its strict adherence to food safety regulations.

Representatives of the European Union said Saturday there had been no shipments of any such products to Russia, Interfax reported.

The chief sanitary inspector is most concerned with the volume of such meat supplied to the Russian market and the possible content of dangerous substances, such as phenylbutazone, which is used by veterinarians to treat horses.

Phenylbutazone is a carcinogenic substance that is harmful to human health, Onishchenko told Interfax last week, adding that the "European system for food safety works poorly."

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