

Moscow Abandons Plans to Drop Ban on U.S. Pork Imports

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia has scrapped plans to remove a ban on U.S. pork imports, 2 days after a Russian veterinary and phytosanitary inspection service delegation was refused entry to the U.S., DNI.ru reported Tuesday

The visit by the service, known as Rosselkhozadzor, was planned for Sunday, the day after Russia's upper house of parliament gave the green light to send military forces into Ukraine, prompting outcry in the West and threats of economic sanctions.

Rosselkhozadzor had been prepared to permit two Smithfield Packing plants to supply pork to Russia starting on March 10, based on guarantees that the use of certain growth hormones would end. U.S. pork had long been under embargo, due to the use of ractopamine and other growth hormones that are illegal in Russia. Ractopamine, which increases rate of weight gain, is banned in over 160 countries.

The Rosselkohnadzor delegation had hoped to travel to Washington to discuss U.S. guarantees on hormone use and finalize the time frame of the first deliveries. U.S. representatives, however, refused to meet with the Rosselkohnadzor representatives, and said that their next meeting — during negotiations on Kazakhstan's ascension to the World Trade Organization — would also be cancelled.

Despite the snub, Rosselkohnadzor said the door was still open for U.S. businesses to begin deliveries by March 10. "If they can give us additional guarantees before this date, then from that moment we will start delivery of pork from these two U.S. companies, if not, the date will be postponed" Rosselkohnadzor's official representative, Aleksey Aleksenko, said.

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