

Russia Cites Smuggling Concerns to Tighten Restrictions on Belarussian Meat Imports

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Meat and sausage goods are on sale at a grocery store in St. Petersburg on Nov. 12, 2014.

Moscow will tighten restrictions on the transit of meat products across its territory from Belarus to Kazakhstan and other countries following attempts to sell banned imports in Russia, Russia's veterinary and phytosanitary service (VPSS) said Monday.

In August, Russia banned imports of fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish and dairy from the European Union and some other countries in retaliation for Western sanctions over the crisis in Ukraine.

The VPSS said it had discovered a smuggling channel under which meat labeled as intended for transit from Belarus to Kazakhstan was being sold in Russia.

The VPSS also said it had asked Belarus to stop certifying such cargoes until the problem was

resolved.

Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan have set up a free-trade zone as part of their customs union, and Minsk has promised to prevent banned foods from being shipped onward to Russia.

VPSS said that from Nov. 30 transit of products via Russia to Kazakhstan and third countries would be allowed only from checkpoints on the Russian side of the customs union border.

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