

Salt and Cardboard Used to Smuggle Banned Food Into Russia – Watchdog

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A worker arranges slabs of meat for sale at a grocery store in Moscow.

Attempts to smuggle banned foods from Western countries into Russia have used shipments of salt, cardboard and building materials as cover, according to Russia's food safety watchdog.

Food products from the United States and European Union embargoed by Moscow in retaliation for Western sanctions over Ukraine were disguised by importers and detected by Russian customs officials, Rospotrebnadzor head Anna Popova told the TASS news agency Tuesday.

“This is frozen meat, fish and vegetables of unknown origin. Part of it was brought in under the guise of building materials, cardboard and salt,” Popova said, TASS reported.

Russia's food import ban, imposed last August, has stoked rising food price inflation across the country and sparked deficits of some high-end goods, including Italian cheeses and hams.

Some European food producers have suffered particularly severely from the ban.

Rospotrebnadzor has intercepted 2.5 million kilograms of restricted food products at Russia's borders since the ban was introduced, Popova told TASS.

Russian officials have said that they are currently looking at ways to exclude certain EU countries including Greece and Hungary — both of which are politically close to Moscow — from the food embargo.

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