Up to 25% of Cheese in Russia Is Fake, Smuggled From Ukraine — Watchdog

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Up to a quarter of 'cheese products' sold in Russia were produced in Ukraine, circumventing Moscow's embargo on food imports, according to Russia's state agricultural watchdog.

Russia placed restrictions on food imports, including dairy, from countries that enacted sanctions against Moscow after its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. The embargo has been a boon for domestic Russian producers, but consumers have complained about a proliferation of "fake cheese" — dairy products made with milk-substitutes.

Related article: [Up to 50% of Dairy Products in Russian Market Are Fake, Report Says](#)

Up to 300,000 tonnes of Ukrainian cheese products are entering Russia every year after being repackaged in Belarus, Russia's agricultural watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor spokeswoman Yulia Melano [told](#) the RBC business portal Tuesday.

"In all likelihood, we're talking about the legalization of Ukrainian cheese or protein and fat products through Belarus," reads a letter written by Rosselkhoznadzor head Sergei Dankvert that was obtained by RBC.

The Ukrainian 'cheese products' mostly consist of vegetable oils, rather than dairy, and are imported via Belarus under the guise of Macedonian or Iranian cheese, according to the letter.

Cheese–like products could account for more than half of all cheeses sold in Russia, Andrei Karpov, the executive director of the Association of Retail Trade Companies (AKORT), was cited as saying by RBC.

Rosselkhoznadzor does not yet regulate cheese products, which are made almost entirely out of milk–substitutes, and does not officially track its imports.