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Russian Ministry Moves to Ban Personal Imports of Parmesan and Jamon – Reports

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Russia is considering banning certain meat and dairy products, including parmesan and jamon, over health concerns tied to infectious diseases, the Vedomosti business daily reported.

Wholesale imports of fresh EU food products were banned in 2014 in retaliation to Western states imposing sanctions over Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. Individuals are currently permitted to bring in up to 5 kilograms of food products for personal use.

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The Russian Agriculture Ministry is considering the National Meat Association's proposal to

ban individuals from importing meat and dairy products, Vedomosti reported on Thursday.

The association also wants increased baggage controls at the border and harsher punishments for violating the bans, the newspaper cited a March 20 letter sent to Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Gordeyev as saying.

The Agriculture Ministry and food safety watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor appear to endorse the bans, Vedomosti reported. It does not indicate if or when the bans could be introduced.

The health concerns surround African swine fever in imported meat and foot-and-mouth disease in dairy.

African swine fever affects pigs and wild boar and has spread in Eastern Europe in recent years. It does not affect humans.

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Hungary, Russia, Poland, Ukraine and Romania are among the countries affected, alarming governments and pig farmers due the pace at which it has spread.

Russia's agricultural industry experts said import bans would do little to fight infectious diseases, arguing that Russia instead needs to improve the efficiency of its veterinary controls.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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