

Russia's Ban on U.S. Poultry Addressed at Trade Hearing

*Coalition for U.S.-Russia Trade
March 3, 2010*

At a Senate Finance Committee hearing today, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk stated that he was "very troubled" by what he termed as an "arbitrary action" by Russia to restrict imports of poultry from the United States due to the use of chlorine washes.

Poultry trade has long been a sensitive issue in the context of Russia's WTO accession. Kirk stated that the U.S. government is trying to persuade Russia to comply with the standards of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). However, Kirk said, this effort is impeded by the fact that the United States cannot seek arbitration on Russia's sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards through the World Trade Organization (WTO) because Russia is not a WTO member.

Kirk's comments came in response to a question by Sen. Thomas Carper (D-DE), who noted the importance of poultry trade to his state and voiced concern over the Russian restrictions.

U.S.-Russia talks on the poultry restrictions were held in January, and officials from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are in Moscow this week for another round of negotiations as they seek to regain market access for U.S. exporters of poultry.¹

¹ "USTR, USDA Return to Moscow Next Week to Discuss Poultry Access," *Inside U.S. Trade*, February 26, 2010.