

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2012

President Barack H. Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As Congress is faced with a decision of whether or not we grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) to Russia, there are a number of issues left to be resolved. However, we want to raise a particular issue with you that is important to U.S. farmers and ranchers. Among the outstanding issues yet to be addressed adequately is Russia's failure to bring its practices into compliance with unambiguous WTO sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards with respect to imports of meat and poultry products from the United States.

We know you understand the importance of beef, pork, and poultry to the U.S. and Russia trade relationship. Last year, U.S. meat and poultry exports collectively ranked second only to aircraft engines in total U.S. export value to Russia. We appreciate our trade officials' efforts in obtaining strong tariff and quota access provisions from Russia in the accession talks.

However, U.S. meat and poultry exports have been steadily falling in recent years due to Russia's non-science based sanitary measures. Russia's restrictions are numerous and range from the unjustifiable de-listing of U.S. meat processing facilities to arbitrary SPS actions that lack scientific justification to limit or even halt poultry and meat imports. Judging by Russia's past and current practices on SPS issues, we lack confidence that Russia will all of a sudden treat U.S. pork and poultry products equitably upon entry into the WTO. Furthermore, while U.S. beef does not currently face the challenges U.S. pork and poultry are dealing with, given Russia's track record on U.S. pork and poultry, we have little reason to believe U.S. beef won't eventually face its own issues with non-science based SPS measures instituted by Russian officials.

Officials in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the Department of Agriculture are well acquainted with the Russian measures we are referring to, and they appreciate the fact Russia's approach is not supported by science. Our trade officials must keep up the pressure on Russia to lower these non-science based SPS barriers, and urge Russia to take these steps prior to formal entry into the WTO. If we are not able to adequately address the SPS issues, it will undermine the commitments we obtained on tariffs and quotas.

We ask that you direct our trade officials to continue every effort to obtain firm, science-based commitments from Russia on the outstanding SPS issues prior to their formal entry into the WTO. The commitments we are asking for from Russia are reasonable and achievable and are within the scope of the type of commitments made to the United States by both China and Vietnam in the context of their accessions to the WTO. In addition, we urge you to address these issues with President Putin at your earliest opportunity.

We hope you will agree every effort should be made to lower these unjustifiable barriers hurting U.S. farmers, and that it should happen prior to Russia's formal entry into the WTO. We stand behind our farmers and products they produce, and they deserve to be treated equitably by our trading partners. While this is only one of many issues that needs to be addressed by Russia, it is a key issue. If it were resolved in a satisfactory manner it would certainly be a crucial step forward in our trade relationship with Russia.

Sincerely,

Chuck Grassley

Jon Kyl

John Boozman  
Mark Udall

Amy Klobuchar

Richard A. Lugar

Pat Roberts

Rebecca Stabenow

John Hickenlooper

Leah Ruckelshaus

Steve Amodeo

Gene McCardell

Herb Kohl

Paul Hanchman

Al Franken

Jim Johnson

Tom Coburn

James McInerney



Quinn Hatch

Shirley Brown

John Thune

Kay R. Hagan

Kay Hensel

Jerry Moran

Ken Coats

Sayby Chaulkier

Clara Kim

Tom Auk

Mark Royce

Tom Sum

Jay Jensen

Mike Enji

Wm F. B. †

Mike Johnson