

Amid Ongoing Trade Talks, U.S. and China Remove Import Restrictions on Poultry Products

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On November 14, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) [announced](#) that China plans to lift its [ban on poultry imports](#) from the United States. China originally instituted its ban on U.S. poultry in 2015, amid [concerns](#) over highly-pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks. While these concerns have subsided over the past four years, China had yet to lift its ban on U.S. poultry until now. As part of USDA's announcement, United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue released a statement hailing the decision as a win for U.S. farmers and expressing optimism about the new export opportunities.

This news comes one week after the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued a [final rule](#) removing its own ban on Chinese imports of certain poultry products. While processed poultry products could already be imported from China, it was conditioned on the requirement that the products be derived from poultry slaughtered in the United States or in other countries with a poultry slaughter inspection system equivalent to that of the United States. Following an extensive evaluation of China's laws, regulations, control programs, and inspection procedures, FSIS determined that these systems were equivalent to those of the United States. Notably, the new rule only covers fully cooked poultry products, and does not remove the current restrictions on Chinese raw poultry imports instituted by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), due to concerns over animal disease risk.

The respective removals of U.S. and China poultry import restrictions are part of [ongoing trade negotiations](#) between the two countries. For several years, there have been growing congressional efforts to ease these restrictions, specifically with regard to poultry imports. As previously covered on this [blog](#), in July 2017, a bipartisan group of 37 U.S. senators led by Senator Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) and Senator Mark Warner (D-Va.) called on Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to press for the swift reopening of the Chinese market to U.S. chicken and turkey exports. Today's announcement marks an important milestone in the materialization of that effort.

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