

US senators concerned with SA's failure to meet US Poultry imports deadline

Washington, DC, US: Senators Tom Carper and Chris Coons (both D-Del.) and Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) expressed concern after South Africa missed an October 15 deadline to allow US poultry exports to South Africa to resume and urged South Africa to act immediately.



USDA via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

A settlement was reached in the longstanding poultry dispute between the United States and South Africa on June 8, 2015, after negotiations in Paris led by the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the Department of State, US Ambassador to South Africa Patrick Gaspard and trade experts from industry. The agreement was welcome news for the entire US poultry industry, including the large poultry operations in the Senators' home states - Georgia and Delaware.

Since the settlement was reached, South Africa has been slow to fulfill the obligations agreed to in Paris, including the commitment to resolve sanitary barriers to poultry hindering the successful implementation of the agreement. Last month, Senators Coons and Isakson called on President Zuma to act quickly to address the unresolved issues in the agreement.

South Africa agreed to finalise both a trade protocol for avian influenza and a health certificate for US poultry by 15 October. Despite assurances by high-ranking South African officials that those issues would be resolved by the deadline, they have not. Important differences remain on the health certificate and trade protocol. The US has insisted that South Africa follow World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines to use a regional approach for avian influenza.

South Africa urged to resolve outstanding barrier to US poultry

"We are concerned that South Africa has not followed through on its promise to address key issues by October 15, preventing full implementation of the deal," said the senators.

"South Africa failed to finalise both the trade protocol and health certificate for US poultry despite the administration's intense engagement with South Africa over the past year to resolve these issues. We believe this inaction must be factored into the out-of-cycle review of South Africa's AGOA eligibility and urge the administration to take appropriate action. South Africa must take the necessary steps to resolve outstanding barriers to US poultry immediately if its AGOA benefits are to be preserved. Hardworking poultry farmers in our home states and across the country should not have to wait any longer to participate in the South African market."

Senators require South Africa's eligibility for AGOA to be reviewed

Senators Coons and Isakson, both members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Carper, a member of the Senate Finance Committee, have pressured the South African government for over a year to end the antidumping duties on US poultry. Most recently, the senators secured language in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) that would put pressure on South Africa to remove unfair limits on American poultry imports.

The bipartisan amendment introduced by Isakson and co-sponsored by Carper and Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., would require the USTR to conduct an out-of-cycle review of South Africa's trade practices, specifically antidumping duties on US poultry. The senators look forward to seeing South Africa resolve this issue so they can focus on other important areas of collaboration.

Coons and Isakson are the co-chairs of the Senate Chicken Caucus, of which Carper is a member. Both Delaware and Georgia have large poultry industries and are major exporters of poultry. The poultry industry annually contributes over \$15.1 billion to the Georgia economy. Delaware's poultry industry supports more than 14,000 jobs and contributes more than \$4.6 billion to the state's economy, according to the National Chicken Council.

By Office of Senator Chris Coons

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