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## Russian Federation

### Poultry and Products

## Moscow Rally Against Poultry Meat Imports 2006

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**Report Highlights:**

A Moscow rally against imports of poultry meat and decrying Russia's efforts to accede to the World Trade Organization drew a small, partisan crowd and almost no press coverage. Speakers at the rally and handouts provided to attendees called avian influenza a "myth" and part of a U.S. effort to expand exports by destroying the Russian poultry sector. The rally indicates the degree to which the Russian poultry industry is in distress, and the rhetorical extremes to which it is prepared to go in order to protect its interests.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Moscow [RS1]  
[RS]

Federation Council Senator Sergey Lisovskiy and the Russian Poultry Union sponsored a public rally the morning of April 19, 2006 on Mayakovskiy Square in Moscow to protest imports of U.S. poultry meat and Russia's accession to the WTO. The rally was advertised a day in advance in a full-page advertisement in a major Moscow daily newspaper.



The rally drew an audience of approximately 300, the vast majority of them employees of poultry growout and processing operations who were bused in for the event. The audience was dominated by poultry plant employees from Moscow, Ryazan, Tula, Kursk, Ivanovo and other regions within a few hours' drive from Moscow. A particularly large group represented Gorino (the Ivanovskiy Broiler plant). There were several groups of younger people in yellow baseball caps with the name Modifik on them.

The rally received virtually no press play. National radio station "Mayak" ran a short story on the 6:00 o'clock p.m. news program, but no reports on the rally were to be seen in newspapers the following day.

Press officers for the event handed out press kits consisting of an open letter to President Putin that had been published in the daily "Moskovskiy komsomolets" newspaper the previous day, an appeal to journalists from the Russian Poultry Union decrying the "myth" of avian influenza, and libelous but catchy cartoons (reproduced below). The materials are reproduced below to provide a sense of the rhetorical extremes the Russian poultry industry is reaching as it expresses its economic distress.

### The Oral Message

Several directors and employees of poultry farms and processing plants spoke at the rally. The thrust of their remarks boiled down to:

- Inaction on the part of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) will cause many Russian people to lose jobs;
- There are large stocks of unsold domestic poultry meat at all poultry plants in Russia;
- Slogans such as "U.S. poultry will make us mutants", "we see lots of young people here, don't let American culture affect you, don't eat fast food!"



- U.S. and European food safety authorities care mostly about the cleanliness of workspaces at poultry processing facilities, and not the wholesomeness of the product itself.

### Folk Songs

In between speeches by 25 directors and employees of poultry plants, a Russian folk ensemble sang "chastushki" (ribald couplets set to music) defaming imported and especially U.S. poultry meat. An example follows (informal translation):

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ????? ???? ????? ???? ???????? | <i>Bush legs, Bush legs, accursed</i>    |
| ???? ?????? ??? ? ????????     | <i>My sweetheart ate some last night</i> |
| ????? ??????? ??????? ?        | <i>I don't interest him any more.</i>    |

### Open Letter to President Putin

The open letter to President Putin reads as follows (informal translation):

Begin text:

Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich!

The most scientific and technologically advanced sector of Russia's agriculture, poultry production, is currently facing the threat of extinction. This may be a serious blow to the food security of the country and can shed doubt on the implementation of the national project "Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex."

This situation is the result of:

- An unjustified annual increase in imports of chicken meat in spite of the rapid growth in domestic production. Poultry producers are the only people in Russia's agriculture who managed to double output since 1998! The annual increase in 2005 came to 17% (184,000 tons). In the first quarter of this year it has already exceeded 53,000 tons! We have much to be proud of and to report to the country!
- Frightening of the population in the mass media, including government-run editions, over the artificial threat of "avian influenza" which is leading to a decline in demand on poultry and table eggs in the country.
- Growing illegal imports of chicken through the Special Economic Zone in Kaliningrad oblast.
- Dumping by importers.

All this is leading to overstocking of unsold products, a reduction in wholesale prices (by 25%) and as a result to unprofitability and smaller output volumes as well as unemployment.

Therefore, the market is cleared for low-quality and often health-endangering imported leg quarters and protein substitutes like soybeans, social tension is built up because millions of rural residents involved in agriculture and adjacent sectors are left without work.

If extreme measures are not taken now, the situation can become unpredictable, the country can descend to full dependence on imports, which for our great nation is impermissible!

And, most important, the population is left without nutritious and high-quality animal protein affordable to the majority – the basis of life force of man and the edible egg! (sic)

There's nothing to say about a favorable investment climate in agriculture in Russia in this situation!

The constant concessions and de facto surrender of interests of domestic agriculture under the conditions of the presumed accession to the WTO are becoming a serious threat to the sector.

We, producers, people engaged in poultry production in Russia, appeal to you, as guarantor of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, with the request to avert the death of an entire sector of the nation's agriculture, to defend the national interests!

There is no appealing climate in Russia's agriculture for investments!

Continued concessions and the betrayal of domestic agricultural interests at WTO accession talks are becoming a serious threat to the industry. We, producers, people who are involved in poultry production in Russia appeal to you, the guarantor of Russian Federation Constitution and request your assistance in averting the demise of an entire agricultural sector in Russia and in protection of national interests!

Members of the Russian Poultry Union  
representing 640 broiler companies and hatcheries  
End text.



#### **Appeal to Journalists of Russia** (informal translation)

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

You are representatives of the fourth estate in Russia. And you, like nobody else, know the power of the printed word.

Today you are unwittingly being manipulated for creation of the latest global myth under the rubric "Avian Influenza".

In Russia not one person has died of "avian influenza".

In the whole world since 1997 95 people have died.

Each year 150 people die worldwide from coconuts falling on their heads.

Each year from 250,000 to 500,000 people die of usual influenza, 1,200,000 of tuberculosis.

Why in view of these statistics are all airwaves and newspaper columns packed with information about some cat that died in Germany and was a carrier of "avian influenza"? Why do you allow yourselves to be used this way?

Ladies and gentlemen! Under cover of the hullabaloo over "avian influenza" the transnational corporations are trying once again to saddle you and us with "Bush legs".

We in Russia have another global problem, which has escaped your attention. It's the problem of food imports. This is an issue of national security and the nation's health.

The Russian poultry industry since 1998 has made a great stride in output of domestic chicken meat, doubling its production volume. And you knew that our domestic chicken meat is of much better quality than "Bush legs", and chicken eggs are the most affordable, wholesome animal product and are always safe!

You know that in Russia veterinary oversight is much stricter. We have not had a single case of avian influenza in a commercial poultry meat facility. And in principle it's impossible, thanks to the technologies applied!

We, producers, people engaged in poultry production in Russia, call on you to be more diligent. We ask you, before writing about this nonexistent threat, to think about who will profit from your material.

We are ready to share information with you. We invite you to our plants, so you can be convinced of the truthfulness of our words.

And we hope very much that we live in one country and that we have mutual interests. We hope that it is as important to you as it is to us that the food in our stores was safe.

Know that every irresponsible public word about "avian influenza" is a chunk of the tombstone over Russian poultry production, and thus, the food security of Russia.

Members of the Russian Poultry Union  
640 broiler and egg farms  
End text.



## Cartoons from the Press Kit



This cartoon depicts Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref leaning out of a traditional Russian hut (izbushka) that rests of chicken legs. The slogan reads, "MEDT – a hut on BUSH legs" ("MERT – izBUSHka na nozhkakh BUSHa!")

This is a play on words, since the syllable "BUSH" appears in both the term "Bush legs" and the Russian word for hut.

It is also a not-so-veiled reference to witchcraft, since the Russian fairy tale witch Baba Yaga lives in a hut that rests on chicken legs.



# ХВАТИТ ТРАВИТЬ РОССИЮ!

## Не дадим сделать из нас Мутантов!

Сегодня **Россия тонет** в импорте низкокачественного, опасного для здоровья продовольствия! Транснациональные корпорации используют нашу страну как свалку для своих продовольственных отходов.

**В РОССИЮ ЗАВОЗЯТ:** Модифицированные продукты: сою, муку. .. мясо непонятного происхождения и возраста... напичканную химией курятину

**Это** вредно для здоровья **опасно** для наших детей и внуков

**Спасение утопающих** - дело рук самих утопающих! Если руководство МЭРТ не может поставить заслон на государственном уровне - **сделаем это сами!** Отказавшись от импортных продуктов, мы сохраним себя и здоровье своих детей!

**Покупая продукты - думайте о здоровье!**

Российские птицеводы

"ENOUGH  
OF POISONING  
RUSSIA!

We won't let them make  
Mutants out of us!

Today Russia is drowning in  
imports of low-quality,  
health-endangering food!  
Transnational corporations  
are using our country as a  
garbage dump for their food  
leftovers.

INTO RUSSIA  
THEY IMPORT:  
Modified foods: soya, flour,  
meat of incomprehensible  
origin and age...chicken  
meat packed with chemicals

THIS is harmful to health  
DANGEROUS for our  
children and grandchildren

Salvation of the drowning is  
in the hands of the  
drowning themselves! If  
the leadership of MEDT  
cannot put a stop at the  
government level – we'll do  
it ourselves! Refusing  
imported foods, we  
preserve ourselves and the  
health of our children!

[When] buying food – think  
about health!

Russian Poultry Producers"

"BUSH LEGS  
are a fatal  
number!"

???? is the  
abbreviation  
for the  
Ministry of  
Economic  
Development  
and Trade  
(MEDT) and a  
component of  
the word for  
"death".



"MEDT – a  
hut on Bush  
legs"

See page 6,  
above.



"Gref! You  
love Bush –  
eat [him]  
yourself!"



"ENOUGH  
OF  
POISONING  
RUSSIA!"



"WTO – Death for Russia!"

Again, MEDT's Russian abbreviation appears in the Russian word for death.



"BOOS! Are you for or against Russia?"

Georgiy Boos is governor of Kaliningrad oblast, a free zone through which poultry meat enters Russia outside the tariff-rate quota.



"For BUSH and GREF Russia is SECONDARY!"

This is another play on words, for the letters ??? (WTO) are part of the Russian word for "secondary".



"IN BUSH LEGS THERE IS NO TRUTH!"

"hormones steroids antibiotics chlorine"

Во все времена и у всех народов России куриное мясо было исключительно полноценной едой. Только оно: гарантировало людям доступный **животный белок**, а значит - **жизненные силы!** Из всех мясных продуктов сочетает в себе **сочность и питательность – с нежирностью и диетичностью!** В курочке почти нет холестерина – причины многих недугов. Поэтому куриное мясо **незаменимо** для детей, стариков и больных. А курочка, выращиваемая на натуральных кормах, придает любому пиршеству королевскую изысканность и **полезность**. Не верьте, что натуральный животный белок можно заменить генными продуктами! Можно обмануть себя, но организм не обманешь! Недаром ведь восточная мудрость гласит: **«Мы – то, что мы едим»**. **Питайтесь полноценно!**

**РОССИИ НУЖНА  
РОССИЙСКАЯ ПТИЦА,  
А НЕ ОТРАВА  
ИЗ ЗА ГРАНИЦЫ**

“During all times and for all peoples of Russia chicken meat was an exceptionally wholesome foodstuff. Only it guaranteed people affordable animal protein, that is, life force! Out of all meat products it comprises juiciness and nutritiousness with no fat and healthfulness! In the chicken there is practically no cholesterol – the cause of many ailments. Therefore chicken meat is irreplaceable for children, the elderly, and the ill. And the chicken raised on natural feeds imparts to any feast a royal refinement and usefulness. Don’t believe that natural animal protein can be replaced with genetic foods! You can fool yourself, but not your organism! Not for nothing does Oriental wisdom say, “We are what we eat.” Eat wholesomely!

RUSSIA NEEDS RUSSIAN BIRDS, AND NOT POISON FROM ABROAD.”