

Monday, October 19, 2015

ISAKSON, DELAWARE SENATORS CONCERNED WITH SOUTH AFRICA'S FAILURE TO MEET KEY DEADLINE FOR RESUMING IMPORT OF U.S. POULTRY

Urge immediate action by South Africa to allow U.S. poultry exports to South Africa to resume

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., Tom Carper, D-Del., and Chris Coons, D-Del., today expressed concern after South Africa missed an October 15th deadline to finalize parts of the U.S.-South Africa agreement reached in Paris earlier this year and urged South Africa to act immediately to allow U.S. poultry exports to South Africa to resume.

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

Since the settlement was reached, South Africa has been slow to fulfill the obligations agreed to in Paris, hindering the successful implementation of the agreement. Last month, Senators Isakson and Coons, both members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, **called on the South African President** to act quickly to address the unresolved issues in the agreement. According to the Paris agreement, by October 15, 2015, South Africa should have

issued both a trade protocol for avian influenza and a health certificate for U.S. poultry. Despite assurances by high-ranking South African officials, they have not met the set deadline. The U.S. has insisted that South Africa follow World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines to use a regional approach for avian influenza, but South Africa continues to resist that approach. Differences also remain on the health certificate.

“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 finalize both the trade protocol and health certificate for U.S. 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 U.S. 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.”

The senators have pressured the South African government for more than a year to end the antidumping duties on U.S. poultry. Most recently, the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* included language introduced by Isakson and co-sponsored by Sens. Tom Carper, D-Del., and Mark Warner, D-Va., that would put pressure on South Africa to remove unfair limits on American poultry imports. The bipartisan amendment would require the USTR to conduct an out-of-cycle review of South Africa’s trade practices, specifically antidumping duties on U.S. poultry. The senators look forward to seeing South Africa resolve this issue so they can focus on other important areas of collaboration.

Isakson and Coons are the co-chairs of the Senate Chicken Caucus, of which Carper is a member. Both of their states have large poultry industries and are major exporters of poultry. The poultry industry annually contributes over \$15.1 billion to the Georgia economy, including farmers, processing, and allied industries. 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.

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