

Onishchenko Standing up to U.S. 'Pressure' on Ractopamine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The United States is pressuring Russia to end its recent ban on U.S. meat imports containing the growth hormone ractopamine, chief sanitary inspector Gennady Onishchenko said.

The Americans haven't given up the idea of trying to achieve their goal through political and administrative pressure," Onishchenko said, Interfax reported Friday.

"But the U.S. is not discussing the problem in the correct forum," he said.

In February 2013, the ban on meat containing ractopamine went into effect throughout the country. Onishchenko's watchdog claims that these measures were justified due to the alleged risks that the consumption of ractopamine presents.

"If we work within the rules of WTO, the U.S. should give a scientifically grounded answer considering their unsubstantiated rules," Onishchenko said. "According to WTO rules,

international court proceedings [on the disagreement] should come into effect."

"There is a very dangerous trend [of not allowing a country to offer a scientifically justified rejection of a WTO rule]. This weakens the potential of individual WTO members to prove the unacceptability of any particular rule, considering the specifics of food stuffs, life and nutritional balance," the head of the watchdog said.

"There is one trend that is more positive, which we will support in any way we can— a move back to the original concept of scientifically justified risks, which primarily focus on evaluating the risk to human health, and not economic risks," Onishchenko added.

Although partial traces of ractopamine remain after an animal is slaughtered, countries such as the United States and Canada consider the additive as being safe for human consumption.

Onishchenko's agency published a scientific study outlining the dangers of ractopamine consumption. The main concern is over the fact that remnants of the hormone in meat are transmitted into the human body and can potentially cause health problems.

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