

Russia Could Limit Food Transit From Ukraine and Belarus to Kazakhstan

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An employee works at a dairy plant in Minsk, Belarus.

Moscow may limit food shipments from Belarus and Ukraine to Kazakhstan across Russian territory because of attempts to sell banned imports in Russia, the head of Russia's Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service was quoted as saying on Thursday.

In early August, Russia banned about \$9 billion worth of imports of fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish and dairy from the European Union and some other countries in retaliation for Western sanctions over the crisis in Ukraine.

"We will be talking about stopping the transit to Kazakhstan through the borders of Belarus and Ukraine and allowing it only via our checkpoints," news agency RIA Novosti quoted Sergei Dankvert as saying.

Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan have a free-trade zone as part of their customs union, and

Minsk has promised to prevent banned foods from being shipped onward to Russia.

Kazakhstan is ready to cooperate with Russia if it plans to discuss the toughening of checkpoint controls on the Russia-EU border, Kazakh deputy national economy minister Madina Abylkasymova told reporters in Astana.

"But an introduction of some kind of restriction on the transit of products that Kazakhstan imports from the European Union is out of the question," she added.

Russia's phytosanitary watchdog recently reported that 8,000 tons of meat, falsely labeled as coming from Brazil and destined for Kazakhstan, had been delivered to Russia via Belarus, Dankvert said.

The service managed to find about 300 tons of the meat, while 7,500 tons "got lost in Russia," he added.

The service may also ban pork imports from Belarus due to suspected outbreaks of African swine fever, the service said. It planned to discuss the issue at a meeting with the Belarussian agriculture ministry on Thursday.

Belarus has suspended shipments of pork to Russia until Nov. 11, when officials plan to discuss the issue again, the service was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency later on Thursday.

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