

# US, SA agree on agricultural issues

PRETORIA: South African and United States veterinary experts have agreed to ensure that US poultry imports to South Africa resume by the end of the year.



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"South Africa and the United States will finalise terms and conditions and the poultry certificate for export by 15 October 2015 to enable contracting and shipments of US poultry exports to the entire South Africa prior to the end of 2015," said the Departments of Trade and Industry and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in a joint statement. This follows a meeting held between South African and US veterinary experts on Monday.

## US chicken imports

In June, the two countries agreed on an annual quota of 65,000 tonnes of US chicken imported into South Africa. They had been at loggerheads over the inclusion of US chicken imports into the South African market. However, the quota has not been implemented due to South Africa's concerns about avian flu in the US.

In turn, the US had warned that if barriers to US meat imports were not lifted, South Africa could lose the duty-free access to the US market.

The poultry protocol will provide the technical basis to allow for the continued import of poultry from the non-affected areas in the US in the event of renewed outbreaks of avian influenza. "South Africa shall implement the 65,000 metric tons as agreed in the Paris meeting in June 2015 as soon as possible with a view to completing the administrative justice process that needs to be followed by the end of 2015."

## Trading in meats

Regarding beef imports, South Africa had already removed the ban on the imports of US beef and had communicated this officially to the US. The vets from the two sides agreed on the technical issues required to expedite the issuing of the necessary animal health certificate to allow for the import of beef meat from the US.

On pork, while the South African market for pork is open to the US, the two sides shared information on the technical requirements for the importation of cuts that were of interest to the US.

South Africa also discussed some issues where it had an ongoing interest in exporting its own animal products to the US, including beef and ostrich meat. The US provided South Africa with information on the technical requirements for access to the US market and agreed to expedite and facilitate the process towards obtaining the necessary health certificates for these products.

"South Africa remains fully committed to the full implementation of the letter and spirit of the agreements reached in Paris between the US and SA in June on the issues related to AGOA. The process is irreversible." The African Growth Opportunities Act (AGOA) is a preferential agreement that has been in place since 2000 between the US and Sub-Saharan African countries. The current AGOA is due to expire at the end of September.

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