

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Food Safety and Inspection Service**

July 8, 2003

**9 CFR Part 381**

**[Docket No. 02-015DF]**

**RIN 0583-AC97**

**Addition of Australia and New Zealand to the List of Foreign Countries Eligible to Import Poultry Products (Ratite Only) into the United States**

Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA  
FSIS Docket Clerk  
Docket 02-015DF, Room 102  
Cotton Annex, 300 C Street, SW.  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

02-015DF  
02-015DF-2  
Ann Merkel

Greetings:

I am responding to the above proposal to lift import restrictions for ratites and ratite products from Australia and New Zealand. I very definitely am "against" this action.

As a woman emu rancher I have sacrificed much in the last ten years to stay in the emu business and promote American Emu Products as have all American Emu Growers. The industry is still in the pioneering stage and we are all struggling to make ends meet at this point.

We would all raise more birds if there was a market for more products, but we are not there yet. The allowable quantity of import may not seem large to someone outside the industry, but to those of us in the industry it will be devastating.

Due to our high costs, the American Ratite Farmer cannot compete with ratite products from Australia and New Zealand. They sell their products for less than it costs us to raise the birds.

If this proposal is allowed to pass, it will almost certainly guarantee the death of the American Ratite Farm and related industries. Please reconsider and withdraw this rule.

Sincerely,



Ann Merkel  
American Emu Grower

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