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Ginny Brown Walte

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414 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
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(202) 225-1002

DISTRICT OFFICES:

20 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 200
BROOKSVILLE, FL 34601
(352) 799-8354
(866) GWAITE5

38008 MERIDIAN AVENUE, SUITE A
DADE CITY, FL 33525
(352) 567-8707
(866) GWAITE5

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2006

The Honorable Mike Johanns
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

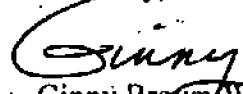
The U.S. Department of Agriculture is considering a proposal to allow poultry imports from China. While I understand the Department has included provisions to protect against the threat of avian influenza in the United States, the turmoil that could arise from this agreement is too great to allow this rule to go into effect.

My constituents fear that China does not possess adequate resources and proper know-how to guarantee the processing eliminates the possibility of avian flu. They would like greater reassurance by the USDA on the measures that would enforce food safety standards. The public perception of poultry imports from China has been extremely negative, and this proposal could severely affect the poultry industry.

It is my hope that as you review the public comments regarding poultry imports from China you will carefully consider the detrimental effects this rule could impose. Approximately 154,000 birds have died from avian influenza in China, a number that is too large to ignore. Combined with news reports of BSE found in cattle imported from Japan and Canada, food safety concerns amongst my constituents are rising.

I am confident you will take the many aspects of this proposed rule into consideration and please keep me apprised of your final determination.

Sincerely,


Ginny Brown Walte
Member of Congress

GBW:jc

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0905

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