

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

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Tharan Schmidt

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express **my surprise and absolute opposition** to the proposal to lift restrictions for ratites and ratite products from Australia and New Zealand.

In a time when this country is taking exhaustive measures to guarantee the safety of its citizens, why then consider importing products that do not meet American standards and regulations?

Members of the American Ostrich Association have worked tirelessly with the USDA, FDA, state and national Farm Bureaus, and many other governmental agencies and related groups to enact legislation that will ensure the safety, control and regulation of ratite processing and marketing. Importing Australian and New Zealand ratite products that do not meet our standards is a threat to public health and to the prosperity of the American Ostrich Farmer.

I urge you to reconsider and withdraw this proposal.

Sincerely,

Tharan Schmidt
Wheatland Ostrich Farms