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July 20, 2003

FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket 02-015DF
Room 102
Cotton Annex
300 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700

02-015DF-48
02-015DF
John Southern



Subject: Adverse Comment re FSIS 9 CFR Part 381 RIN 0583-AC97

Dear Sir or Madam:

I respectfully request the proposed approval to add Australia and New Zealand to the list of foreign countries that are authorized to import poultry products (Ratites only) into the United States be rejected. This action could very well be the straw that breaks the back of the American ratite industry that has been struggling so hard to get established in this country.

Those American farmers who have managed to survive the trials of developing this new industry in America are only now beginning to see a market emerge that may finally enable them to move to the profit side of the ledger. Many farmers who tried to pioneer this new alternative agricultural enterprise have already fallen into impossible financial stress or have already gone bankrupt. Those of us who have survived to this point certainly do not need our own government giving the fruits of our labors to foreign investors who historically have undermined the price levels American producers need in order to make a profit vis-à-vis US costs of labor and goods.

There can be no doubt this poorly timed action would severely damage our own struggling ratite industry. There also can be no doubt that these foreign investors have not developed oil standards as we so costly and painstakingly did here in America in order to assure inferior products with unknown potentials don't reach the unwary American public. This action would open public exposure to this risk after all we've done to try to prevent it. Why would our own Government do such a thing?

I've watched the struggles of small farmers who sacrificed more than you can possibly imagine to help get this industry in America going. It nearly makes me cry to think our own Government would even consider undermining us as this act will surely do.

Please! If you can't help the American Ratite grower, for God's sake, don't help our competitors without first establishing a level playing field. Reject this ill conceived action.

Respectfully


John Southern

CC: The American Emu Association