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NEWS

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SA gives in on long-running US chicken imports dispute

South Africa will end punitive duties on United States chicken and renew imports – initially 65 000 tonnes a year – said trade and industry minister, Dr Rob Davies, over the weekend.

Reuters news agency cited US industry groups as saying that the removal of the import barriers opened a market that had been closed for the past 15 years.

The deal was "within the tolerance of the (South African poultry) industry and is something we can all live with," Davies told Reuters in a telephone conversation from Paris, where the deal was concluded.

The agreement, which will see the US emerge as one of the top poultry exporters to Africa's most advanced economy, should help smooth the passage of South Africa's inclusion in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa), which is currently under US Senate review.

"We believe we have placed ourselves in a much stronger position," Davies said.

US senators Johnny Isakson and Chris Coons – who threatened to block SA's Agoa inclusion unless market access was increased – said final details should be thrashed out by the end of the month.

That should clear the way for poultry shipments to the South African market before the end of 2015, they said.

"We look forward to working with our government and the South Africans on implementing this important agreement," the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council and the National Chicken Council said in a joint statement.



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