

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 18, 2007

Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
2300 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

The ongoing investigation into the recent series of pet deaths and illnesses in the United States has revealed that contaminated batches of wheat gluten and rice protein responsible for these events were imported from China. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), China was the source of both the contaminated wheat gluten responsible for the recall of more than 60 million containers of cat and dog food, and the most recent recall of rice protein products.

Both products were contaminated with melamine, a chemical used for industrial purposes in the United States and in fertilizers in China. According to experts, no level of melamine should be found in pet or human food.

In the case of the contaminated wheat gluten, FDA has identified Xuzhou Anying Biologic Technology Development Co. Ltd. as the source of the product. Although spokespeople for Xuzhou Anying have denied involvement in the incident, U.S.-based importer ChemNutra, Inc., has demonstrated that it imported the contaminated wheat gluten from Xuzhou Anying and various media reports show that the Chinese company was involved in purchasing significant quantities of melamine. In the case of the rice protein contamination, U.S. importer Wilbur-Ellis has said that it imported its products from Binzhou Futian Biology Technology, Ltd.

In response to these contaminations, on March 30, 2007, FDA took steps to block imports of Chinese wheat gluten thought to pose a risk to the safety of the human and pet food supply. The Agency has also made multiple requests to the Chinese Government to allow U.S. inspectors to look at the facilities that are suspected to have produced the contaminated product. On April 4, 2007, the FDA sent its first letter to the Chinese Government asking for visas to allow its inspectors visit China. The request was not granted, and on April 17, 2007, the FDA sent an additional letter emphasizing that it wished to be allowed to send its inspectors to China.

This incident has brought suffering to pet owners who have seen their animals fall prey to illness or death, and caused significant economic losses to U.S. companies that believed they were importing wholesome products

Therefore, we strongly urge the Chinese Government to quickly issue visas to U.S. inspectors and cooperate in this investigation. Last year, the United States imported more than \$2.1 billion of agricultural goods from China, up from nearly \$1.8 billion the year before. Clearly, this is an important trading relationship.

We appreciate the courtesy of a timely response. We would also like to meet with you in the near future to discuss this issue.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator



Rosa L. DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies