

# U.S. consumers won't know if chicken is from China

By Maria Godoy, NPR

Here's a bit of news that might make you drop that chicken nugget midbite.

Just before the start of Labor Day weekend, the U.S. Department of Agriculture quietly announced that it was ending a ban on processed chicken imports from China. The kicker: These products can now be sold in the U.S. without a country-of-origin label.

For starters, just four Chinese processing plants will be allowed to export cooked chicken products to the U.S., as first reported by *Politico*. The plants in question passed USDA inspection in March. Initially, these processors will only be allowed to export chicken products made from birds that were raised in the U.S. and Canada. Because of that, the poultry processors won't be required to have a USDA inspector on site, as the *New York Times* notes, adding:

"And because the poultry will be processed, it will not require country-of-origin labeling. Nor will consumers eating chicken noodle soup from a can or chicken nuggets in a fast-food restaurant know if the chicken came from Chinese processing plants."

That's a pretty disturbing thought for anyone who's followed the slew of stories regarding food safety failures in China in recent years. As we've on *The Salt*, this year alone, thousands of dead pigs turned up in the waters of Shanghai, rat meat was passed off as mutton and – perhaps most disconcerting for U.S. consumers – there was an outbreak of the among live fowl in fresh meat markets.

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