

contamination? Is China exporting it fairly or dumping it in Pakistan? Why are we importing Chinese poultry when US, EU, Japan and other developed countries have banned it altogether? Can the said import of meat lead to spread of SARS and so on?

The issue gained public attention when a Karachi-based food company imported three containers of processed Chinese chicken earlier this year and supplied it in the local market at about Rs 75 to Rs 80 per kilo-

gram. The rate of this meat was as low as the retail price of live broiler available in the local market at that time.

These statistics were hard to digest for the members of Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) who feared complete closure of local poultry industry comprising more than 25,000 poultry farms and employing about 500,000 people in case the import continues. PPA sources believe that the chicken imported from China will mainly be consumed in catering services, hotels, airline industry and others which makes up 35 per cent of the total demand of poultry in the country.

In an effort to save the interests of the local poultry industry, local dealers have appealed to the government to increase import duty on poultry by 75 to 100 per cent and ensure that the imported meat is hygienic, free of virus and

industry was able to convince the government to have a sample test of the meat and see if it carried SARS virus or bird flu virus that was fast spreading in China. He informed TNS that Japan had banned poultry import from China after its quarantine facility in Tokyo detected bird flu virus in duck products arriving from China.

The PPA secretary said that the association and consumers were also worried about the fact that the importers of poultry did not have any idea about

company provides chicken to a major food chain but has never dealt in Chinese chicken. "Artal has 48 food processing units in the country and is content with its local production," he said. Shahid said that the Chinese meat was weird in taste, seemed to be of larger than normal chicken and pale in colour. China has achieved phenomenal success over the years in producing genetically modified chicken with minimum bone structure to increase the profitability of the

Department told TNS that so far there have been no reports of unhygienic chicken being sold in the province. He said the issue of Chinese poultry import has so far been confined to Karachi but the federal government has taken notice of the complaints of the local poultry industry and consumers. On fears of spread of any virus, Dr Asif said that the department has not received any such complaint and will react instantly if any such fear surfaces.

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