STOP ILLEGAL IMPORTS OF SPENT FOWL

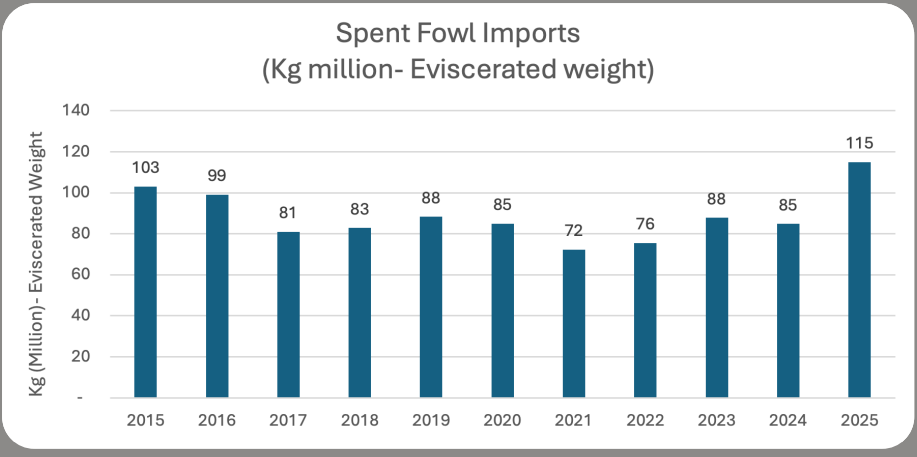
THE ISSUE

SOME IMPORTERS ARE FALSELY DECLARING CHICKEN MEAT AS SPENT FOWL TO AVOID IMPORT CONTROLS.

THIS BORDER FRAUD COSTS CANADIAN JOBS AND TAX REVENUE AND WEAKENS FOOD SAFETY BY BREAKING TRACEABILITY.

CONTEXT

- Spent fowl are egg-laying hens processed for meat after their laying cycle ends — a by-product of egg and hatching egg production.
- Canada allows unlimited duty-free imports of spent fowl from the U.S., but limits broiler meat imports.
- Because it is hard to visually tell the difference between the two, some importers mislabel broiler meat as spent fowl to circumvent import controls.
- 2025 imports reached 115 million kilograms, the highest volume ever and 35% increase over the previous year.



* AAFC Monthly National Fowl Statistics.

CHICKEN FARMERS OF CANADA
LES PRODUCTEURS DE POULET DU CANADA

TIMELINE

2012 – Canada imported 106 million kilograms of meat declared as spent fowl from the U.S. — nearly 100% of the entire U.S. spent fowl production at the time, raising serious concerns about large-scale mislabeling and import fraud.[1]

2014 – A DNA test to distinguish spent fowl and broiler was developed by Trent University with support from CFC.

2016 – CFIA suspended a cold storage establishment in the U.S. for mislabeling practices.

2017 – CBSA initiated the first round of priority verification for imports of spent fowl. They are now in their third round, assessing $377 million in duties, penalties and interests for misclassified imported goods.

2025 – most recent data shows Canadian imports equal 93% of total U.S. spent fowl production — an impossible figure that proves ongoing fraud considering U.S. fowl is also sold in domestic and other export markets.

1 Based on our estimates, any imports above 70 million kilograms is a red flag for mislabeling.

- When converted into whole bird equivalents, imports coming from the U.S. represent 93% of total U.S. fowl slaughter, which is a clear signal that illegal imports are crossing our borders.
- Based on 2025 data, illegal imports represent an annual loss of 3,600 jobs, $394 million in economic activity, and $129 million in taxes.
- Fraudulent imports also pose a food safety risk: mislabeled meat cannot be tracked in recalls.

93%

In 2025, Canada's imports of spent fowl would have required 93% of all U.S. production — even though the U.S. also sells spent fowl at home and to many other export markets, a clear signal of mislabeling.



THE SOLUTION

- With support from CFC, Trent University has developed a DNA test to distinguish broiler meat from spent fowl. This test has not yet been implemented as a means of import verification.
- CFC has since committed to a further investment in Trent University to update the test.

THE USE OF THE DNA TEST WOULD:

- Prevent illegal imports
- Protect Canadian jobs and tax revenue
- Strengthen food safety

ASK

With illegal imports continuing at an all-time high, the government must act on its announcement from March 2025, which commits to tackling spent fowl fraud at the border and protecting consumers by developing an action plan to improve detection.

CFC expects this commitment to lead to the implementation of DNA testing to distinguish between broiler meat and spent fowl meat — an essential step to stopping illegal imports.

June 2026