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Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

Ministry of Agriculture reports on Winter Crop Status...Russian Government discusses results of agriculture in 2013 and plans for 2014...Russia increases fines for improper use of agricultural lands...Government drafts codification system for GMOs ...Federal Fishery Agency reports increased fish prices despite higher catch...Russian Government adopts orders on crop insurance and short term loans to agricultural producers...More information on plans for additional Russian Agricultural Attachés... Russia signs decree on conservation of fish resources in the North Pacific Ocean...Belarus and Egypt discuss a free trade agreement with the Customs Union...and various news items from the Russian and Belarusian Veterinary Service.

General Information:

Welcome to the Russian Agricultural Policy and Situation Bi-Weekly Update, a summary of issues of interest to the U. S. agricultural community. The report includes information that has been garnered during travel within Russia, reported in the local media, or offered by host country officials and agricultural analysts. Press articles are included and summarized in this report. Significant issues will be expanded upon in subsequent reports from this office. Minor grammatical changes have been made for clarification.

DISCLAIMER: Any press summary contained herein does NOT reflect USDA's, the U.S. Embassy's, or any other U.S. government agency's point of view or official policy.

Ministry of Agriculture Reports on the Status of Winter Crop as of End of January 2014 and Spring Sowing Forecasts

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, winter grains for 2014 crop were sown on 14.7 million hectares, compared to 16.3 million hectares last year. Winter wheat was sown on 12 million hectares, winter rye – on over 2 million hectares, triticale – on 0.2 million hectares, and barley – on 0.4 million hectares. 9.5 million hectares of grain are in good condition, 4.5 million hectares – in adequate condition, and 0.6 million hectares (4.1 percent of the total) is in poor condition, which is in line with the long-term average. Besides winter grains, Russian farmers sown 0.2 million hectares of winter rapeseed and 0.2 million hectares of winter false flax (ryzhik). Ministry of Agriculture forecasts that in 2014, farmers will sow 31.8 million hectares with spring grains and pulses compared to 31.3 million hectares last year. <http://www.mcx.ru/news/news/show/20179.355.htm>

Russian Government Holds Meeting on the Results of Agricultural Year 2013 and Agriculture Related Issues in 2014

This meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and was held on February 6, 2014. The Agricultural Minister Nikolay Fedorov reported on the results of agricultural year. The major issues that the government shall resolve in 2014 are the following: to increase effectiveness of support of dairy industry (Minister Fedorov offered to switch from per liter price support to more ample interest rate subsidies for investment loans in dairy industry); farmers' indebtedness; timely supply of per hectare federal subsidies for spring field works; and co-financing of federal programs by provincial budgets. <http://government.ru/news/10293>

Russian President Signed Amendments to Increase Fines for Non-use and Misuse of Agricultural Land

In accordance with Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences, the non-use of agricultural land plots will be fined in a percentage of the assessed value of the relevant plot of land, and fines for the improper use of land plot will be charged from 0.5 percent to 1.5 percent of the assessed value of the plot, but not less than 3,000 rubles (\$88). For administrative bodies the fine may vary from 0.5 to 1.5 percent of the assessed value of the plot, but not less than 50,000 rubles (\$1,471), and for legal entities the fine will be from 2 to 10 percent of the assessed value, but not less than 200,000 rubles (\$5,882) and shall not exceed 500,000 rubles (\$14,706). The Amendments specify details of what is meant by non-use and misuse of plots of agricultural lands. <http://agronews.ru/news/detail/131555/>

Russia Drafts a Codification System for Classification and Registration of Genetically Engineered Organisms (GMO)

The Ministry of Science and Education presented the project "Russian National Classifier of transformational events (genetic modifications)" that is designed to encode information about GMOs. According to the document, which is available on the Russian Internet portal of draft government regulations and documents for public discussion, the system is a digital code that encrypts information about the transforming DNA and the recipient organism. The code consists of five numeric fields indicating the type of organism (animals, plants, microorganisms), the source and type of introduced DNA, information about selective symptoms, information about localization of products of transgenic DNA, as well as the degree of mobility of introduced nucleic acid sequences. The classifier will not cover conventional hybrid plants, crossed animals and other products of selection. The document is at <http://regulation.gov.ru/project/11761.html>.

The document has been developed in implementation of the Roadmap "Development of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering" (approved by the Government Order No. 1247-p of July 18, 2013) and the Government Resolution No. 839 of September 23, 2013 "On the State Registration of Genetically Engineered Organisms Intended for Release into Environment" (FAS/Moscow GAIN reports [Roadmap for Development of Biotechnology 9-20-2013.pdf](#) and Resolution on GMO Registration for Environmental Release_9-25-2013.pdf). The Codes will be used for classification and registration of transformation events and will provide for compatibility of government information systems to be created at federal and provincial levels in the sphere of state registration of genetically engineered-modified organisms intended for release into environment, as well as products derived from the use of such organisms or containing such organisms.

Federal Fishery Agency Reports on the Continued Increasing Prices for Frozen Fish in January 2014 Despite Lower Seasonal Demand for Fish

According to the Russian Statistical Committee, the average consumer prices for frozen eviscerated fish in January 2014 increased by 0.6 percent to 91.63 Rubles per kilo (\$2.7/kg), compared to the end of December 2013. According to the Head of the Information Office of the Federal Fishery Agency (Rosrybolovstvo), a price jump in January has not occurred for the last 7 years as the demand for fish traditionally declines in January. Also, the increasing prices is despite an increasing in fish catch, which was 250,000 MT in January 2014, 11.3 percent higher than in January 2013. In addition, fish exports are falling and imports are increasing. Russian Federal Custom Service reports that in January 2013 exports of fish decreased by 2.3 percent, to 35,700 MT, and imports increased by 8.7 percent, up to 27,800 MT. Rosrybolovstvo suggests that the reason for increasing prices might be traders' reaction to the ruble's fall and expectation of higher rates for export contracts as well as to significantly restricted volumes of fish on the local market in 2013 because of the higher exports from the Far East.

http://www.agronews.ru/news/detail/131450/?sphrase_id=273258

On January 28th, the Russian Government Adopted Order 80-p on Distribution of Subsidies for Agricultural Insurance and Order 83-p for Short Term Loans

The Government of the Russian Federation during a recent meeting adopted draft Order # 80-p dated January 23, 2014. According to the document it is planned to allocate total 7,407.2 billion rubles (\$218 million) from federal and regional budgets for agricultural insurance.

Distribution of subsidies from the federal to the regional budgets is carried out within the budget allocations, envisaged to the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia in 2014, in the amount of 5,947 billion rubles (\$175 million), including for crop production – 4,997 billion rubles (\$147 million), livestock –

950 million rubles (\$28 million).

Calculated level of co-financing for these activities from regional budgets is estimated at 20 percent, or 1.2 billion rubles (\$35 million), for crop production, and for livestock – more than 25 percent, or 261 million rubles (\$7,670 million). The minimum amount of co-financing from the federal budget is 60 percent, and maximum – is 95 percent.

<http://mcx.ru/news/news/show/20072.355.htm>

The Government of the Russian Federation also adopted draft Order # 83-p dated January 23, 2014. Distribution of subsidies from the federal to the regional budgets is carried out within the budget allocations, envisaged to the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia in 2014, in the amount of 7,130 billion rubles (\$209 million), including for crop production – 3,392 billion rubles (99 million), livestock – 3,738 billion rubles (\$109 million). Calculated level of co-financing for these activities from regional budgets is estimated at 5 percent, in case of minimum amount of co-financing, at the amount of 375.2 million rubles (\$11 million), including for crop production - 178.5 million rubles (\$5.2 million), livestock - 196.7 million rubles (\$5.8 million).

<http://government.ru/media/files/41d4ba4745b501b4aa06.pdfws/show/19980.355.htm>

More on the Ministry of Agriculture's Plans to Increase the Number of Agricultural Attachés

The Ministry of Agriculture's plans to increase the number of agricultural attaches all over the world in order to promote Russian agriculture, and defend interests of Russian agro-industrial complex in countries where these interests are most important (see FAS/Moscow GAIN Reports [Russian Agricultural Policy and Situation Bi-Weekly Update -2 Moscow 1-28-2014.pdf](#)). At present Russia has agricultural attachés in 11 countries, including Canada, United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, India and two others (<http://www.rg.ru/2014/01/19/prodovolstvie-site.html>). The Ministry of Agriculture has planned to increase the number of its representatives abroad to 30-31 since 2012, and named such countries as the United Arab Emirates, Israel (strategically important country in the region, and potential market for Russia's exports of poultry meat, sugar, and grain), Australia (cooperation in high technologies, especially in beef cattle industry), Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, China (more grain, pork and meat offal from Russia), Brazil (veterinary issues of meat trade, and possible exports of Russian grain), Egypt, Jordan, and Indonesia (<http://izvestia.ru/news/539535>). The proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign relations in the end of 2012, but the final list is still under consideration.

Russia signs Decree on Conservation and Management of Fish Resources in the North Pacific Ocean

On January 31, 2014, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed Decree # 34 on Russia's accession to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources in the Open Sea of the North Pacific Ocean (Convention). The purpose of the Convention is to ensure long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources in the convention area.

According to the Decree "due to overexploitation of commercial bioresources in the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation the most important task of the Russian fishery sector is restoration and expansion of fishing to zones of foreign countries and convention areas. One of the most promising areas is the northern part of the Pacific Ocean. Accession of the Russian Federation to the Convention would allow Russian fishermen to fish in the open seas of the North Pacific Ocean."

Russia's potential annual catch of water biological resources in this part of the Pacific is estimated at 130,000 MT. Russia may use up to 48 catching vessels during the harvest in the zone. Accession to the Convention would require payment of annual national contributions of no more than \$45,000 dollars. The payment will be implemented within the budget allocations to Federal Fishery Agency from the federal budget for the implementation of international commitments.

<http://government.ru/activities/10196>

Belarus and Egypt Discuss a Free Trade Area Between the Customs Union and Egypt

According to BelTA, "Belarus' Ambassador to Egypt, Sergei Rachkov, and Egypt's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs, Maghdi Radi, have discussed a possibility to establish a free trade area (FTA) between Egypt and the Customs Union." For more information, see

<http://news.belta.by/en/news/politics?id=739672>

Russia Restricts European Pork Imports

The Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Rosselkhozadzor) reports that because African Swine Fever (ASF) has been detected in Lithuania, it has introduced temporary restrictions on the importation of pork from the European Union. For additional information, see

<http://www.fsvps.ru/fsvps/news/8840.html?language=en>

and <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20140131/187053207/Russia-Halts-EU-Pork-Imports-Over-Virus-Outbreak.html>

Belarus Bans Cattle Imports from Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia Because of FMD

According to BelTA, the Belarusian Agriculture and Food Ministry has restricted cattle imports from Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia after "foot-and-mouth disease virus serotype A was detected while conducting postmortem examination of the cattle taken from one of the villages." For more information, see

<http://news.belta.by/en/news/society?id=739100>

Belarus Introduced Temporary Restrictions on Imports of Seed and Table potatoes from EU Countries Starting February 1, 2014

Belarus has introduced temporary restrictions on imports of seed and table potato from the EU countries from February 1, 2014. Belarus has also restricted the import of planting material (except for that imported for variety tests and research and development). An exception is supplies from nurseries located on the EU territory and recognized as places, zones and production sectors that meet international standards and not bear quarantine threat for Belarus and Russia. According to the Agriculture and Food Ministry of Belarus, temporary restrictions have been introduced following repeated requests of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance of the Russian Federation and in line with Articles 6 and 8 of the Customs Union on Plant Quarantine of December 11, 2009, and the principles of the International Plant Protection Convention.

<http://news.belta.by/en/news/econom?id=739016>. Russia banned imports of seed and table potato from the EU on July 1, 2013. For more information on the Russian ban see FAS/Moscow GAIN report [Russian Agricultural Policy and Situation Bi-Weekly Update-5 11-18-2013.pdf](#)

ASF Outbreaks Reported on Russian Farms in Bryansk and Tula

According to the Baltic Times, ASF has recently been detected on Russian farms in Bryansk and Tula Oblasts. For additional information, see <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/34345/>

