

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Russian Federation

Post: Moscow

USDA Helps Russia Fight the Fires

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

In an effort to assist the current emergency situation in Russia related to the extreme heat and wildfires, USDA and USAID deployed two fire experts through its partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, Disaster Assistance Support Program. In addition to donating fire-fighting equipment, the technical team met with GOR counterparts and provided technical assistance, facilitated coordination and assessed the need for further assistance with fire suppression and land rehabilitation.

General Information:

Within days of declaring Russia's fires a disaster, two fire management experts from USDA's Forest Service were deployed to Russia to assess the situation and provide technical assistance. The fires have led authorities in 36 regions to declare states of emergency. Since the beginning of the fires, approximately 26,000 fires have burned over a total of 810,000 hectares.

Beginning on August 9, 2010, the two-member technical team has been collaborating with their Russian counterparts in both the Forrest Service and assistance organizations. The U.S. experts provided technical assistance, facilitated coordination, and assessed the need for further assistance. The team focused on examining the potential to provide follow-on technical advice to Russia on post-fire forest and peat land rehabilitation.

As part of the USG contribution an airplane arrived in Moscow from California on August 13, 2010, containing equipment to fight the wildfires. The flight carried general-purpose firefighting equipment. In addition, the State of California contributed a shipment of Nomex fire-resistant clothing. USDA's Forest Service initiated the immediate procurement and shipment of fire fighting equipment and additional shipments are likely to follow. On a closely coordinated parallel track, the formal USG process to request supplies for international humanitarian assistance/disaster response is underway.

After most of the U.S.-donated firefighting equipment had arrived, the assessment team in Moscow shifted its focus from immediate crisis management to longer-term planning for forest fire cooperation. The U.S. Forest Service has been collaborating with Russian counterparts on fire management for nearly 30 years, during which time many exchanges, workshops, and study tours have taken place.