

# Kvas, Sherbet, Kefir Avoid Being Classified as Alcohol

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Low-alcohol-content dairy drink kefir being poured into a glass. **Yuriybrisk**

A range of national beverages including kefir, ryazhenka and kvas, all of which contain small amounts of alcohol, will not require permissions needed for alcohol production under a rule set to take effect July 1, according to an order signed Friday by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

The new regulations require producers of food and beverages with more than 0.5 percent alcohol content to get special excise stamps and meet other requirements, leading makers of popular low-alcohol-content beverages like kvas to seek an exception.

Medvedev granted their request Friday by ordering about a dozen products exempted from the law, among them "sour dairy beverages," fermented beverages including kvas, cider and honey-based wines that contain between 0.5 and 1.2 percent alcohol, ice cream, chocolate, sherbet, "sweet edible ice," pastries, and cold-smoked sausage, according to a

copy of the order posted on the government's website.

Popular dairy drinks kefir and ryazhenka were among those exempted, Medvedev's spokeswoman Natalia Timakova told Interfax.

Licensing requirements for such drinks as cider and the mead-like sbiten would have been too costly for the small businesses that produce many of them, meaning they would have been forced to close down, Vedomosti reported Wednesday.

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