

# Audit Chamber Finds Farm Land Shrinking

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The total agricultural land in Russia shrank by 9.8 million hectares in the period from Jan. 1, 2008 to Jan. 1, 2011, the Audit Chamber reported after an audit of the use of agricultural land owned by the state and land used by organizations that report to the Agriculture Ministry and Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

The main reason for the reduction of area was the rezoning of land into other categories, such as changes in the borders of population centers, changes in the type of use permitted and the closing of agricultural organizations.

The most dramatic drop in the area of agricultural land was at RAAS organizations, where the total area shrank 69 percent over the past four years to 1.5 million hectares in 2012.

Most audited organizations that are subordinate to the Agriculture Ministry and RAAS either do not use agricultural land to produce agricultural products or use the land ineffectively, the

fiscal watchdog found.

The audit also found that there is currently no mechanism for using agricultural land held by organizations that are in the midst of bankruptcy proceedings.

This could lead to “degradation, pollution [and] littering,” the report concluded.

“After bankruptcy proceedings are completed, using such land becomes inexpedient because it requires a lot of money to restore,” the Audit Chamber said. It will send reports to the Federal Property Agency and RAAS.

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