

Wheat Harvest Forecast at 9-Year Low

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Drought-stricken Russia will have less wheat to supply domestic and export markets this season than it did in the 2010/11 crop year, when the government shocked markets with a snap decision to ban exports, a leading Russian grain analyst said.

Andrei Sizov Sr., chief executive of the SovEcon consultancy, said Russia's total wheat supply was likely to be around 9 million tons less than it was in 2010/11 due to a combination of a lower harvest and lower stocks.

SovEcon has cut its wheat harvest forecast to 38 million tons from 39 million, he told a gathering of grain producers, buyers and traders on Thursday.

"The wheat harvest will be less than it was in 2010, when, I remind you, it was 41.5 million tons," Sizov said.

"This is the lowest level in nine years," he added.

The reduced forecast reflected a deterioration of yields in a widespread drought.

A rapid succession of cuts in harvest estimates by the government and leading analysts has prompted market speculation the government could limit exports again.

Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich, due to hold a meeting of the government's food security commission on Friday, has said Russia may consider protective tariffs but not before the end of this calendar year.

Interfax news agency said Deputy Agriculture Minister Ilya Shestakov reiterated on Thursday that the government did not intend to ban exports.

"There is no need to talk about it," Shestakov was quoted as saying.

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