

Dvorkovich Opposes Food Stamps

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich said he opposed the introduction of food stamps, a measure intended to support low-income households.

However, it would "make sense" to distribute electronic cards that would allow the holder to buy goods at a discount.

"There won't be any food stamps. I'm against even the term 'food stamps,'" Dvorkovich said in an interview with Kommersant published Thursday.

He said there is also a problem with the general public's perception of food stamps.

"We have a very complicated history, and people perceive such innovation in part through the prism of the past," he said. "Such mechanisms of support can be introduced only in a technically and psychologically comfortable way."

He said the main problem in Russia's agribusiness sector is the debt burden resulting from the

2008-09 financial crisis and recent droughts.

To solve the problem, the government plans to invest in Russian Agricultural Bank, he said.

Dvorkovich said the system of state support for the agriculture industry is changing, partly because of Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization.

Major state support measures will include subsidized interest rates on loans and aid per hectare and liter of milk, he said.

He also said that starting next year farmers will not receive discounted fuel as they have in recent years.

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