

Grain Lobby Says Winter Crop Conditions Tough

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Weather conditions have been difficult for Russia's winter grain crop due to dry conditions during sowing and cold snaps in some regions in December, the head of Russia's Grain Union said Wednesday.

The conditions described by Grain Union head Arkady Zlochevsky are broadly similar to those last winter, which preceded a fall in Russia's gross grain harvest to just over 70 million tons in 2012 from 94 million tons in 2011, though Zlochevsky cautioned it was too early to estimate the damage.

"Of over 15 million hectares sown [to winter grains], about 1.2 million can be written off because of dry weather conditions. They just did not sprout," he said at a news conference. "They will be resown to spring grain."

He added, "How will they overwinter from the point of view of the December cold snaps in

several regions? It is too early to say, but it does add risks. More than a million hectares were without snow cover, and in low-lying areas the temperature was minus 12 or 13 degrees, even minus 15 [Celsius].”

The conditions could lead to a drop in yields or to winter kill, he said. “We’ll be able to see in the spring.”

Analysts say Russia is poised to import grain to make up for volumes exported in the first half of the July 2012 to June 2013 marketing season.

Zlochevsky said Russia at the moment did not require imports.

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