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Giant Hailstones Kill Hundreds of Farm Animals

By The Moscow Times

June 17, 2013



A violent hailstorm has swept through southern Kazakhstan, desolating crops and killing hundreds of farm animals.

The Zhamylskaya region on Kazakhstan's southern border with Kyrgyzstan was pummeled by hailstones measuring 30 to 35 millimeters in diameter. Carried on 20 meter per second winds, the storm laid waste to local livestock, killing 176 heads of cattle and up to 500 chickens, the country's Emergency Situations Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

Two more cows were struck dead by lightning, the report said.

Crops were also severely damaged. Ninety-five hectares of barley were destroyed, along with 560 hectares of melon fields, 290 hectares of corn, 84 hectares of potatoes, 202 hectares of sunflowers and 380 hectares of other vegetables.

All together, the devastation stretches to more than 16 square kilometers.

Almost 500 houses were also damaged in the storm, including three local schools.

Electricity has been restored in the affected area. Damage assessment and repair work is ongoing, the ministry said.

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