

Crimea Brings in Bumper Grain Harvest, But Nobody's Buying

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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International grain sellers have been pushed out of Crimea even as the peninsula's early harvest is expected to climb to more than two and a half times its 2013 levels, Crimean Agriculture Minister Nikolai Polyushkin said.

"Almost all operators [on the international grain market] have left us, they were simply banned," Polyushkin said at a press-conference in the region's capital Simferopol on Wednesday, Interfax reported.

Droughts pushed last year's early grain yields down to about 10 quintals (1,000 kilograms) per hectare, he said, and farmers had anticipated poor harvests this year as well in light of scarce rainfall in March and April, but downpours in May and June have improved forecasts.

Polyushkin said this year's early harvest should reach 1.1 million tons with farmers gathering about 24 quintals (2,400 kilograms) per hectare of farmland.

The question now is whether Crimea can find buyers for this ample harvest. Polyushkin said that, in addition to local consumers, Crimea will look east and south for customers.

"Feed barley, which is grown in Crimea, is in demand in countries in Southeast Asia, the Near East and Northern Africa," the minister said.

The EU's ban on imports from Crimea, which went into effect on June 25, will have no impact on grain sales, he added — even before the ban, the European market was "essentially shut" to grains from Ukraine.

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