

Russia Considering Ban on EU Fruit Imports

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's state food safety watchdog said Monday that it was considering restricting all or some European Union fruit imports, mainly from Eastern Europe, as the number of imports Russia has banned amid political tensions continues to rise.

The statement came hours after The Hague's arbitration court ruled that Russia must pay more than \$50 billion for expropriating the assets of the now-defunct oil producer Yukos, potentially a big hit for the country's economy.

"Our experts will make a decision [on fruit imports] in a week or two," Alexei Alexeyenko, a spokesman for the Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection Service, told Reuters, adding that the move was linked to a lack of phytosanitary controls.

He declined to name the countries whose supplies could be hit, but said "first of all it is

an issue for Eastern Europe." The largest fruit suppliers to Russia include Poland, Moldova and the Netherlands, he added.

The move follows a series of earlier bans that Russia has imposed over recent months amid fraught relations with former Soviet republics that have eschewed close ties with Moscow in favor of European integration.

Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine all signed association agreements with the EU earlier this year. Moldova, whose parliament was the first to ratify the agreement in early July, was struck with bans on fruit and preserves imports shortly after.

A ban on Ukrainian dairy imports went into effect on Monday, to be followed Tuesday with a ban on imports of food and vegetable preserves. Alexeyenko told RIA Novosti last week that Russia may completely halt food imports from Ukraine for as long as the country's negotiations on integration with the EU continue.

The U.S., which has become one of the harshest critics of Russia's actions in Ukraine, may soon also fall prey to food bans. U.S. fast food giant McDonald's has come under the watchdog's scrutiny, and on Monday the watchdog's head Sergei Dankvert told Interfax that all poultry imports from the U.S. could potentially be halted.

Material from Reuters is included in this report.

See also:

[Russia Bans Dairy Imports from Ukraine](#)

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