

Russia Could Impose Grain Export Ban, But Not Yet

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A field of wheat is seen during harvest in Russia.

Russia might consider banning grain exports altogether if informal trade restrictions already in place fail to benefit the economy as hoped, a senior minister said on Monday.

The bulk of Russia's grain output is wheat, for which it is expected to be the world's fourth-largest exporter this year.

But in response to rising food inflation it curbed grain exports in December, imposing tougher quality monitoring while announcing an export tax that will come into force on Feb. 1.

"Measures have been taken. If that is not enough, there are more radical proposals," one of the country's deputy prime ministers, Arkady Dvorkovich, told a meeting with lawmakers of President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party.

"I think it is unnecessary to impose an embargo on exports for now, but such proposals

exist," the RIA Novosti news agency quoted Dvorkovich as saying.

Russia had been exporting record volumes from a large grain crop of 104 million tons as the plunging value of the ruble linked to the country's economic crisis spurred a dash for hard currencies while driving up domestic prices.

December's informal export curbs — which have been stepped up since the start of the year, while bringing domestic wheat prices down — were the third on grain since 2008, when Russia set a wheat tax.

It last banned grain exports altogether in 2010 after a drought, causing ructions on markets. Dvorkovich did not specify at what point Russia might consider another ban.

Turkey, Egypt and Iran are the largest buyers of Russian wheat.

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