

Russian Wheat Exporters Weary of Signing New Deals They Cannot Keep

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An aerial view shows machines harvesting wheat in a field near the village of Moskovskoye, outside Stavropol in southern Russia.

Russian grain exporters still have one million tons of wheat they need to ship under contracts signed before the government imposed export curbs, Arkady Zlochevsky, the head of the Russian Grain Union, the farmers' lobby, said on Tuesday.

The Russian government has been trying to cool domestic wheat prices, which have been boosted by a slide in the ruble, with informal curbs on exports since December, to which it added an export tax from Feb. 1.

Traders are trying to fulfill previously signed contracts but are not agreeing any new deals, Zlochevsky told reporters.

"The risks are so unpredictable now that exporters are afraid to sign contracts," he said.

"When you sign a contract now you cannot guarantee that you will be allowed to ship this volume out of the country."

Exporters had contracts for about 3 million tons of wheat in December, of which they managed to ship 2 million tons out of the country in January, Zlochevsky added.

He said since the export tax was introduced on wheat, informal restrictions have not been eased, while exports of wheat have fallen dramatically to 87,000 tons for the first 11 days of February.

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

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