

Russia May Give Agricultural Investors Free Land

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Agriculture Ministry has proposed leasing state land to agricultural investors for free for up to five years in order to reduce the amount of vacant agricultural land, newspaper Vedomosti reported Friday, citing an unnamed source within the Agriculture Ministry.

Around 28 percent of the total amount of farmable land in Russia, or 56 million hectares, is not used for its intended purpose, Vedomosti reported, citing data from the Agriculture Ministry. Nearly half of this land, or 21.6 million hectares, is in the Siberian federal district in central Russia, according to Agriculture Ministry data.

The Agriculture Ministry also suggested compensating investors for the cost of developing state-owned land. Without compensation for the costs of developing new fields, many businessmen would balk at investing in agriculture, Vedomosti reported, citing its source

in the Agriculture Ministry.

An unnamed Economic Development Ministry official said the proposal has been approved, Vedomosti reported.

This is not the first time the government has mulled giving out free land in an effort to boost agricultural production.

Following an initiative backed by President Vladimir Putin, the State Duma in February introduced a bill that provided for the free distribution of land plots of up to 100 acres in the Far East to Russian citizens. The land can be used only for agricultural purposes and cannot be sold, according to news agency Interfax.

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