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Russia's Medvedev Says Ban on Western Products Can Be Changed

By The Moscow Times

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Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev poses at Terruar farmers' cooperative in the village of Rodnoye, near Yalta, Crimea.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said on Thursday a list of banned products from Western countries could be changed according to the state of relations with the European Union and other countries.

Medvedev told a government meeting he had approved an order by President Vladimir Putin to extend a ban on food imports from the West by one year, a response to the EU's decision to extend sanctions on Russia over its role in the Ukraine crisis.

The list of banned products, which include fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, milk and dairy products, were so far the same as in the earlier ban.

Some Russian officials have said the list could be expanded to include flowers, chocolates and

tinned fish.

"This list is of course not a constant. It can be changed depending on a number of things, including how our relations develop with our European partners and partners in a number of other countries," Medvedev told a government meeting.

Russia has said it would respond to Western sanctions imposed over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis in a "symmetrical" way, widening its so-called counter-sanctions only if the West extends its own.

Putin has praised the import ban for spurring agricultural growth and says Russia is weathering other sanctions that have all but cut off banks and companies from global financial markets and oil companies from some cooperation.

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