

Mars Candy Opens M&M's Production Line Outside Moscow

By [The Moscow Times](#)

July 08, 2015



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The Mars candy company opened a 3 billion ruble (\$52 million) production line for M&M's chocolates at its facility outside Moscow on Wednesday, upping production even as chocolate consumption in Russia comes under pressure from rising prices, news agency TASS reported.

Speaking at a ceremony celebrating the opening of the new line, Mars CEO Jean-Christophe Flatin said that the Moscow region is a strategically important market for the candy maker, which operates nine factories across Russia.

The investment will increase the factory's production capacity by 18 percent, the report said.

Mars is investing in production even as Russians' chocolate consumption falls due to a surge in prices brought on by the rising cost of cocoa and the ruble's 40 percent fall against the U.S.

dollar since the start of last year.

Per capita chocolate consumption dropped 5 percent in 2014, according to the Center for Confectionery Market Research, which studies Russia's candy and chocolate markets.

However, one part of the industry is still thriving: budget chocolate, which has claimed market share from mid-range products as prices rise.

Mars' products fall in this category. The company is known for inexpensive global brands such as Mars, Snickers, Bounty, Milky Way and Orbit gum.

"The investments and technologies that have been implemented here deserve respect," said Moscow region Governor Andrei Vorobyov, who took part in the opening ceremony.

"Three billion rubles is a large amount of money and important, especially now, for our nation's economy," Vorobyov said.

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