

Belarussian President Picks Potatoes at Official Residence

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President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko

Belarus's flamboyant president Alexander Lukashenko, known for his earthy publicity stunts, harvested 70 sacks of potatoes and some watermelons at his official residence in the country's capital Minsk together with his small son Nikolai, the local ONT television station reported Sunday.

The potatoes, picked from the vegetable garden at the Drozdy residence, will be distributed among orphanages and nursing homes, the report said.

The president, who has ruled the former Soviet country with an iron fist for 21 years, has repeatedly called his youngest son — whom he often takes to official meetings and trips abroad — his likely successor.

Lukashenko, a former collective farm director, last demonstrated his agricultural skills in July, when he taught the French actor Gerard Depardieu how to scythe grass at another of

Lukashenko's residences north of Minsk.

According to news reports, after scything under the sun, Lukashenko rewarded Depardieu with some home-distilled vodka and Belarussian food.

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