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Russian State Duma Bans Import and Production of GMOs

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The Russian State Duma has passed a bill banning the import and production of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the state-run news agency TASS reported Friday.

The bill will affect all crops and animals considered to be genetically modified, except for those used for scientific purposes.

The government will also be able to ban the import of GMOs into the country if they are proved to have a negative impact on human health or the environment.

Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich announced the decision to ban GMOs in 2015, but no legal penalties for the production or importation has existed until now.

Violations of the law carry a fine of 10,000-50,000 ($150-$750) rubles for individuals and 100,000-500,000 rubles for legal entities ($1,500-$7,500).

Many American and European countries continue to produce and sell GMO products and the new law may further reduce the already scant presence of Western food in Russian stores.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev called for the embargo against Western food products to continue until the end of 2017 in May.

Russian officials insist that country's farms be able will produce enough food for the country without the use of yield-increasing GMOs. Moscow hopes to stop all meat, dairy, or vegetable imports by 2020, Agriculture Minister Alexander Tkachev said in June.

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