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Russians Told to Drink More Wine to Boost Country's Health

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Russia may have found an unusual means of improving public health: encouraging its citizens to drink more wine.

Alexander Tkachyov, head of the Russian Agriculture Ministry, said that Russians should be encouraged to drink wine as a substitute for stronger alcoholic drinks such as vodka.

"We are a country which generally drinks strong alcohol like vodka or moonshine," Tkachyov told Russian television channel NTV. "This not only robs people of their health, but also of their lives. By drinking more wine, Russians could see the country's health and demographic problems change for the better."

He said that the state was also boosting financial support for domestically-produced wines.

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"The Russian market is shifting in favor of wine. People are beginning to understand and be interested in quality wine," Tkachyov said. "Of course, everything has to be in moderation: You can die from drinking a bucket of water. Wine must also be taken in moderation, even though the majority of Russians don't understand that."

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