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Russian Farmers Build Straw 'Zenit' Stadium to Challenge World Cup Corruption

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Russia has spent lavishly on preparations for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, building massive new stadiums across the country.

Most of the financing comes from public-private partnerships between the government and major corporations, including those of billionaire Aras Agalarov, whose ties to the Trump campaign are now being investigated.

A group of more modest farmers, however, are also getting into the act, by building their own Zenit Arena in the village of Krasnoye in the Stavropol region, the Sports.ru website reports.

This new stadium is entirely made of straw, cost about 40,000 rubles ($673 USD) and took precisely five days to build.

At the entrance, a tongue-in-cheek sign reads: “Not a single ruble was stolen during the construction of this stadium.”

The choice to call it “Zenit Arena” was done “for laughs,” said the stadium’s director, farmer Roman Ponomarev.

The rural arena stands in stark contrast to the new stadium on St. Petersburg’s Krestovsky Island designed by world renowned Japanese architect, Kisho Kurakawa. The stadium has been an object of controversy for its exorbitant cost, delayed construction, and building site conditions.

“At first [the authorities] said that the [St. Petersburg] stadium would cost 6 billion rubles, then 48 billion rubles; finally, it turned out that it hadn’t even been completed yet. [Our straw stadium] is intended to mock this debacle,” said Ponomarev.

Last year, Reuters reported that the total cost of the 2018 World Cup in Russia would amount to 620.9 billion rubles ($8.2 billion).

At the end of July, the straw stadium builders will stage a “World Cup for Straw Football,” with referees, teams and trophy cups, Ponomarev said.

Embed:

Уровень! Ставрополье, креативно и с юмором:-) #россия #russia #arena #stadium

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