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Russians Are Adjusting to Food Import Ban and Domestic Cheese

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Most Russians have learned to live with a ban on foreign food imports introduced three years ago, according to a recent poll.

Two-thirds of those polled by the Romir research company in June said they did not find that the quality of products that fall under a Russian import ban had deteriorated in the past year. The results of a similar survey conducted in late 2015 showed roughly half of respondents thought so.

Russia introduced an import ban on a range of foods in August 2014 targeting products like dairy and meat from Western countries, in response to sanctions imposed on the country over its involvement in Ukraine. The measure should have been a boon to domestic producers.

Russians even seem to have adjusted to substitutes for imported cheese — a product that, in Russia, many have come to associate with palm oil rather than milk. Twenty-seven percent of respondents found issue with the domestic substitutes on store shelves. In 2015, that number

was 33 percent.

Related article: Warning: This Is Not Cheese. In Russia, Watch What You Eat

Residents of cities with a population of 100,000 to 500,000 people were most unhappy with the products on offer. The cheese critics were mostly found in Russian cities with populations of one million or higher.

“It can be said that the period of major shocks caused by the change in brands and quality of new goods are behind us. Russians are gradually getting used to the new goods” Romir concluded.

The survey polled 1500 people in all Russian regions.

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