

Russia Restricts Grain Exports Amid Pandemic

By [AFP](#)

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Russia earns \$20 billion a year from grain exports. **Pixabay**

Russia on Thursday published a government decree establishing an export quota for certain grains until the end of June as its virus cases spiked.

The measures came after the heads of three global agencies including the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organisation on Wednesday warned countries against imposing export restrictions that could interrupt the food supply chain.

Russia's agriculture ministry had proposed the quota last month.

Russia is the world's top wheat exporter. In the agricultural year from 2018–2019, it exported more than 35 million tons of wheat and 43.3 million tons of all grains, RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Russia's restrictions, which came into force Wednesday, apply to wheat, maize, barley and rye

as well as a mixture of grains called meslin, an official government website said.

Only 7 million tons of these can be exported, the government order said. This does not apply to seeds. Exports are still unlimited in a customs union Russia has set up with countries including Kazakhstan and Belarus.

The government order signed by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said these grains were "of significant importance to the domestic market."

While it did not refer to the coronavirus pandemic, Russia wants to ensure its supplies during the virus crisis and keep domestic prices down.

Russia on Thursday announced the highest number yet of new coronavirus cases at 771, taking the total number of confirmed cases to 3,548 while 30 people have died.

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