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Russia to Inspect Supermarket Chains for Egg Price Fixing

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Denis Voronin / Moskva News Agency

Russia's Anti-Monopoly Service (FAS) announced Tuesday that it will conduct inspections at the country's largest supermarket chains amid the rising cost of eggs.

"Inspections will be carried out to assess whether anti-competitive agreements [were made] between retail chains, which could have led to an increase in the cost of socially important goods," FAS said in a statement, adding: "This includes checking prices for chicken eggs."

Among the major supermarket chains impacted by the inspections are the French-owned Auchan, stores operated by the X5 group, Magnit and Lenta.

In December, FAS announced price-fixing charges against four Russian egg producers after President Vladimir Putin issued a rare public apology for the surging costs of the staple good. The cost of chicken eggs outpaced inflation and increased by as much as 60% last year.

Experts have said that a slew of factors are to blame, including higher costs of labor and

transportation, as well as the rising price of chicken feed and imported antibiotics.

In late February, the head of FAS, Maxim Shaskolsky, claimed that the price of eggs was "trending downward."

In addition to antitrust lawsuits, Russian authorities allowed duty-free imports of chicken eggs between January and June this year to keep costs down.

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