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Emergency Declared in Parts of Southern Russia as Drought Concerns Grow

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Several major grain-producing regions in southern Russia and annexed Crimea have declared emergencies in their agricultural sectors due to severe drought and spring frosts.

"Farmers have to work under extremely unfavorable weather conditions this year," Rostov region Governor Yury Slyusar wrote Wednesday on Telegram.

His office said more than 500,000 hectares (1.24 million acres) of crops have been lost to drought across nearly half the region. Ten of Rostov's 43 districts, equivalent to U.S. counties, are currently under an emergency regime.

An agricultural emergency allows affected farmers to apply for compensation and signals potential risks to harvest expectations. Harvesting in the Rostov region is set to begin in the second half of June.

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In the neighboring Krasnodar region, the regional governor said last week that he was considering a similar declaration in northern districts bordering Rostov.

Kremlin-installed authorities in annexed Crimea declared an agricultural emergency on Tuesday in at least five towns and districts affected by late frosts.

The Rostov region was also hit by spring frosts, though reportedly less severe than last year, when the harvest dropped by more than 20% due to adverse weather. A frost-related emergency has been in place there since May 19.

Southern Russia, Belarus and much of Ukraine remain under drought warnings, according to a late-May report by the European Drought Observatory, which cited ongoing precipitation deficits.

Despite the weather-related setbacks, Russia's grain harvest is still projected to reach 135 million metric tons this year, up from 130 million in 2023, Deputy Prime Minister for Agriculture Dmitry Patrushev said Tuesday.

Russia is the world's largest grain exporter.

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