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Krasnodar Drought Inflicts Nearly $600M in Crop Losses, Agribusiness Group Says

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Dmitry Rogulin / TASS

An ongoing drought in southern Russia's Krasnodar region has caused around 46 billion rubles ($572 million) in agricultural losses so far this summer, the head of a local agribusiness lobby said Wednesday.

"Drought damage in the northern districts of [the Krasnodar region] totals about 46 billion rubles," said Konstantin Yurov, chairman of the People's Farmer of Kuban business association, in comments to local media. "That's a loss of roughly 2.8 million tons of grain."

The European Drought Observatory, operated by the European Commission's Joint Research Center, reported that as of late July, most of northern Krasnodar had been experiencing the highest drought alert level, while the rest of the region faced warning and watch conditions.

Earlier this summer, authorities in Krasnodar declared a state of emergency across nine districts — roughly equivalent to U.S. counties — after a prolonged dry spell began affecting thousands of farmers in the region, a key hub for grain, vegetable and sunflower production.

The state of emergency allows farmers to seek government assistance.

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Yurov said his association had asked Russia's Agriculture Ministry to extend loan repayment deadlines and defer leasing payments for affected farmers to help them avoid bankruptcy.

The People's Farmer of Kuban association previously warned that areas impacted by the drought could see crop losses of up to 25% for wheat, corn and sunflower in the upcoming fall harvest.

Despite the losses, Russia's Agriculture Ministry maintains a national harvest forecast of 135 million tons, slightly above last year's 129.8 million tons, citing strong results from the Central, Volga, and North Caucasus regions. While domestic food supply appears secure, experts say the drought could affect Russia's grain exports.

The frequency and intensity of droughts across the globe are increasing due to the burning of fossil fuels and other human activities that release greenhouse gases, according to climate scientists.

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