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Record-Breaking Month: Russia Exports $1B+ in Farm Products to China

Russia has achieved a historic milestone in its agricultural trade with China, exporting more than $1 billion worth of agricultural products in a single month for the first time, according to preliminary expert estimates.

In December 2025, Russia supplied approximately 1.3 million tons of agricultural goods to the Chinese market, with the total value exceeding $1 billion. This marks a significant increase compared with the previous record, set in October 2025, when exports were valued at around $812 million.

The surge was driven by strong demand across a diverse range of products. In value terms, rapeseed oil emerged as the leading export item, generating roughly $215 million in revenue. Live, fresh, or chilled crabs ranked second, with shipments exceeding $159 million. Other major export categories included flax seeds, valued at more than $74 million, pollock at approximately $65 million, and herring, which accounted for over $55 million.

In addition to the record-breaking value, Russia also set a new high in terms of export volume. The 1.3 million tons shipped in December represent the largest monthly volume ever recorded in agricultural exports to China. The previous volume record was registered in September 2023, when exports reached 1.14 million tons.

Experts note that the new highs reflect the strengthening of trade ties between Russia and China, as well as China's growing demand for Russian agricultural and seafood products. The December performance underscores the increasing role of the Chinese market as a key destination for Russian agri-food exports and signals continued momentum heading into 2026.[4]

Commodity Auctions: Results For 20.01.2026

Purchase

OOO Trading House Sodruzhestvo

Soybeans 40 (excluding VAT) | 33,000 ₽/t | 2,000 t

OOO Zakazchik No. 1

Wheat, Grade 4, 12.5% (excluding VAT) | 16,400 ₽/t | 600 t

OOO Zakazchik No. 1

Wheat, Grade 4, 12.5% (excluding VAT) | 15,595 ₽/t | 620 t

OOO OZK Trading

Wheat, Grade 4, 12.5% (excluding VAT) | 16,150 ₽/t | 75 tons

OOO OZK Trading

Wheat, Grade 4, 12.5% (excluding VAT) | 15,545 ₽/t | 300 tons

OOO CHERKIZOVO-MASLA

Soybeans, Grade 40 (excluding VAT) | 33,050 ₽/t | 4,000 tons[3]

Mishustin Outlines Russia's Foreign Trade Priorities at Strategic Economic Session

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin chaired a strategic session in Moscow focused on the development of the country's foreign economic activity, where officials reviewed current results and outlined key priorities for the coming years.

During the meeting, Mishustin emphasized that one of Russia's main long-term objectives is to increase non-resource, non-energy exports by 67% by 2030. According to the government's plans, around 80% of these exports are expected to be directed to friendly countries, reflecting the ongoing reorientation of Russia's foreign trade flows.

Officials noted that significant progress has already been made. In 2025, Russia recorded a historic result, with 86% of total exports delivered to friendly states, amounting to more than 10 trillion rubles in value. The strongest contribution to export growth came from machine building, the chemical industry, and metallurgy, which have shown sustained expansion despite external constraints.

The session also highlighted the growing role of the agricultural sector in foreign trade. Supplies of food products, including confectionery, meat, and dairy goods, have increased substantially, strengthening Russia's position in global agri-food markets and supporting export diversification.

In addition, Mishustin pointed to Russia's accelerated transition to settlements in national currencies. Their share in foreign trade transactions has now reached 85%, reducing dependence on traditional reserve currencies and enhancing financial sovereignty.

Looking ahead, the government plans to continue expanding global logistics routes, constructing new production and port facilities, and reinforcing export-support infrastructure. These measures are aimed at improving access to international markets, lowering logistical costs, and ensuring stable growth in Russia's foreign economic activity over the medium and long term.[6]

UAE Emerges as Key Growth Market for Russian Agricultural Exports

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) continues to play a significant role in global agricultural trade, remaining one of the world's largest net importers of agri-food products and offering growing opportunities for exporters from Russia.

Experts note that the structure of agricultural imports into the UAE is shaped by two key factors: steady domestic consumer demand and the country's role as a regional trade and distribution hub, serving markets across the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. As a result, the UAE maintains consistently high import volumes across a wide range of food and agricultural commodities.

Among the top five agricultural import categories in the UAE are poultry meat, beef and edible by-products of cattle, beet and cane sugar, flour confectionery and bakery products, and powdered milk. Collectively, the ten largest commodity groups account for more than 30% of the total volume of agricultural imports, underlining the concentration of demand in core food segments.

Russia has steadily strengthened its position in the UAE's agricultural market in recent years. In 2024, bilateral trade in agricultural products between Russia and the UAE reached a record $439.2 million, with Russian exports accounting for nearly 90% of the total turnover. This reflects the UAE's growing reliance on Russian supplies for key staple and protein products.

The expansion was driven primarily by increased shipments of barley, which rose 3.2 times year-on-year, alongside wheat, which recorded a 16.7% increase, and poultry meat, where exports surged by 96.5%. Analysts say these trends point to sustained demand and strong competitiveness of Russian agricultural goods in the Emirati market.

Looking ahead, experts estimate that by 2030, the potential volume of Russian agricultural exports to the UAE could reach $550–600 million. The most promising product categories include wheat and barley, dried legumes such as lentils, peas, and chickpeas, poultry meat and edible by-products, sunflower and soybean oils, confectionery and flour-based products, as well as crustaceans.

Despite record agricultural trade figures, analysts highlight that there is still significant room for expansion. In 2024, Russia's total exports to the UAE amounted to approximately $7 billion, with gold accounting for around $5.5 billion of that total. Against this backdrop, agricultural exports represent only a small share of overall trade, indicating substantial growth potential for Russian farmers and food producers.

Thanks to stable import demand, a transparent market structure, and a long-standing history of trade and economic cooperation, the UAE remains one of the most attractive and predictable markets for the further expansion of Russian agricultural exports.[7]

Ukraine’s Agricultural Exports Rebound to $24.5 Billion in 2024, Nearing Pre-War Levels

Ukraine’s agricultural exports totaled $24.5 billion in 2024, accounting for 59% of the country’s overall exports, according to data released by the Ministry of Agrarian Policy on January 3. The result signals a strong recovery for the sector, bringing export revenues close to pre-war levels and marking the second-highest annual figure on record, after the peak of $27.7 billion in 2021.

Long recognized as one of the world’s leading agricultural producers, Ukraine exported 78.3 million tons of agricultural commodities last year. These shipments included key products such as grains and oilseeds, which play a critical role in ensuring food supplies across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Sunflower oil remained Ukraine’s largest agricultural export by value, accounting for 21% of total agri-food exports. Nearly 6 million tons of sunflower oil were shipped abroad, generating $5.1 billion in revenue. Corn matched sunflower oil’s share, with exports reaching 29.6 million tons worth approximately $5 billion. Wheat ranked third, representing 15% of exports, with 20.6 million tons sold internationally for $3.7 billion.

Other significant export categories included rapeseed, which accounted for 7% of total agricultural exports and brought in $1.8 billion, and soybeans, which represented 5% or $1.3 billion. Exports of oilcake and other processing residues reached $1 billion, while meat and poultry products contributed $958 million, or about 4% of total agricultural export revenues. Barley and sugar each accounted for 2%, valued at $557 million and $418 million, respectively.

Throughout Russia’s full-scale invasion, Ukraine’s agricultural trade has faced persistent disruption. Moscow has repeatedly sought to obstruct Ukrainian exports by blockading Black Sea ports and attempting to displace Ukrainian products in global markets, including through the distribution of agricultural goods reportedly taken from occupied territories.

Despite these challenges, Ukraine managed to restore a significant portion of its export capacity after reopening a maritime trade corridor in 2023. The corridor enabled the resumption of large-scale seaborne shipments, helping stabilize export volumes and restore Ukraine’s position as a key supplier to global food markets.

Officials and analysts say the 2024 results highlight the resilience of Ukraine’s agricultural sector and its continued importance to the national economy, even amid ongoing security and logistical challenges.[1]

Ukraine Denies Reports of Shipping Slowdown at Deepwater Ports Despite Russian Attacks

Ukraine’s port authorities have rejected media reports suggesting that shipowners are avoiding Ukrainian deepwater ports due to intensified Russian attacks, stating that vessel traffic has continued to grow.

In a response to Forbes Ukraine, the press service of the Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority (USPA) said that as of January 20, 2026, the number of vessels heading to Ukrainian ports was 9% higher than on the same date a year earlier. According to the agency, this data contradicts claims that heightened security risks have led shipowners to withdraw from Ukrainian routes.

Earlier media reports indicated that at the start of last week, the market still showed a significant number of firm offers in the handysize segment for transporting Ukrainian grain. However, by midweek, sentiment reportedly shifted, with shipowners becoming more cautious and increasingly reluctant to continue negotiations amid concerns over security conditions.

USPA confirmed that vessel nominations for entry into the ports of Greater Odesa were up by 9% year-on-year as of January 20. For security reasons, the authority declined to disclose exact figures related to vessel traffic or port calls.

The agency also reported positive dynamics in port operations over shorter periods. During the first 19 days of January 2026, Ukrainian ports processed approximately 2% more vessels than during the same period in December 2025, and more than 3% more compared with the corresponding period last year.

In terms of cargo volumes, Ukrainian seaports have handled 4.16 million tons of cargo since the beginning of 2026. This represents a 5% increase compared with January 2025, and nearly 13% growth compared with the same period in December 2025.

Port officials say the figures reflect the continued functioning of Ukraine's maritime logistics despite ongoing security challenges, underscoring the resilience of the country's export infrastructure and the sustained interest of shipping companies in Ukrainian trade routes.[2]

Despite Restrictions, Russian Goods Continue to Find Buyers in the EU

Russian exports to the European Union continued in 2025 despite the sanctions regime imposed by EU member states, with some product categories even recording notable growth, according to Eurostat data published for the past year.

While trade volumes remain far below pre-sanctions levels, statistics indicate that Russian companies have managed not only to maintain access to certain European markets but also to increase shipments of selected goods. One of the most prominent examples is the export of medicinal products.

In 2025, exports of Russian pharmaceuticals to the EU rose by around 50% compared with 2024, exceeding €30 million. This marked the highest level in five years, underscoring sustained demand in specific segments of the European healthcare market. The largest importers of Russian medicines were Sweden, Slovenia, and Hungary.

Market analysts note that the majority of Russian pharmaceuticals supplied to the EU consist of generic medicines, which are typically lower-cost alternatives to branded original drugs. Their competitive pricing and established production volumes have helped Russian manufacturers retain a foothold in the European market despite regulatory and political constraints.

Another product category showing significant growth was tea. In November 2025, Russian tea exports to EU countries tripled month-on-month, reaching €323,000. This represented the strongest monthly result since June 2025, when shipments totaled €409,000.

Germany emerged as the key destination for Russian tea, accounting for approximately 73% of total deliveries. Latvia ranked second, while the remaining volumes were distributed among France and Portugal, according to Eurostat figures.

Experts say the data highlights the selective nature of ongoing trade between Russia and the EU, where certain non-sanctioned goods—particularly consumer products and pharmaceuticals—continue to move across borders. Despite ongoing geopolitical tensions and restrictive measures, demand for competitively priced Russian products persists in specific European markets, allowing limited trade flows to continue.[7]

China Resumes Canadian Canola Imports After Months-Long Suspension

China has resumed imports of rapeseed from Canada, marking a significant shift in bilateral agricultural trade following months of restrictions, according to a report by Reuters, citing market sources.

Shortly after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to Beijing last week, a Chinese importer purchased 60,000 tons of Canadian commercial rapeseed, or canola. The shipment represents the first Panamax-sized cargo of Canadian canola destined for China since Beijing suspended imports in October. The vessel is expected to be loaded and shipped in March, signaling a gradual normalization of trade flows.

Industry participants say the deal improves prospects for Canadian farmers, who have faced limited access to the Chinese market amid trade tensions. At the same time, analysts note that the resumption of Canadian supplies could intensify competition in China's oilseed market, potentially weakening the position of Australia, one of China's key alternative suppliers during the suspension period.

The renewed trade follows earlier reports that China plans to cut tariffs on Canadian canola as part of a preliminary trade agreement. Under the new terms, total import duties on Canadian rapeseed are set to fall to around 15% from the current 84%, effective March 1. The tariff reduction is expected to significantly improve the price competitiveness of Canadian canola in the Chinese market.

The initial agreement also reportedly includes provisions for lowering tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, indicating a broader effort by both countries to ease trade frictions across multiple sectors.

Market observers say the resumption of canola imports reflects China's continued need to diversify oilseed supplies, while underscoring the importance of diplomatic engagement in restoring access to key agricultural markets.[5]

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