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USDA Raises Turkey’s Sunflower Import Forecast on Weak Harvest

Turkey is set to sharply increase sunflower seed imports in the 2025/26 marketing season after drought severely reduced domestic production.

According to the February outlook from United States Department of Agriculture, Turkey’s sunflower imports are now projected at 1 million tonnes, up 200,000 tonnes from the previous estimate and year-on-year levels — marking the highest volume in six years.

The revision reflects the current pace of raw material purchases, as Turkey’s sunflower harvest was heavily impacted by dry weather. Industry estimates place total production at just 1.2–1.4 million tonnes (net weight), one of the weakest results of the past decade.

As a result, Turkey is increasingly sourcing sunflower seeds from overseas rather than finished products, which remain costly in the Black Sea region. Imports from European Union countries surged dramatically during September–November of the 2025/26 marketing year, reaching more than 758,000 tonnes — a 26-fold increase compared with the same period last season.

The shift highlights Turkey’s growing reliance on foreign supplies to meet domestic demand amid tightening local output.[4]

Analysts Warn Russia’s 91 Million Tonne Wheat Crop Target May Be Too Ambitious

Forecasts calling for a 91 million tonne wheat harvest in the upcoming season appear overly optimistic, according to Andrey Sizov, head of the analytical center Sovecon.

Speaking on the outlook, Sizov noted that achieving such a production level would require a rare combination of near-record crop yields alongside expanded—or at least fully preserved—sown areas. Analysts currently do not view this scenario as their baseline expectation.

Experts emphasize that while favorable weather could still improve prospects, multiple uncertainties remain. These include soil moisture levels, spring weather patterns, and farmers’ planting decisions, all of which will play a critical role in determining final output.

Market participants also point out that maintaining planting areas at current levels may prove challenging amid rising input costs and margin pressure, while pushing yields close to record highs would depend heavily on consistently supportive climatic conditions throughout the growing season.

As a result, analysts caution that expectations for a 91 million tonne wheat crop may be premature, urging the market to take a more conservative view until clearer indicators emerge later in the season. [3]

NGT Grain Transshipment Falls to 5.47 Million Tonnes as Russia Tightens Export Limits

Grain transshipment at Novorossiysk Grain Terminal declined by 24.4% in 2025, reflecting tighter export restrictions during the first half of the year.

The terminal, operated by NGT (part of Demetra Holding), exported 5.47 million tonnes of grain in 2025, down from 7.24 million tonnes a year earlier, the company said in a press release.

The drop was primarily driven by a smaller government export quota. From February 15 to June 30, the quota for grain exports was set at 10.6 million tonnes, significantly lower than the 29 million tonnes allowed during the same period in 2024.

Despite weaker grain volumes, the terminal reported strong growth in non-grain cargoes. Shipments of molasses rose to 98,000 tonnes, up from 38,000 tonnes the previous year, while fatty acid volumes increased to 14,000 tonnes, compared with 6,000 tonnes in 2024.

The figures highlight how quota constraints reshaped cargo flows at the port, prompting NGT to diversify shipments as grain exports slowed.[3]

Ruble Share in Russia's Foreign Trade Settlements Tops 50% for First Time

The share of the ruble in Russia's foreign trade settlements has surpassed 50% for the first time on record, highlighting a major shift toward the use of the national currency in international transactions.

According to data analyzed by the Bank of Russia, ruble-denominated payments accounted for 53.7% of export revenues from goods and services at year-end, up from 41.5% in 2024. This represents an increase of more than 12 percentage points year on year, underscoring the continued expansion of ruble usage in external trade.

Growth was recorded across all macroregions, with the sharpest rise seen in the Caribbean, where the ruble's share jumped 43.4 percentage points to a record 97.6%. Settlements with Africa also showed strong momentum, climbing 34.7 percentage points to 88.3%.

Significant increases were reported in other regions as well: ruble settlements reached 82.5% in Oceania, 50.3% in South America, and 51.2% in Asia.

A similar trend is emerging on the import side. In 2025, ruble payments for imports also exceeded 50% for the first time, with the largest rise again recorded in trade with the Caribbean, where ruble usage increased 48.4 percentage points to 79.1%.

Market participants attribute the shift to broader adoption of national-currency settlements, rerouted trade flows, and strengthened financial infrastructure supporting cross-border ruble payments.

Analysts note that growing willingness among foreign partners to transact in rubles helps reduce currency risks for Russian exporters and importers and improves profit forecasting. However, they caution that some counterparties may seek price discounts to offset their own exposure to ruble volatility.[5]

Food Wheat Prices Flat in Ukraine, Feed Wheat Rises on Domestic and Export Interest

Wheat prices in Ukraine showed limited movement last week, with the food wheat segment remaining largely stable amid softer demand from millers.

Market participants reported that reduced production levels led to a slight decline in milling demand, with only a small number of buyers continuing active procurement. In contrast, feed wheat prices posted modest gains, supported by steady domestic consumption, increased trader interest, and positive trends in the export market.

Second-class food wheat continued to trade within a range of UAH 9,600–10,600 per tonne CPT, showing no major adjustments over the week. Meanwhile, feed wheat prices rose by UAH 100–200 per tonne, settling at UAH 8,800–10,100 per tonne CPT.

Export-oriented pricing also strengthened slightly. Prices for both food and feed wheat at Ukrainian ports increased by $1–3 per tonne, reaching $212–219 per tonne for food wheat and $205–214 per tonne CPT-port for feed wheat.

Analysts attribute the divergent price dynamics to weaker milling demand on the one hand and robust buying interest for feed wheat on the other, driven by domestic needs and improving export sentiment.[2]

Ukraine Exports Nearly 115,000 Tonnes of Agri Products by Road in Early February

Road shipments of agricultural products from Ukraine reached 114.99 thousand tonnes between the start of February and February 12, according to data released by Spike Brokers.

Market analysts said flows remained stable, with no sharp fluctuations, emphasizing that road transport continues to serve as a supplementary channel rather than a primary route for large grain volumes.

Structurally, road logistics are increasingly focused on higher value-added products. The largest export volumes during the period were recorded for sunflower oil (10.587 thousand tonnes), poultry meat (8.718 thousand tonnes), and corn (6.782 thousand tonnes). Soy products also formed a substantial share, including soybean oilcake (5.945 thousand tonnes), soybean oil (5.296 thousand tonnes), and soybeans (4.699 thousand tonnes).

Exports of processed food items also remained steady, with bakery products totaling 4.285 thousand tonnes, confectionery products 2.817 thousand tonnes, and chocolate 1.956 thousand tonnes. Analysts noted that this trend highlights the specialization of road corridors in processed goods rather than bulk raw grain.

Geographically, road exports were concentrated at several key western border crossings, led by Porubne–Siret (21.985 thousand tonnes), Krakivets–Korczowa (17.747 thousand tonnes), Chop–Zahony (14.228 thousand tonnes), Rava-Ruska–Hrebenne (13.882 thousand tonnes), and Yahodyn–Dorohusk (11.055 thousand tonnes).

Overall, routes through Poland, Romania, and Hungary continue to form the backbone of Ukraine's road-based agricultural exports, reinforcing the role of western corridors in moving processed and higher-margin products to international markets.[2]

Bulgaria Awaits First Argentine Sunflower Shipments as Imports Set to Reshape Balkan Market

Bulgaria is preparing to receive its first shipments of sunflower seed from Argentina in the coming weeks, according to market sources.

The first vessel, carrying approximately 40,000 tonnes, is currently off the coast of Morocco and is expected to arrive at Bulgarian ports in early March. In total, up to ten ships are scheduled for delivery between late February and early March.

If all cargoes arrive on schedule, Bulgaria could import around 400,000 tonnes of Argentine sunflower. Combined with deliveries to Romania, total regional imports may approach half a million tonnes, significantly altering the raw material balance and intensifying competition across the Balkans.

With Bulgaria's domestic sunflower output estimated at roughly 1.5 million tonnes, imported volumes would represent about a quarter of national production, making external supplies a key factor in price formation and market dynamics.

Argentine sunflower prices are currently assessed at approximately $470–500 per tonne on FOB terms, rising to around $580–590 per tonne delivered to Bulgaria. Despite local availability, this pricing structure is supporting import demand.

Another driver behind increased imports is tight domestic supply, as farmers are reportedly holding back sales in anticipation of higher prices following weak harvests in Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine.

Market analysts expect competition to remain elevated in the near term, noting that longer-term stability will depend on improvements in yields and production efficiency. The arrival of the first Argentine shipments is seen as an important benchmark for future pricing and overall stability in the regional sunflower oil market.[1]

Azerbaijan Wheat Imports Jump Nearly 50% in January 2026

Azerbaijan significantly increased wheat imports in January 2026, bringing in 129.9 thousand tonnes valued at $28.9 million, according to data from the country's State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan, as reported by local media.

Compared with January 2025, import volumes rose by nearly 50% in physical terms, while the value of purchases increased by 54.4% year on year. In the same month last year, Azerbaijan imported 86.7 thousand tonnes of wheat worth $18.7 million.

Historical figures also point to a steady upward trend in wheat procurement. In January 2024, imports totaled around 75.8 thousand tonnes valued at approximately $16.4 million. A year earlier, in January 2023, the country purchased about 68.2 thousand tonnes for roughly $15.2 million, reflecting more moderate demand and comparatively stronger domestic supply conditions.

Market experts attribute the sharp rise in January 2026 imports to shifts in the domestic grain balance, harvest variability, and the need to rebuild reserves amid rising consumption. The latest data suggest that external sourcing is becoming an increasingly important tool for ensuring food security and stabilizing internal supply. [1]

Year	Wheat imports (tons)	Import value (USD)
2026	129,932.80	$28,872,000
2025	86,654.05	$18,695,000
2024	~75,800	~$16,400,000
2023	~68,200	~$15,200,000

EU Wheat Export Outlook Cut as Crop Losses Weigh on 2025/26 Supply

Exports of European wheat are expected to face mounting pressure in the 2025/26 season, as weaker production prospects prompt analysts to scale back forecasts.

Consulting firm Expana has lowered its projection for soft wheat exports from the European Union to 27.6 million tonnes, citing reduced planting areas and weather-related crop losses.

Total EU wheat production is now forecast at 128.3 million tonnes, down 6% year on year, while barley output is expected to fall 8% to 52.2 million tonnes. The downward revision reflects damage to winter crops caused by freezing conditions in Poland and across the Baltic states, where farmers were forced to re-evaluate sowing areas.

Despite the weaker grain harvest outlook, barley exports from the EU could reach their highest level since the 2015/16 season, supported by strong demand from buyers in the Middle East, according to market observers.

The mixed picture underscores growing challenges for European wheat exporters, even as barley shipments benefit from robust overseas demand. [6]

India Lifts Wheat Export Ban as Stocks Rise and Prices Eas

India has officially lifted its wheat export ban, approving shipments of up to 2.5 million tonnes of wheat along with 500,000 tonnes of wheat-based processed products. The restriction, introduced in 2022 to contain domestic price inflation and safeguard food security, has been removed amid ample inventories, declining local prices, and expectations of higher production.

The decision is expected to reshape regional trade flows, with export activity likely to resume through key inland logistics hubs, including Khilji.

Despite the policy change, Indian wheat remains relatively expensive compared with global offers. Local traders estimate current FOB prices at $280–290 per tonne, limiting competitiveness on international markets.

India's wheat output reached a record 117.9 million tonnes in 2025, providing the supply cushion needed to reopen exports. Market participants note that the move could gradually increase India's presence in regional destinations, although price dynamics will remain a key factor shaping demand.[6]

More Than $212M Approved to Promote U.S. Food, Feed and Agricultural Exports

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced more than $212 million in funding under its Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development Program (FMD) initiatives to support exports of U.S. agricultural products, including animal feed.

The funding will back public-private partnerships aimed at expanding the presence of American food, feed, and raw materials in international markets.

For fiscal year 2026, MAP distributed over $181 million to 68 nonprofit organizations and cooperatives to promote U.S. consumer products abroad. Meanwhile, FMD allocated more than $31 million to 18 trade organizations focused on long-term market development and commodity promotion.

Among key beneficiaries in the pet food segment is the Pet Food Institute, which received more than $1.3 million, subject to mandatory co-financing of at least 35%. The funds will be used to support entry into new export markets.

The North American Renderers Association secured over $1.5 million in combined MAP and FMD support for activities in China and Mexico, including plant registration and efforts to resolve trade barriers. The funding is expected to facilitate exports of animal raw materials and processed products.

In addition, the American Feed Industry Association received more than $170,000 to advance market development and promote U.S. feed products overseas.

USDA officials said the MAP and FMD programs together provide broad-based support for American exporters, covering everything from consumer foods to feed and agricultural raw materials, reinforcing the competitiveness of U.S. products on global markets.[1]

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