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Russia Keeps Top Spot as Egypt's Wheat Imports Decline in February

Wheat imports by Egypt fell by 13% year-on-year in February 2026, totaling about 1.3 million tonnes, compared with 1.5 million tonnes in February 2025, according to official data cited by local media. Overall, the country imported roughly 2.3 million tonnes of wheat during the first two months of 2026.

Russia remained the largest supplier in February, delivering around 797,000 tonnes, which accounted for 57.5% of total imports. Romania ranked second with 189,000 tonnes (13.6%), followed closely by Ukraine, which shipped 186,000 tonnes, representing 13.5% of the total.

According to Hisham Suleiman, director of the grain trading and importing company Mediterranean Star, government purchases accounted for about 53.6% of total wheat imports in February, equivalent to roughly 741,000 tonnes across 13 cargo shipments.

Meanwhile, wheat prices on Egypt's domestic market have increased by about 6% over the past week, reaching approximately 13,000 Egyptian pounds per tonne. The rise is largely attributed to the depreciation of the Egyptian pound against the US dollar, which has raised the cost of imported grain.

Additional pressure is coming from logistics costs. Traders report that maritime freight rates have surged by about 36%, climbing to around $30 per tonne from $22 previously, amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. The higher costs and market uncertainty are prompting some importers to scale back purchases.[1]

Russia May Extend GMO Soybean Import Permit for Export-Oriented Feed

The Ministry of Agriculture of Russia has proposed extending the permission to import genetically modified (GMO) soybeans into Russia for another year, provided that the feed products made from them are exported rather than used domestically.

The draft proposal has been published on the official government portal. It applies to soybeans classified under FTS code 1201 90 000 0 (other soybeans, whether crushed or uncrushed), as well as related feed products such as soybean meal and compound feed mixtures derived from soybeans, typically listed under group 23, including code 2304 for oilcakes and other solid soybean residues.

Under the current government decree adopted on June 12, 2025, imports of GMO soybeans for such purposes are allowed for one year. The ministry now proposes amending the document by replacing the wording "one year" with "two years," effectively extending the measure's validity.

At the same time, the import and circulation of GMO seeds for planting or cultivation within Russia will remain prohibited, as under existing regulations.

According to official data, Russia's soybean harvest reached about 9 million tons in 2025, up from 7.1 million tons the previous year. As a result, feed produced from imported GMO soybeans is seen largely as an additional revenue opportunity for exporters, rather than a key component of the domestic feed market.[3]

New EAEU Rules Clarify Product Origin and Ease Compliance for Businesses

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has approved updated rules for determining the country of origin of goods, clarifying what can legitimately be labeled as "made in the Union."

Under the revised framework, simple operations such as washing, packaging, or basic assembly will no longer qualify a product for Union origin status. The changes aim to prevent the misuse of origin labeling and ensure that products claiming EAEU origin have undergone substantial processing within member states.

For importers and exporters, the update means that proof of origin will be mandatory whenever tariffs, quotas, or permit requirements depend on it. At the same time, the system is gradually moving toward digitalization, with electronic certificates that can be verified online, which should speed up inspections and reduce the risk of counterfeit documents.

The Union has also approved amendments to its technical regulations. In the updated wording, the term "dangerous products" will be replaced by "products that do not meet the requirements of technical regulations." The change is intended to reduce reputational risks for companies, recognizing that not every regulatory violation necessarily implies a safety hazard.

For carriers and logistics companies, the updated terminology and procedures are expected to simplify interactions with regulatory authorities by clarifying which goods require inspection and under what regulatory framework.[3]

Strong Non-GMO Demand Supports Ukrainian Rapeseed Prices

The export rapeseed market in Ukraine continued to show a modest upward price trend last week, driven mainly by steady demand for non-GMO oilseed. Despite the firmer prices, overall trading activity remained limited.

Prices quoted in foreign currency at Ukrainian ports changed little during the week. However, DAP Western border quotations increased by about $3–5 per ton, reflecting stronger demand in export channels.

On the domestic market, prices rose to around UAH 25,600–25,900 per ton CPT port for non-GMO rapeseed, partly supported by fluctuations in the hryvnia on the local foreign exchange market.

Meanwhile, the broader commodity complex — including rapeseed and canola — continues to receive support from developments in the crude oil and petroleum products markets. Ongoing tensions linked to the Middle East conflict are keeping energy prices elevated, while market participants are increasingly focusing on biofuel demand, which is providing additional support to oilseed prices.[2]

Ukraine Barley Harvest Stable Despite War, Exports Set to Grow

Barley exports from Ukraine are expected to reach 2.8 million tons in the 2025/26 marketing year, marking a 22% increase compared with the previous season, according to data released on March 6 by the Ukrainian Agribusiness Club Association (UCAB).

Despite the ongoing war, barley production in Ukraine has remained relatively stable, although it is still significantly lower than pre-war levels. In the 2025/26 MY, the country harvested about 5.3 million tons of barley, which is 0.4% higher year-on-year but 19.7% below the average of the past five years.

UCAB noted that barley acreage has declined more sharply than other grain crops, mainly due to the temporary occupation of some territories and weaker export potential. In the current marketing year, barley was planted on 1.4 million hectares, down 0.9% from the previous season and 26.4% below the five-year average.

However, barley became the only grain crop in Ukraine to post improved yields, reaching 3.9 t/ha, which is 0.4% higher than last season and 8.4% above the five-year average.

After exports fell to 2.3 million tons in the 2024/25 MY (down 8.4% year-on-year), shipments are projected to rebound in 2025/26. According to UCAB, the increase will be supported by slightly higher production, lower domestic consumption, and larger carryover stocks. [2]

Hormuz Crisis Highlights Turkey’s Potential Role as Regional Logistics Hub

Recent strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran have disrupted traffic through the strategically important Strait of Hormuz, a key maritime route for global energy and agricultural trade. Experts suggest that Türkiye, which previously played a central role in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, could help establish an alternative trade corridor to stabilize supply chains.

Bülent Gülçubuk, a professor at Ankara University’s Faculty of Agriculture, warned that any closure of the strait would increase costs across the global agricultural sector, including energy, fertilizers, transportation, and insurance. He noted that nearly all stages of agricultural production and distribution rely heavily on energy, meaning even short disruptions could quickly push prices higher.

According to Gülçubuk, developing countries and nations already facing food security challenges would be the most affected. He added that Türkiye could emerge as a regional logistics hub, ensuring the steady movement of food and energy supplies, similar to its role during the grain corridor established amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

By utilizing its ports, storage infrastructure, and trade networks, Türkiye could help maintain supply flows, strengthen its own food security, increase transit revenues, and create new logistics and transportation jobs, he said.

Meanwhile, Zeki Bayramoğlu, head of the Agricultural Economics Department at Selçuk University, stressed that the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz extends beyond energy. Around one-third of global fertilizer shipments, including sulfur and ammonia, pass through the waterway, making it vital for modern agriculture.

Bayramoğlu noted that alternative routes for large vessels are extremely limited, meaning prolonged disruptions could significantly reduce fertilizer supplies and push global prices higher. He compared the situation with the 2022 Black Sea shipping crisis, when blocked maritime routes severely disrupted global food trade.

To address potential disruptions, Bayramoğlu proposed a "Safe Passage Initiative for Food and Fertilizers," coordinated from Istanbul and involving importing countries, exporting nations, logistics companies, and international organizations.

He emphasized that Türkiye has already demonstrated its ability to mediate in such crises, but success would require government readiness and strong technical capacity for rapid response.[1]

Middle East Tensions Push Up Bunker Prices, Lifting Black Sea Freight Rates

The first week of spring brought renewed uncertainty to the freight market in the Black Sea, as rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East triggered a sharp increase in bunker fuel prices.

The higher fuel costs have prompted shipowners across most vessel segments to raise their freight offers, with many now seeking an additional $2–4 per ton, depending on the route, to offset the increase in operating expenses.

As a result, charterers in Ukraine are encountering growing difficulties in securing available tonnage. The widening gap between shipowners' price expectations and charterers' bids has slowed negotiations significantly.

Consequently, overall freight pricing activity in the Black Sea market remained limited during the reporting week, as market participants struggled to reach agreements under the new cost conditions.[1]

Middle East Conflict Complicates India's Return to the Global Wheat Market

Escalating tensions in the Middle East could disrupt India's plans to expand wheat exports just as the new harvest begins entering the domestic market. The situation adds uncertainty for farmers and traders in the world's second-largest wheat producer, which has only recently started easing nearly four years of restrictions on grain exports.

A key concern is the disruption of maritime logistics and the volatility of freight rates. Because of this, exporters are hesitant to sign long-term supply contracts with buyers and are cautious about purchasing wheat from farmers. The uncertainty comes despite forecasts that India's wheat production could reach a record 120 million tonnes in the current financial year.

Although global wheat prices have been rising, the regional conflict is limiting India's export opportunities. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), world wheat prices increased by about 1.8% in February, driven by risks of winter crop losses in Europe and the United States, as well as logistical disruptions in the Black Sea region. However, higher freight costs and supply chain instability are offsetting potential gains for Indian exporters.

Industry representatives note that India previously missed major export opportunities during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, when strict export restrictions were still in place. Before the ban, the country was an active supplier on the global market, with wheat exports valued at more than $2.1 billion in fiscal year 2022 and around $1.5 billion in fiscal year 2023, before shipments declined sharply after the restrictions were introduced.

In the current season, traders expect a more cautious market strategy. Some exporters may redirect shipments to nearby markets such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, where transportation costs are lower and demand remains stable. However, analysts warn that prolonged instability in the Gulf region could put a significant portion of India's agricultural exports at risk, as Middle Eastern countries remain key buyers of Indian food products. [1]

Vietnam Ships 1.3 Mln Tons of Rice in Jan–Feb as Prices Decline

Vietnam exported around 640,000 tonnes of rice worth $289.4 million in February 2026, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Vietnam. In the first two months of the year, total shipments reached 1.3 million tonnes valued at $599.3 million.

Compared with the same period in 2025, export volumes increased by about 5%, while the total export value declined by 11.2%, reflecting lower international prices. The average export price for Vietnamese rice in January–February stood at $464.1 per tonne, which is 15.4% lower year-on-year.

The Philippines remained the largest destination for Vietnamese rice, accounting for 47.6% of total exports. China ranked second with 18.3%, followed by Ghana with 8.9%.

Export revenues from shipments to the Philippines rose by 17.6% compared with the same period last year, while deliveries to China surged nearly sixfold. In contrast, exports to Ghana declined by 31%. Among Vietnam's 15 largest export markets, the strongest growth was recorded in China, while shipments to Côte d'Ivoire saw the sharpest drop, falling 90.9% year-on-year.

According to market participants, Vietnam's 5% broken rice is currently priced at about $365 per tonne, unchanged from the previous week. However, trading activity has slowed, as many buyers expect further price declines amid rising domestic supply during the peak harvest of the winter–spring crop.

Preliminary data show that ports in southern Vietnam handled more than 382,000 tonnes of rice in February, with the bulk shipped to the Philippines and African markets. Although tensions in the Middle East have not directly disrupted these flows, traders report higher freight costs due to increased insurance premiums and rising fuel prices. [1]

Australian Canola Shipments Shift Away from EU Toward Asia and Middle East

According to data from Oil World, Australia's canola exports totaled 1.86 million tonnes during October–January of the 2025/26 marketing year, marking an 18% decline compared with the same period last season and the lowest level in four years.

Shipments to the European Union — traditionally the largest destination — fell sharply from 1.73 million tonnes to 1.12 million tonnes. Exports to Pakistan also dropped significantly, declining from 342,000 tonnes to zero during the period.

At the same time, deliveries to several other markets increased. Exports to the United Arab Emirates rose from 54,000 tonnes to 311,000 tonnes, while shipments to China reached 185,000 tonnes, compared with no exports a year earlier. Supplies to Japan also expanded significantly, increasing from 37,000 tonnes to 196,000 tonnes.

In January 2026, Australia exported around 571,000 tonnes of canola, down from 602,000 tonnes in December 2025 and 784,000 tonnes in January 2025. Of this volume, approximately 369,000 tonnes were shipped to the European Union, compared with 462,000 tonnes in December and 543,000 tonnes in January of the previous year. [1]

FAO: Global Wheat Output to Dip 3% in 2026 Despite Above-Average Supply

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) expects global wheat production to decline by about 3% in 2026, reaching around 810 million tonnes. The projected decrease is mainly linked to moderately smaller planting areas following weaker crop prices and a return to more typical yield levels after last year's exceptional harvests. Despite the decline, total production would still remain above the five-year average.

Lower wheat prices are expected to reduce sowing areas in the European Union, although overall production in the bloc is still projected to remain above average. In United States and Canada, FAO anticipates a slight decline in output compared with last year's relatively strong harvests.

In India, wheat production is forecast to remain close to last year's record level, despite drought conditions and elevated temperatures in several regions that have affected crop development. Meanwhile, output in China is expected to remain broadly stable.

For Russia, FAO projects a modest reduction in wheat production, reflecting smaller planted areas, a shift of land toward oilseed crops, and drought conditions in key producing regions during the sowing period.[4]

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