

CSI DAILY NEWS



13.03.2026



Russia–Georgia Trade Expands 6% in 2025, January 2026 Shows Early Slowdown

Trade between Russia and Georgia continued to expand in 2025, although the first month of 2026 showed signs of a slowdown. According to preliminary data from Georgia’s National Statistics Office, bilateral trade turnover reached \$2.69 billion last year, up 6% compared with 2024. In January 2026, however, total trade fell 4% year-on-year to \$195 million.

Georgia’s imports from Russia rose 5% in 2025 to \$1.94 billion, with fuel remaining by far the dominant category, accounting for 44% of total supplies. Other major imports included wheat (5%), wood and wood products (4%), ferrous metals including semi-finished steel products (4%), and sunflower oil (3%).

Among individual product categories, Russian wheat exports to Georgia increased sharply by 35% to \$102 million in 2025. Supplies of oil also grew to \$96 million, while imports of semi-finished non-alloy steel products climbed to \$38 million. At the same time, petroleum product deliveries declined 8% to \$478 million, and hot-rolled bar imports plunged 83% to \$19 million.

In January 2026, Georgia’s imports from Russia dropped 8% year-on-year to \$157 million. The decline was mainly driven by a 54% fall in petroleum product supplies, which dropped to \$25 million.

On the export side, Georgia shipped \$749 million worth of goods to Russia in 2025, marking a 10% increase from the previous year. Wine remained the largest export category, accounting for 23% of total exports, followed by spirits at 21%, fruits and nuts at 17%, water including mineral water at 9%, and soft drinks at 7%.

A major contributor to export growth was a sharp rise in nut shipments, which doubled to \$50 million during the year.

The positive trend continued into early 2026. In January, Georgian exports to Russia rose 13% year-on-year to nearly \$39 million, supported in particular by strong growth in spirits exports, which doubled to \$10 million.

Russia remained Georgia’s third-largest trading partner in 2025, behind Turkey and the United States. Its share in Georgia’s total foreign trade stood at 10.4%. Over the past decade, trade turnover between the two countries has more than tripled, highlighting the long-term expansion of bilateral economic ties despite short-term fluctuations at the start of 2026.⁶

Russian Wheat Discount to Europe Boosts March Export Shipments

The latest USDA update points to stronger global wheat demand in the current season, while Russian exports are gaining momentum amid competitive pricing and robust demand from key destinations.

According to Grain Online, the US Department of Agriculture slightly increased its forecast for global wheat supply and consumption, while trimming expectations for ending stocks. Global wheat supply is now projected at 1,101.8 million tons, up 0.2 million tons from the previous estimate. The revision was mainly driven by higher production forecasts for Ukraine (+1.0 million tons) and Kazakhstan (+0.43 million tons), partially offset by a 1.0 million-ton cut for Australia.

Global wheat consumption is expected to reach a record 824.8 million tons this season, up 14.56 million tons from the previous year, underscoring continued strength in demand.

The USDA also marginally raised its forecast for global wheat trade to 222.2 million tons, compared with 210.5 million tons last season. Argentina was the main upward revision, with exports now expected to reach a record 19.5 million tons — 1.5 million tons above the previous month's forecast — as Argentine wheat remains the most competitively priced among major exporters.

At the same time, global wheat carryover stocks were revised down by 0.6 million tons to 277.0 million tons. Although lower than previously expected, this would still represent the highest level in five years. For comparison, global wheat stocks stood at 259.63 million tons at the end of the previous season.

Against this backdrop, Russian wheat exports are showing a marked increase in March. According to preliminary estimates from SovEcon, Russia could export 3.4–3.8 million tons of wheat this month, compared with 2.4 million tons in March last year and a multi-year average of 3.1 million tons.

The pace of shipments in early March has been particularly strong. The Russian Grain Union estimates that 1.29 million tons of wheat were exported between March 1 and 10, up 2.4 times year-on-year and 21.6% above the same period in February. Analysts say the growth has been supported in part by a \$8–9 per ton discount for Russian wheat versus European origins.

Traditional buyers sharply increased purchases during the period. Egypt imported 339,000 tons of Russian wheat in the first ten days of March, nearly five times more than a year earlier, while shipments to Turkey surged 6.8-fold to 145,000 tons.

The strong start to March suggests that geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have not yet disrupted Russian grain export flows, with key destinations continuing to absorb large volumes.⁶

Krasnodar Krai Ports Export 4.1 Mln Tons of Wheat in First Two Months of 2026

Wheat export shipments through the ports of Krasnodar Krai increased in the first two months of 2026, reflecting steady demand from key buyers in Africa and the Middle East.

In January–February 2026, a total of 4.1 million tons of soft wheat was exported through the region’s ports, up 16% compared with the same period last year. Deliveries were made to 25 countries.

As in previous periods, African and Middle Eastern destinations remained the main buyers of wheat shipped through Krasnodar Krai.

Egypt was the largest importer, receiving 1.5 million tons during the period. Turkey ranked second with 555,000 tons, followed by Sudan with 440,000 tons, Kenya with 273,000 tons, and Nigeria with 209,000 tons.

The data highlights the continued importance of Krasnodar Krai’s Black Sea ports as a major export gateway for Russian wheat, particularly for markets in North Africa, East Africa and the Middle East.⁸

Russian Grain Shipments to Iran via Caspian Sea Resume After Brief Pause

Russian agricultural exports to Iran via the Caspian Sea are gaining importance as the route is increasingly seen as a secure alternative amid disruptions to traditional shipping lanes.

According to Reuters sources, Russian grain shipments to Iran through the Caspian Sea have resumed after a brief pause. Market participants say the corridor has become one of the safest options for bilateral trade following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Port statistics show that by the end of the 2024/25 season, Russian agricultural exports to Iran through Caspian Sea ports totaled 2.0 million tons, accounting for 45.5% of all shipments to Iran handled through Russian ports.

In the current season, as of February, the volume has already reached 2.36 million tons, equivalent to around 44.3% of the total export volume to Iran through Russian ports.

Corn remains the largest product in the structure of shipments via Caspian ports, with 1.2 million tons exported out of a total 1.6 million tons supplied to Iran in the current season. Barley shipments through the route amounted to 884,800 tons out of 1.7 million tons, while sunflower oil exports reached 262,200 tons, representing the entire volume of Russian sunflower oil exports to Iran so far this season.

By comparison, wheat exports to Iran through Caspian ports were relatively limited last season. In 2024/25, only 64,000 tons of Russian wheat were shipped via Caspian terminals out of a total 1.3

million tons exported to Iran through all Russian ports. The bulk of wheat supplies — 1.2 million tons — was handled through Black Sea terminals.

The figures indicate that while the Caspian corridor plays a major role in corn, barley and sunflower oil exports to Iran, wheat shipments have historically remained concentrated in the Black Sea basin. However, recent logistical shifts may increase the strategic importance of Caspian ports in the coming months. ⁴

Commodity Auctions: Results For 12.03.2026

Purchase

OOO Trading House Sodruzhestvo

Soybean 40, incl. VAT | 32,750 ₰/t | 1,300 t

OOO Trading House Sodruzhestvo

Soybean 39, incl. VAT | 31,250 ₰/t | 500 t

OOO Trading House Sodruzhestvo

Soybean 38, incl. VAT | 30,750 ₰/t | 200 t

OOO Zakazchik No. 1

Wheat, grade 4, 12.5%, excluding VAT | 16,300 ₰/t | 600 tons

OOO Zakazchik No. 1

Wheat, grade 4, 12.5%, excluding VAT | 16,495 ₰/t | 620 tons

OOO OZK Trading

Wheat, grade 4, 12.5%, excluding VAT | 16,650 ₰/t | 300 tons

OOO OZK Trading

Wheat, grade 4, 12.5%, excluding VAT | 16,494 P/t | 1,200 tons ⁷

Feed Barley Prices in Ukraine Extend Gains on Tightening Supply

Ukraine's feed barley market maintained an upward price trend this week, supported by a seasonal decline in available supply and steady demand from buyers seeking to secure raw material stocks.

According to APK-Inform, the market is being supported by reduced grain availability as the season progresses, while a number of consumers remain active and are prepared to raise purchase prices in order to build up their raw material base.

As of March 13, bid prices for feed barley in Ukraine were reported in the range of UAH 9,100–10,500 per ton CPT, up by UAH 100–500 per ton compared with levels seen at the end of last week.

The latest movement confirms continued firmness in the domestic barley market, as limited seller activity and ongoing procurement demand continue to underpin prices. ²

Ukraine Forecasts Decline in Sunflower Oil Output and Exports in 2025/26

Ukraine is expected to reduce sunflower oil exports in the 2025/26 marketing year as lower sunflower seed production and weaker processing volumes weigh on overall output, according to a forecast published on March 13 by the Ukrainian Agribusiness Club (UCAB).

The association estimates Ukraine's sunflower oil exports at 4.1 million tons in the 2025/26 season, down 14% from the previous marketing year.

Despite the decline, sunflower oil is expected to remain one of Ukraine's most important agricultural export products. UCAB noted that in 2025, sunflower oil generated the highest export revenue among all products in the country's agricultural sector.

Sunflower oil production in 2025/26 is forecast at 4.3 million tons, which is 13.1% lower than in the previous season and 22.2% below the five-year average.

The decline is primarily linked to lower sunflower seed production. In the current season, sunflower planted area is estimated at 5.2 million hectares, down 2.6% year-on-year. Unfavorable

weather conditions, especially insufficient rainfall, reduced average yields to 2.0 tons per hectare, a decline of 10.6% from the previous season.

As a result, Ukraine's sunflower seed harvest is projected at 10.1 million tons, down 10.6% year-on-year and 13.5% below the five-year average.

At the same time, domestic sunflower oil consumption in Ukraine continues to decline due to the partial occupation of territories, population displacement and the ongoing effects of the war.

In the 2025/26 marketing year, domestic sunflower oil consumption is estimated at 240,000 tons, down 2% from the previous season. This means that the bulk of production will continue to be directed to export markets.

According to UCAB, despite lower yields and reduced crushing volumes, sunflower oil will remain a strategic export commodity for Ukraine, with key demand coming from the European Union, the Middle East and Asian markets. ²

Ukrainian Soybean Prices Could Rise Above UAH 21,000/T, Analysts Say

Ukraine's soybean market has posted strong price gains in the current season, although analysts warn that short-term movements may increasingly depend on developments in the global energy market.

According to the analytical department of the PUSK agricultural cooperative, established within the Ukrainian Agrarian Council, soybean prices in Ukraine have risen substantially since the start of the season, supported by tight domestic supply and firm demand. However, in the near term, price dynamics may be influenced by oil prices, which affect the biofuel sector and broader sentiment across agricultural commodity exchanges.

PUSK analysts noted that export prices for Ukrainian soybeans are now well above levels seen at the beginning of the season. While soybeans were traded at around \$390–395 per ton in September–November, current port prices have climbed to \$450–460 per ton for GM soybeans and above \$475 per ton for non-GM soybeans.

This means that soybean prices have already increased by \$60–70 per ton since the beginning of the season. Analysts say that if values gain another \$10–15 per ton, the market will effectively be approaching a near-\$100 per ton seasonal increase.

Ukrainian soybeans also remain highly competitive on export markets. In Turkey, for example, Ukrainian soybeans are priced at nearly \$500 per ton, compared with \$470–480 per ton for Brazilian supplies, according to the analysts.

The domestic market is also receiving support from limited available stocks. PUSK estimates that by May, soybean inventories in Ukraine could fall below 1 million tons, effectively signaling near exhaustion of old-crop supply.

This could force processors to compete more aggressively for remaining volumes as they try to maintain operations until the arrival of the new harvest. According to the analysts, domestic soybean prices may rise above UAH 21,000 per ton under such conditions.

At the same time, the group cautioned that the short-term outlook remains sensitive to the global energy market. Soybean prices traditionally show a correlation with crude oil due to the role of soybean oil in biodiesel production.

As a result, analysts do not rule out price fluctuations or even a temporary correction during March and the first half of April. Still, in the medium term, the market is expected to remain fundamentally supported by limited old-crop stocks and steady demand from domestic crushers.²

Azerbaijan Produces 127,900 Tons of Food-Grade Wheat in 2025

Azerbaijan produced 127,900 tons of food-grade wheat in 2025 from 22,200 hectares of harvested area, according to the Cabinet of Ministers' annual activity report cited by Report.

Of the total volume produced, 124,200 tons were delivered to procurement points. To support the sector, the government paid 14.96 million manats (about \$8.8 million) in crop subsidies for food-grade wheat supplied across 20 districts.

State support also extended to irrigation infrastructure. During the year, 133 pivot irrigation systems were installed on 6,760 hectares of land by businesses engaged in food-grade wheat production.

To finance these projects, authorities allocated 1.84 million manats (around \$1.1 million) in concessional loans, along with 11 million manats (about \$6.5 million) in concessional funding under 14 approved applications.

The expansion of irrigated wheat production is part of Azerbaijan's broader food security strategy. Under a presidential order signed by Ilham Aliyev on July 19, 2022, aimed at increasing self-sufficiency in food-grade wheat, the Ministry of Agriculture signed contracts with farms for wheat production on 29,170 hectares of pivot-irrigated land during 2022–2025.

In addition, under the Agrarian Subsidy Council's decision on planting and crop payments, a crop subsidy of 100 manats (approximately \$59) per ton was set for 2025 for food-grade wheat produced and delivered to procurement points by growers participating in the program.

The latest figures underscore Azerbaijan's continued efforts to boost domestic food wheat production through targeted subsidies, irrigation investment and long-term self-sufficiency measures.¹

Iran Says Vessels Must Obtain Permission to Transit Hormuz

Iran has announced that all vessels seeking to transit the Strait of Hormuz must obtain prior coordination with Iranian authorities, marking a further tightening of control over one of the world's most important shipping chokepoints.

According to statements by IRGC Navy commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, any ship intending to pass through the strait must receive permission from Iran. The remarks come amid heightened tensions in the region and growing concerns over the safety of commercial navigation through the waterway.

The new requirement signals that Tehran is seeking to assert direct oversight over maritime traffic in the strait, which remains critical for global oil and commodity flows. The move is likely to add further uncertainty for shipowners, insurers and commodity traders already facing elevated geopolitical risks in the Gulf.

Recent reports indicate that some vessels have already sought or received clearance from Iranian authorities, including at least one Turkish-owned ship, underscoring that transit may still be possible under controlled conditions rather than under a full blanket halt.

The latest development is expected to keep pressure on freight, insurance costs and energy markets, as any additional restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz could disrupt crude oil, refined products and agricultural trade flows linked to the Gulf region.⁵

EU Palm Oil Imports Decline Further in 2025/26 Amid Biofuel Policy Shift

Palm oil imports into the European Union continued to trend lower in the 2025/26 season, reflecting weaker consumption and the gradual phase-out of palm oil-based biofuels from national renewable fuel targets.

According to the latest European Commission data cited by Germany's Union for the Promotion of Oilseeds and Cereals (UFOP), the EU imported 1.9 million tons of palm oil between July 1, 2025 and March 3, 2026, slightly below the nearly 2.0 million tons imported during the same period a year earlier.

The decline becomes more pronounced when compared with earlier years. Between July 2023 and March 2024, the EU imported around 2.4 million tons of palm oil, highlighting the broader downward trend in demand.

UFOP links the weaker import pace to the planned exclusion of palm oil-based biofuels from counting toward member states' national quota obligations by 2030. According to the association, several EU countries have already implemented this step ahead of schedule, accelerating the reduction in palm oil use within the bloc.

Indonesia remained the EU's largest palm oil supplier during the period, shipping 597,000 tons, although this was 8% less than in the same period last year. Malaysia, the second-largest supplier, increased deliveries by around 4% to 484,000 tons.

Among other key origins, Guatemala raised shipments to the EU by about 5% to 282,000 tons. In contrast, imports from Papua New Guinea declined by roughly 17%, while shipments from Honduras recorded the sharpest drop, falling approximately 36% year-on-year.

The continued fall in imports confirms a longer-term structural decline in EU palm oil consumption, driven largely by biofuel policy changes and reduced incentives for palm-based feedstocks.

At the same time, UFOP warned that alternative imports such as palm oil mill effluent (POME), which can also be used as a processing feedstock, may create new market distortions if volumes increase.¹

EU Wheat Export Forecast Falls Again as War Reshapes Regional Trade Flows

Consultancy Expana has lowered its forecast for European Union soft wheat exports in the 2025/26 marketing year for the fifth consecutive month, citing weaker expectations for shipments to the Middle East amid the ongoing conflict in the region.

In its latest monthly report, Expana reduced its projection for EU soft wheat exports to 27.1 million tons, down from 27.6 million tons in the previous forecast. Even with the latest cut, exports would still remain above the 2024/25 level, when a poor French harvest constrained the EU's export potential.

According to analyst Benoit Fayaud, the revision reflects lower expected grain flows to Middle Eastern markets, with forecasts for regional shipments reduced by 250,000 tons for soft wheat and 100,000 tons for barley. The cuts were linked to the immediate impact of the conflict on demand and trade logistics in the region.

At the same time, Expana revised down its broader outlook for grain imports into the Middle East in 2025/26. Soft wheat imports were lowered by 1.6 million tons, corn imports by 1.7 million tons, and barley imports by around 500,000 tons.

Despite the weaker demand outlook, analysts noted that strong export activity at the beginning of the marketing year could help cushion the impact of any short-term slowdown. As a result, several

months of reduced demand may have only a limited effect on total seasonal trade volumes if the disruption proves temporary.

However, Expana warned that a prolonged conflict or persistently high energy prices could have broader consequences, potentially weakening grain demand not only in the Middle East but also in other regions.

In its latest crop outlook, the consultancy also slightly raised its forecast for the EU's 2026 soft wheat harvest to 128.6 million tons, while trimming its maize production estimate to 57.9 million tons.¹

India's Wheat Harvest Seen at Record 120.2 Mln Tons in 2025/26

India is expected to harvest a record wheat crop in the 2025/26 season, with production projected at 120.2 million tons, according to the country's Ministry of Agriculture.

The forecast implies a 2% increase from the previous season, as farmers begin harvesting wheat — the key crop of the winter Rabi season, which runs from November to April.

The ministry said the overall grain production outlook for the current crop year remains highly optimistic and points to record volumes.

In addition to wheat, farmers are also harvesting chickpeas and mustard during the Rabi season. Meanwhile, the summer Kharif season, which runs from June to October, includes crops such as rice, corn and cotton.

India's total grain harvest in the Kharif season is estimated at 174.0 million tons, up 2.8% from a year earlier. Grain production in the Rabi season is forecast at 174.5 million tons, which is 3.2% higher year-on-year.

Rice production is also expected to remain strong. The Kharif rice crop is projected at a record 123.9 million tons, while Rabi rice output, excluding the summer harvest, is estimated at 167,000 tons.

The figures point to another strong agricultural year for India, supported by higher output across both major cropping seasons and record expectations for key staple grains.⁴

U.S.-China Trade Talks Could Set Stage for New Soybean Purchases

Soybeans are expected to be one of the central issues at the upcoming meeting between U.S. and Chinese trade officials, as markets look for signals on when Beijing may resume more active purchases of American supplies, Bloomberg reported.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng are scheduled to meet in Paris this weekend, ahead of a planned summit in Beijing later this month between Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping.

Soybeans remain one of the most politically and commercially sensitive commodities in U.S.-China relations, reflecting the mutual dependence between Chinese livestock producers, who need imported feed, and American farmers, who rely heavily on export demand.

Market participants say the upcoming high-level contacts could create room for renewed buying. According to Meng Zhanyu, an analyst at Wuchan Zhongda Futures, the general market expectation is that the leaders' meeting will likely provide incentives for new soybean purchases.

Chinese buying of U.S. soybeans effectively stalled for much of 2025 amid the trade conflict. However, Beijing moved quickly in October to fulfill an agreement for 12 million tons of U.S. soybeans. After that, purchases slowed again, and the timing of the next wave of buying remains unclear.

Under the current trade truce, China is expected to import 25 million tons of U.S. soybeans annually for three years starting in 2026. After the initial 12 million tons were booked, traders widely expected Chinese buyers to step back until the arrival of the new U.S. crop in September, when prices typically become more competitive.

That outlook became less clear after Donald Trump claimed in February on Truth Social that China was considering increasing purchases to 20 million tons already in the current season. Beijing has not publicly confirmed that scenario, leaving the market without a clear signal.

Analysts say expectations for a major breakthrough have become more cautious in recent weeks. Alongside unresolved trade issues, negotiations are being complicated by broader geopolitical risks, including the conflict involving Iran, as well as domestic legal developments in the U.S. that could affect tariff policy.

Susan Stroud of No Bull Ag said the market appears to be lowering expectations for a major trade breakthrough, noting that tensions in the Middle East have added new uncertainty and shifted attention away from China.

Commercial factors also remain important. With harvest progressing in the Southern Hemisphere, China continues to have access to competitively priced Brazilian soybeans. In recent years, Beijing has actively diversified import origins, reducing its dependence on U.S. supplies.

Since October, most U.S. soybean purchases have reportedly come from Chinese state-linked importers, often viewed as politically motivated rather than purely commercial. Private crushers remain more price-sensitive and currently favor Brazilian soybeans, which are cheaper and more readily available. U.S. beans also remain subject to a 13% tariff and are relatively tight in supply.

Still, traders note that political considerations can override economics during sensitive negotiations, and renewed soybean buying could re-emerge as a goodwill gesture ahead of the Trump–Xi summit.

According to Stroud, no such “goodwill” soybean purchases had been seen during the first 10 days of March, despite similar patterns having emerged during previous rounds of negotiations.¹

USDA raises forecast for global vegetable oil exports in 2025/26

The U.S. Department of Agriculture increased its forecast for global exports of major vegetable oils in the 2025/26 season in its March outlook, reflecting stronger expected trade in sunflower and rapeseed oil.

According to the USDA review, global exports of key vegetable oils are now projected at 87.77 million tons, up from the previous estimate of 87.4 million tons.

The largest upward revision was made for sunflower oil, with the global export forecast raised to 13.19 million tons from 12.82 million tons previously. The outlook for rapeseed oil exports was also increased slightly, to 7.92 million tons from 7.89 million tons.

At the same time, the USDA left its forecast for global soybean oil exports unchanged at 13.9 million tons.

The report also highlighted a sharp rise in Canada’s role in the soybean oil market. By the end of the 2025/26 season, Canadian soybean oil imports are expected to reach 800,000 tons, making the country the world’s second-largest importer of the product.

USDA analysts said the surge is driven almost entirely by the launch of renewable diesel production in Newfoundland, as well as the expansion of soybean oil trade flows with Argentina.

The latest revisions point to continued strength in global vegetable oil trade, with biofuel demand and changing import patterns increasingly shaping market dynamics.³

References:

1. www.ukragroconsult.com
2. www.apk-inform.com
3. Agroexport Telegram Channel
4. Agroexpert Telegram Channel
5. Centr VET Telegram Channel
6. World Trade Telegram Channel
7. NAMEX Telegram Channel
8. Rus Grain Union Telegram Channel