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Turkey and Kazakhstan Agree to Expand Agricultural Trade Cooperation

Turkey and Kazakhstan have agreed to strengthen cooperation in agricultural trade and increase exports of Kazakh grain to the Turkish market following talks in Astana between President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

According to Tokayev, the two countries are preparing to adopt a joint roadmap designed to expand bilateral trade in agricultural products, with a particular focus on increasing Kazakhstan's grain exports.

The discussions also covered several large-scale agricultural investment projects. Tiryaki Agro plans to invest \$320 million in the construction of a deep grain-processing plant in Astana with annual processing capacity of 240,000 tonnes of wheat and 80,000 tonnes of peas.

Meanwhile, Alarko Holding intends to invest \$650 million in a greenhouse complex project in Shymkent. Kazakhstan additionally expressed interest in expanding cooperation with Turkey in the field of modern agricultural technologies.

The two countries also agreed to further develop logistics infrastructure and strengthen the Middle Corridor route through the Caspian Sea, which is increasingly viewed as a modern Silk Road connecting Central Asia with the Mediterranean region. ¹

Russia Boosts Corn Shipments as Turkey and Iran Increase Purchases

Russia increased corn exports sharply during the first quarter of 2026, supplying more than \$260 million worth of corn to foreign markets, according to industry estimates. The export value was 55% higher than in the same period of 2025, while shipment volumes rose 68% year-on-year to 1.2 million tonnes.

Iran remained the largest buyer of Russian corn, with imports from Russia increasing significantly at the start of 2026.

Turkey also sharply increased purchases of Russian corn. Between January and March, exports to Turkey rose 6.5 times year-on-year to \$88 million. South Korea ranked third among the largest importers, purchasing around \$25 million worth of Russian corn.

Other major buyers included China and Kazakhstan, each importing more than \$13 million worth of Russian corn during the reporting period. Exports to China increased 2.5 times compared with the previous year, while shipments to Kazakhstan surged 45-fold.

Ilya Ilyushin noted that corn remains one of the world's most widely cultivated grains and, together with wheat and barley, is among Russia's key cereal export crops. He said larger harvests create opportunities to expand exports of both raw corn and processed products.

According to Ilyushin, Russia retains strong potential to increase corn supplies to Iran, Turkey, China, South Korea and other markets. He added that access to East Asian export destinations is particularly important for farmers in Russia's Far East, where production significantly exceeds domestic demand. ³

Russia Adopts Unified Standard for Corn Oil Classification and Production

Rosstandart has approved a new GOST standard for corn oil, with the quality requirements set to come into force on September 1, 2027, according to the agency's registry.

The new standard applies to corn oil produced from corn germ (*Zea mays* L.) and intended for direct human consumption, including use in children's nutrition and in various sectors of the food industry. It also covers corn oil used as edible raw material for refining at enterprises producing oil and fat products.

According to the document description, the GOST establishes a classification system for corn oil and defines technical requirements for both the finished product and the raw materials used in production.⁴

Russia Sets Wheat Export Duty at Zero for May 20–26

Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation announced that export duties on wheat, corn and barley from Russia will remain at zero for the period from May 20 to May 26.

The updated duty calculations were based on revised indicative export prices per tonne. Wheat prices remained unchanged at \$230.7 per tonne, while barley prices slightly declined to \$221.4 per tonne from \$221.9 previously. Corn prices increased marginally to \$221.4 per tonne from \$220.

Russia introduced flexible export duties on wheat, corn and barley in 2021 as part of its grain damper mechanism. Under the system, duties are calculated at 70% of the difference between indicative export prices and base prices. The calculations are based on export contracts registered on the Moscow Exchange.⁴

Container Freight Costs Reach Highest Level of 2026

The Drewry World Container Index accelerated its upward trend over the past week, rising 12% to \$2,553 per 40-foot container (FEU). The index surpassed the \$2,500 mark for the first time since the beginning of the year.

The strongest increase in freight rates was recorded on routes linking China with Europe. Shipping costs from Shanghai to Genoa climbed 20% to \$3,701 per FEU, while rates from Shanghai to Rotterdam increased 11% to \$2,413.

Freight rates also rose on trans-Pacific routes to the United States. The Shanghai–New York route gained 14% to \$4,252 per FEU, while Shanghai–Los Angeles rates rose 10% to \$3,357.

The increase in freight costs coincided with a broader recovery in Chinese exports. According to data from the General Administration of Customs of China, exports from China to the European Union reached \$46.8 billion in April, up 13% from March. Shipments to the United States increased 25% month-on-month to \$29.4 billion.

The current level of the Drewry index is now 14% higher than the same period a year earlier, when it stood at \$2,233 per FEU.

Drewry expects freight rates to continue rising next week amid recovering demand, while tensions in the Middle East remain an additional source of uncertainty for global shipping markets.⁵

Russia's Sunflower Seed Prices Reach 34,500 Rubles per Ton in March

The average price of sunflower seeds in Russia reached 34,500 rubles per tonne in March 2026, according to data from SoyaNews.

The figure was 1.2% higher than in February, although it remained 9.9% below the level recorded in March 2025. Since the beginning of 2026, sunflower seed prices in Russia have declined by 1.8%.

Since January 2024, the lowest average sunflower seed price was recorded in February 2024 at 24,600 rubles per tonne, while the highest level was reached in January 2025 at 43,000 rubles per tonne.

Regionally, the highest sunflower seed prices in March 2026 were registered in Russia's Southern Federal District, where prices averaged 36,200 rubles per tonne. The lowest prices were recorded in the Siberian Federal District at 26,700 rubles per tonne.⁶

Ukraine's Seaports Increase Cargo Throughput Despite Drone Attacks

Ukraine's seaports handled 8.2 million tonnes of cargo in April 2026, an increase of 35.8% compared with the same month last year, according to the Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority.

The growth was recorded despite intensified attacks on port and logistics infrastructure. The authority stated that more than 500 unmanned aerial vehicles targeted logistics facilities during April alone, with ports reportedly coming under attack almost every other day.


Despite ongoing security risks and repeated shelling, port operators maintained uninterrupted operations and continued fulfilling foreign trade contracts, the authority said.

In total, Ukraine's seaports processed 29.5 million tonnes of cargo during January–April 2026, exceeding volumes recorded during the same period a year earlier.

Grain remained the dominant cargo category, accounting for 16 million tonnes of throughput during the four-month period, up 7% year-on-year, according to the Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority.²

Ukraine's Sunflower Market Faces Ongoing Raw Material Shortage

Sunflower prices in Ukraine are likely to continue rising despite a recent market correction caused by geopolitical developments and lower oil prices, according to analysts from the PUSK agricultural cooperative operating within the framework of the Ukrainian Agrarian Council.



Analysts noted that recent geopolitical developments triggered declines across commodity markets, including vegetable oils. Following statements by U.S. President Donald Trump regarding a possible end to the conflict with Iran, oil prices fell sharply, weighing on exchange-traded assets and physical vegetable oil markets. As a result, sunflower oil prices declined by approximately \$10–15 per tonne, prompting Ukrainian processors to lower purchase prices for sunflower seeds.

However, the market did not experience an increase in supply, as farmers continued to restrain sales. Analysts said the ongoing sowing campaign and stronger profitability from corn sales were among the key reasons behind the limited selling activity.

PUSK also stated that sunflower oil currently appears undervalued relative to soybean oil, despite historically trading at a premium. According to analysts, this creates conditions for a near-term price recovery even without additional gains in soybean oil prices. Persistently high oil prices are also expected to support the market.

The cooperative added that Ukraine's domestic sunflower market continues to face a shortage of supply. Even large processing plants reportedly hold raw material stocks sufficient for no more than two weeks, while some companies are purchasing only 300–700 tonnes per week.

Against this backdrop, analysts believe sunflower prices could recover to around 34,000–35,000 UAH per tonne.²

Ukrainian Feed Barley Prices Fall Amid Sluggish Import Demand

Weak demand from traditional buyers of Ukrainian feed barley has forced exporters to lower purchase prices in Ukrainian ports to levels comparable with the upcoming harvest.

Market participants said importers in the Middle East are currently cautious about contracting new-crop barley due to disruptions linked to tensions in the Persian Gulf and expectations of larger domestic grain harvests compared with last year.


The weak demand was reflected in the latest tender by Jordan's state grain buyer, which made no purchases in an international tender for 120,000 tonnes of feed barley after receiving only one offer that was considered too expensive. The tender was subsequently postponed until the end of May.

In Ukraine, export bid prices for feed barley declined by 300–400 UAH per tonne to 10,400–10,500 UAH per tonne, equivalent to about \$208–210 per tonne delivered to Black Sea ports, effectively matching new-crop price levels.

As of May 17, Ukraine exported only 5,000 tonnes of barley during the first half of the month. Total barley exports since the start of the 2025/26 marketing season reached 1.67 million tonnes, down 56% from the 2.67 million tonnes exported during the same period a year earlier.

The slowdown in exports could increase carryover stocks at the beginning of the next season. However, Ukrainian farmers are hoping that rising feed corn prices — currently around \$230 per tonne in Black Sea ports — and feed wheat prices of \$217–218 per tonne may eventually support barley prices.

According to ASAP Agri, Romanian new-crop barley is currently more competitive on export markets than Ukrainian supplies. Romanian barley is offered at around €191 per tonne FOB Constanta, or about \$225 per tonne FOB for July delivery, while Ukrainian barley is trading near \$230 per tonne FOB.



The European Commission estimates Romania's 2026 barley harvest at around 3 million tonnes. Although lower than last year's crop, the volume would remain above the country's long-term average, supporting Romania's strong export position.

Meanwhile, favorable rainfall in Ukraine has improved crop conditions, and the country's barley harvest is expected to remain close to last year's level at around 5.5 million tonnes.¹

Kazakhstan Discusses Possible Export Duties on Grain and Oilseeds

Kazakhstan has begun discussions on the possible introduction of export duties on several agricultural commodities, including grains and oilseeds. The issue was considered during a meeting organized by the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Atameken with participation from the State Revenue Committee of the Ministry of Finance, industry associations and agricultural sector representatives.

According to the Grain Union of Kazakhstan, business representatives expressed a unified position that the introduction of export duties would be premature under current market conditions. Market participants warned that such measures could reduce domestic purchase prices and weaken farmers' incomes.

Industry representatives also noted that Kazakhstan's agricultural sector is already under pressure from rising logistics, financing and production costs. Grain exports remain a key source of revenue for rural regions, and additional trade restrictions could negatively affect profitability and investment activity in the sector.

Participants in the discussions argued that export duties should only be considered after sufficient domestic processing capacity has been developed and reaches stable utilization levels. The Grain Union emphasized the importance of maintaining predictable trade conditions while continuing to expand value-added agricultural processing without creating additional burdens for producers.


The Association of Farmers of Kazakhstan also strongly opposed the proposal, warning that export duties could reduce incentives for farmers to grow wheat and sunflower crops. According to the association, this could lead to lower planted areas and declining yields over the medium term, while also risking the loss of export markets to competing suppliers such as Russia, Ukraine, Canada and Australia.

The association stated that Kazakhstan should avoid permanent export duties on grain and apply temporary restrictions only in force majeure situations such as droughts, sharp price increases or supply shortages. For oilseeds, the group said temporary moderate duties could be acceptable only if combined with farmer support measures, investment in processing capacity and clear policy predictability.¹

Poland May Need More Ukrainian Rapeseed Amid Domestic Deficit

Changes in Ukrainian rapeseed exports could have significant implications for the Polish market, according to reporting by Farmer.pl.

The growing share of processed vegetable oil exports from Ukraine, rather than raw rapeseed shipments, is increasing competition in the vegetable oil market while also creating pressure on Polish processing plants due to limited raw material availability.



Analysts warn that reduced access to imported rapeseed could affect both rapeseed and rapeseed meal prices in Poland. Lower domestic processing volumes may also reduce the availability of locally produced vegetable oil and protein feed, potentially influencing Polish farmers' crop decisions in the coming years.

The publication noted that Ukraine is increasingly transforming from a supplier of raw materials into a stronger exporter of processed agricultural products, significantly altering market dynamics within the European Union. Poland is currently the second-largest importer of Ukrainian rapeseed oil after Spain.

Between July 1, 2025 and the end of March 2026, Ukraine's vegetable oil exports increased by 21.1% in value terms.

At the same time, Poland's domestic rapeseed crop is facing worsening conditions due to drought and April frosts. In some regions, yield potential has reportedly fallen to 1–1.5 tonnes per hectare. Since Poland is one of the key participants in the EU rapeseed market balance, a smaller harvest could increase the country's need for imported raw materials.

Polish processors have previously warned of a rapeseed shortage estimated at no less than 500,000 tonnes and called for the reopening of imports from Ukraine, despite current restrictions on Ukrainian rapeseed entering the Polish market.

Market participants say that if Poland reopens imports of Ukrainian rapeseed, additional demand could support prices for Ukrainian supplies.¹

Argentina's Wheat Harvest Forecast to Decline in 2026/27

The Buenos Aires Grain Exchange has released its first forecast for Argentina's 2026/27 wheat harvest, projecting production at 21.3 million tonnes. This would represent a decline of 23.4% compared with the previous season.

The exchange also expects the country's wheat planting area to decrease by 3% to 6.5 million hectares. Wheat sowing in Argentina is expected to continue through July, while harvesting is scheduled for October through December.

The United States Department of Agriculture estimates Argentina's upcoming wheat crop slightly lower at 21 million tonnes. According to USDA projections, Argentina's wheat export potential in the 2026/27 marketing year could decline to 14.5 million tonnes, down 4 million tonnes from the current season.¹

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