

Russian embargo in the agricultural sector and the protective mechanisms of Bulgarian agriculture

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Date: 16.09.2015 *Issue:* 9/2015



The State Fund Agriculture has prepared a scheme for emergency measures to support the fruit and vegetable market.

In August, Russia added Albania, Montenegro, Liechtenstein, and Iceland to the list of countries with an embargo on imports of agricultural goods, in response to Western sanctions due to the crisis in Ukraine. The ban covers meat, fish, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables and applies with equal force to the United States, Canada, Norway, and Australia, as well as to all 28 member states of the European Union. Moscow will also ban imports of some goods from Ukraine from

2016 if the economic part of the association agreement between Kyiv and the EU, signed in June last year, enters into force, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev told Reuters.

In connection with the extension of the Russian import ban for another year (until July 2016), the European Commission provided for, with Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1369/2015 of 7 August this year, an extension of the period of application of the temporary emergency measures to support producers of certain fruits and vegetables, which were introduced by Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1031/2014.

Producers will be able to apply the 2 emergency measures already known and applied in 2014:

1) withdrawal of products from the market, which are to be intended for:

- free distribution to charitable organizations or foundations, schools, kindergartens, children's camps, medical institutions, nursing homes, or places of detention;

- animal feed.

2) non-harvesting of vegetables and fruits.

The measures will apply to the same products as in 2014, namely: tomatoes, cucumbers, gherkins, carrots, sweet peppers, cabbage, cauliflower, mushrooms, apples, pears, raspberries, dessert grapes, plums, peaches, and nectarines.

The requirements for the application of the two sub-measures aim to minimize the phytosanitary consequences of non-harvesting of the produce - primarily the spread of plant diseases. The withdrawn produce can be provided free of charge to charitable organizations or foundations, schools, kindergartens, children's camps, medical institutions, nursing homes, or places of detention, as well as for animal feed.

The use of vegetables and/or fruits withdrawn from the market for animal feed is certified by a confirmatory report from an official veterinarian or an inspector from the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency. The conditions for determining the amount of financial aid for the products remain the same as for the measures applied in 2014, with the difference that the application of a reduction coefficient is not foreseen.

Aid will be provided only to producers of the specified vegetables and fruits who are registered by July 31, 2015, under Ordinance No. 3 of 1999 on the establishment and maintenance of a register of agricultural producers.

The acceptance of applications for the application of measures regarding all other fruits and vegetables ceases when the total quantity for which measures have been applied reaches 3000

tons. For peaches and nectarines, the total quantity for aid will not exceed 950 tons. The principle of priority for the first applicant who has applied one of the measures will be applied.

One of the conditions for using the aid is the presence of an inspector from the State Fund "Agriculture" when filling out the documents, who will record all necessary data for the application of the respective measure.

The possibility for reimbursement of incurred transport costs when applying the measure of withdrawal from the market of products intended for free distribution is also provided. The aid for transport costs is provided to producers who have transported the approved vegetables and fruits for withdrawal from the place of withdrawal to the place of delivery. The amount of this aid is specified in an annex to the ordinance.

Guidelines for the application of temporary emergency measures to support the market in the fruit and vegetable sector. [HERE](#)