

## Black Sea Crop Update

26 January 2023

### Agribusiness News

#### Russia's winter crop condition

Earlier this week, Russia's Minister of Agriculture was briefed on the condition of winter crops.

More than 94% of winter crops are reported to be in good and satisfactory condition, in line with the long-term average but down on last year's 97%.

In Rostov, where 2.9MHA of winter crops have been sown, more than 98% of crops are in good and satisfactory condition, same in Volgograd, while Krasnodar report 100% of 1.8MHA successfully sprouted.

I wouldn't read too much into these numbers as around 60% of the Russian winter wheat crop is still under snow, so no one knows what it looks like, and it's the agronomist's job to make the crop assessments, whose continued employment is based on doing a good job.



Having said that, winter temperatures have not been cause for concern, so crop conditions should be good.

We did see temperatures down to  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) in Volgograd last week but not long enough to be a problem.

The guys briefing the minister did cover their backs by saying severe frosts had been observed in Russia, not all regions have snow cover, and they did see [ice] crust in a number of territories, but in general, not critical...it was like 2019.

Personally, I don't think there will be an issue.

Looking forward to where we may see a problem is if there is a thaw and re-freeze during the next six to eight weeks; we sometimes see increased damage as plants are frozen in ice (see picture from 2016).

#### Russia's spring sowing campaign

At the same meeting, the Minister of Ag was supposedly updated on the preparations for the spring sowing campaign, although no information was posted.

I feel the Russian Ministry of Agriculture will be as cagey reporting figures again this year as last year.

It was mentioned that fertiliser application on winter crops has started in (occupied) Crimea and will start elsewhere soon, but that's no surprise.

#### USDA say Russian wheat estimate not feasible

The USDA is not buying Russia's wheat crop estimates, nor are we.

In their latest World Ag Production report (WAP 1-23), they say Russia's wheat forecast of 102MMT (adjusted for Crimea) is not supported by their remote sensing and statistical-based yield modelling.

Their estimate for Russian wheat is 91MMT and excludes estimated output from Crimea, output from Ukraine oblasts currently under conflict, and any misappropriated production from the conflict zones.

Earlier today, Reuters reported the chairman of USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board, Mark Jekanowski, saying the agency sees Russia's official wheat crop estimate as "not feasible".

Will Russia respond?