

Russians Faced With Lower Quality Fruit and Veg Following Western Food Ban

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A vendor sells vegetables and fruits at the city market in St.Petersburg, Russia.

Russian consumers have been left with lower-quality produce and a reduced choice of fruit and vegetables following Moscow's ban on Western food imports, retailers said.

"There are less fruit and vegetables [available]. The quality of that produce is worse," the head of the Russian Retailers Association, Ilya Yakubson said, the TASS news agency reported Thursday.

Moscow in August announced a sweeping ban on food imports from the 28 EU countries, the U.S., Australia, Canada and Norway in response to Western sanctions against Russia over its perceived role in the Ukraine crisis.

But trying to replace European fruit and vegetables with those from China has been an uphill battle, according to Yakubson

"Produce from Southeast Asia is of a somewhat different quality," he was quoted by TASS as telling a conference titled Retail Business Russia & CIS.

Retailers have also struggled this fall to replace produce that was previously imported from southern Europe but which has been out of season in other parts of the world, Yakubson was quoted as saying.

However, in response to reports that some retailers would try to take advantage of the food ban by increasing their prices, Yakubson reserved only praise for the authorities, saying they were more than willing to discuss price hikes if they could be justified, TASS reported.

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