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Return to Russia won't be easy

Russian authorities have warned EU food producers that returning to the market will not be simple even once the ban has been formally lifted



Russia could allow around 20 firms from Hungary, Cyprus and Greece to return to its market once the embargo on food imports from the European Union is lifted, according to Interfax news agency.

Sergei Dankvert, head of the federal veterinary service, apparently told Interfax that Moscow could let 15 Hungarian and a handful of Greek and Cypriot producers back into its market. "The inspections are continuing and this number could be increased," he said.

The favourable treatment is thought to be down to the good ties maintained by authorities in Hungary, Cyprus and Greece with Russia during the ban, despite their involvement in EU sanctions against the country over the Ukraine crisis.

The Russian embargo is due to run out on 7 August, a year after it was imposed, but Dankvert made no mention of any specific timeframe. Instead, he stressed that the return of any EU food producers to the Russian market would be neither simple nor automatic even following the formal lifting of the ban.

Prior to the embargo, around 6,000 European firms were exporting food products to Russia, according to Dankvert, but these have gradually been replaced by suppliers from Latin America, Africa and Asia, in addition to non-EU countries in Europe such as Serbia.