

Belarus has taken Russia's lead by introducing restrictions on importing potatoes from the Ukraine, as conflict continues in the Eastern European country. 

A statement from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus says the temporary restrictions will come into effect on July 10, 2014.

Potatoes shipped before this date will also be subjected to quarantine and phytosanitary control, it says.

This is the latest trade issue to come up as part of the ongoing geopolitical tension in the region.

In June, www.freshfruitportal.com reported how Russia's Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Rosselkhoznadzor) [issued a temporary ban on potatoes from neighboring Ukraine on the basis of repeated pest contamination issues](#).

In the fresh produce industry many believe the bans are politically motivated, but the statement from the Belarus government department insists its ban relates to quarantine and pest issues.

"Please be informed that in connection with the appeal of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance of the Russia Federation and in accordance with Articles 6 and 8 of the Customs Union Agreement on Plant Quarantine of December 11, 2009, the principles of the International Convention on Plant Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus will issue temporary restrictions on imports of potato food from Ukraine to Belarus," the statement says.

Meanwhile, some sections of the Russian media are reporting how exporters are turning to alternative markets in the Middle East, India, China and Turkey to plug the gaps following EU sanctions relating to Russian trade.

On June 23, the EU Foreign Affairs Council met in Luxembourg where members agreed to prohibit the import of goods originating from Crimea and Sevastopol, with the exception of those carrying certificates of origin granted by the Ukraine government.

The Council also prohibited direct or indirect financing or financial assistance for the import of goods, including insurances relating to such goods, and 'continues to monitor the situation and to consider further trade measures as necessary', according to an EU release that summarizes last month's meeting.

Related story: [Russia places temporary ban on Ukrainian potatoes](#)

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