The European Commission has grafted extra funding onto a grower support program it suspended on Sept. 10, with a targeted €165 million (US$209 million) package for producers hit by Russia's ban on EU produce imports.

Unlike its €125 million (US$159 million) predecessor that was abandoned due to fraud claims, the new deal comes with an annex outlining eligible volumes in member states with specific figures for each crop, with amounts based on exports over the last three years.

Additionally, it also includes oranges, mandarins and clementines which did not fall under the previous scheme.

"I am pleased that the Commission has managed to mobilise a further €165 million to help ease the market pressure for fruit and vegetable growers following the Russian ban," EU agricultural commissioner Dacian Cioloş said in a release.

"This programme will be more targeted than the initial scheme, although there is still some flexibility within the 4 product groups. These market support measures will provide short-term relief," he said, referring to the product categories for the 12 countries that exported the most produce on average to Russia in the September-December period between 2011-13.

*Click here for more stories* relating to Russia's ban on produce imports from the EU, the U.S., Australia, Canada and Norway.

The package includes withdrawals for EU-funded free distribution to the public or for non-food use, and payments at a lower rate for green-harvesting or non-harvesting.

The biggest category in volume is 'apples & pears' with 181,000 metric tons (MT), followed by citrus fruit (oranges, mandarins and clementines) with a total of 96,090MT.

The third category with 44,300MT is 'other vegetables' and includes carrots, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, while 76,895MT worth of produce will be accounted for under the 'other fruits' category, including kiwifruit, plums and table grapes.

While citrus growers have benefited from the new package, others will miss out as cabbage, cauliflowers, headed broccoli, mushrooms, and soft fruit are no longer included in the scheme.

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