



Ukrzernoprom Agro avoids Ukraine harvest hiccups

Ukrzernoprom Agro joined other Ukraine farm operators downplaying the threat posed by a rain-punctuated harvest as it revealed a move towards spring crops next year, to reduce the potential for frost damage.

The group, which sowed 85,000 hectares of crops, from buckwheat to peas, said that its harvest was "going according to schedule", with more than 100,000 tonnes of grains collected so far, out of a target of 240,000 tonnes.

The statement comes a week after Eugene Leng, the Ukrzernoprom Agro chief executive, warned of the threat to grain quality posed by rains which have dumped twice normal rainfall on eastern Ukraine.

"It will not be possible to harvest a lot of milling wheat," Mr Leng told a conference, in Kiev, comments supported by a report from US Department of Agriculture officials.

"Powerful rains in the second part of June and beginning of July on the one hand relieved the accumulated moisture deficit, but on the other hand were too strong," the USDA said, explaining 1.0m-tonne downgrades last week to forecasts for Ukraine's wheat production and exports.

"The moisture could result in harvest delays, some additional lodging, and is expected to raise the share of feed-quality wheat."

Better outlook

However, many of the concerns appear at odds with statements from the likes of Mykola Prysyazhnyuk, Ukraine's farm minister, who on Wednesday lifted by 2m tonnes to 47m tonnes his forecast for the country's grains production.

Chicken-to-corn group MHP said on Monday that its grain yields will "be good enough", while last week Landkom International said its crops had been in "good condition" ahead of harvest.

A spokesperson for Ukrzernoprom Agro said that the company, whose farms are scattered throughout Ukraine, would "have more or less a good harvest this year".

Spring vs winter

Ukrzernoprom Agro also revealed that it would trim by 2,400 hectares, to 50,800 hectares, its sowings of autumn-seeded grains, with particular cuts to barley and rapeseed plantings.

The shift reflected in part the greater risk associated with autumn sowings in a country which can have bitter

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Coffee	116.15	+0.15
Cotton #2	61.62	-0.83
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winters, with rapeseed plantings cut in areas they struggled last time, the spokesperson said.

Furthermore, spring crops, such as corn, soybeans and sunflowers, "look more profitable".

Spring crops they have historically accounted for a minority of the company's sowing schedule, with 30,000 hectares sown this year.

Shares in MCB Agricole, Ukrzernoprom Agro's Frankfurt-listed holding company, stood unchanged at E1.905 in afternoon trade.

