



Commodity Intelligence Report

February 28, 2018

Russia 2018/19 Winter Grain: Planted Area and Early-Season Conditions

Russia's winter grains are planted from August through November and remain dormant during the winter. Vegetative growth resumes in March and harvest occurs from July through August. According to data from the Russian Ministry of Agriculture, the area planted to 2018/19 winter grains totaled 16.68 million hectares compared to 16.94 million for 2017/18 (see Figure 1). The major winter grains include wheat, rye, barley, and triticale. Although total winter-grain area in Russia is down 1.5 percent from last year, area is up 0.18 mha (3.2 percent) in the high-yielding Southern District, where winter-wheat yield averages 3.52 tons per hectare. Meanwhile, area is down 0.27 mha (5.9 percent) in the Volga District, where average winter-wheat yield is only 2.05 t/ha. Winter-grain area is down 1.7 percent in the Central District and essentially unchanged in the North Caucasus District.

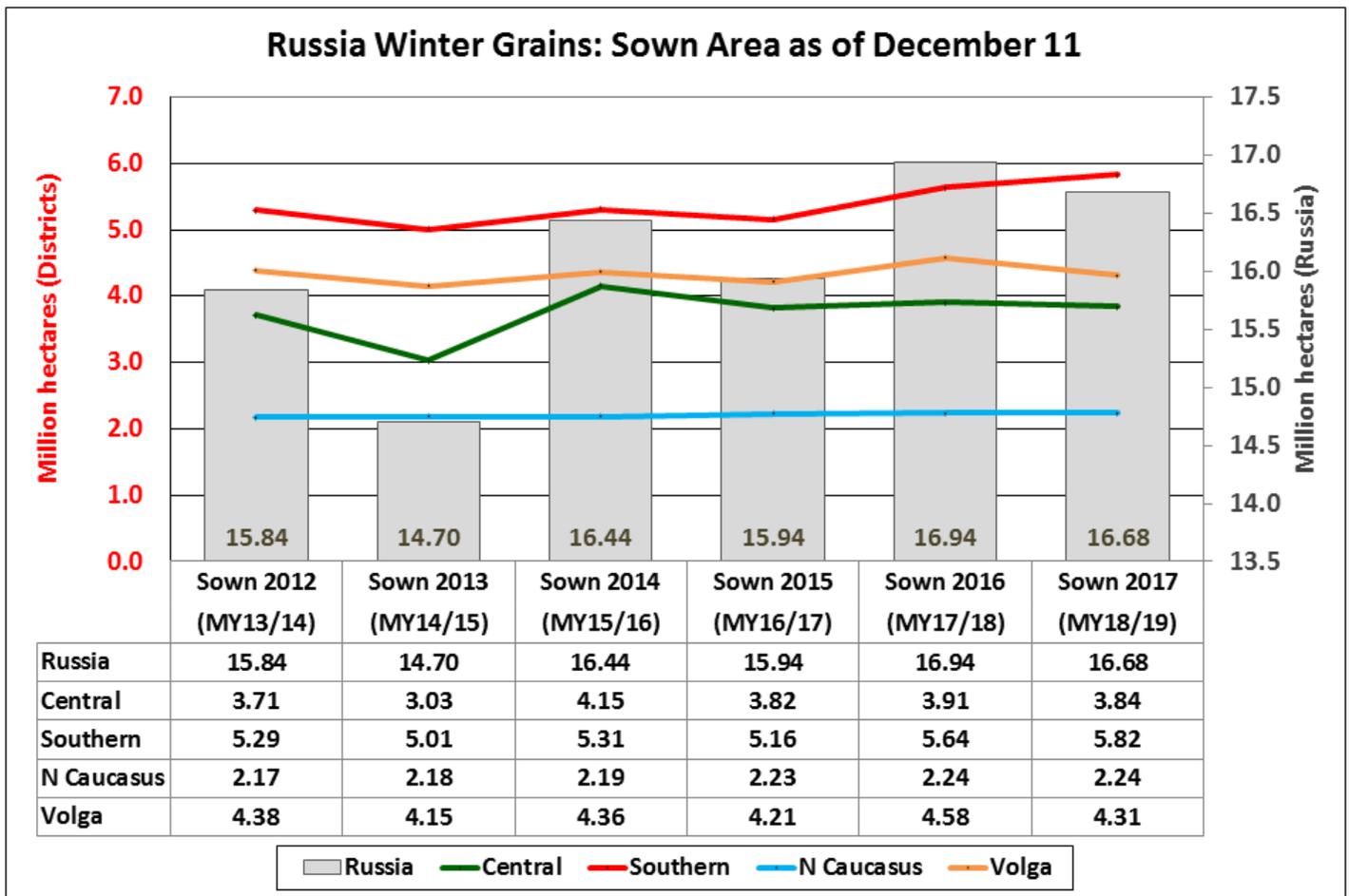
Wheat comprises about 85 percent of Russia's winter grain area, rye about 10 percent, and barley about 3 percent. Triticale accounts for most of the remainder. Winter wheat and triticale are grown throughout European Russia, which includes the Central, Southern, North Caucasus, and Volga Districts. The Volga District is the main production region for rye, and barley is grown only in the Southern District. The Volga is the only Russian district that grows significant amounts of both winter and spring wheat.

Conditions were generally favorable for the planting and establishment of Russia's winter grains, and following initial delays in the Volga District the fall sowing campaign progressed at a relatively rapid pace (see Figure 2). Although surface moisture in southern Russia was low during the middle of the planting season, rainfall beginning in mid-October was beneficial for developing winter crops. The Ministry of Agriculture reported that winter crops were in good or satisfactory condition on 95 percent of the planted area as of January 30. Crops in most areas were under protective snow cover by mid-February (see Figure 3).

Winter wheat yields reached record levels in 2017 in every major production region (see Figure 4). Record yields were reported for barley, corn, and sunseed as well. Over the past 20 years, Russian crop production has benefited from steady improvement in agricultural technology. Although machinery inventories have been declining for over 25 years, more efficient machinery (particularly imported grain harvesters) has been replacing outdated and unserviceable equipment, enabling crop producers to compensate for the lower numbers. The use of imported hybrid seed for corn and sunflowers has grown enormously since 2003. Mineral fertilizer application rates have increased (see Figure 5) and the methods of application, including more precise timing and placement, have improved. Crop yields have increased accordingly (see Figure 6), although the remarkably high wheat yields for the past two years have been the result chiefly of outstanding weather. Initial USDA global crop-production estimates for 2018/19 will be released on May 10, 2018.

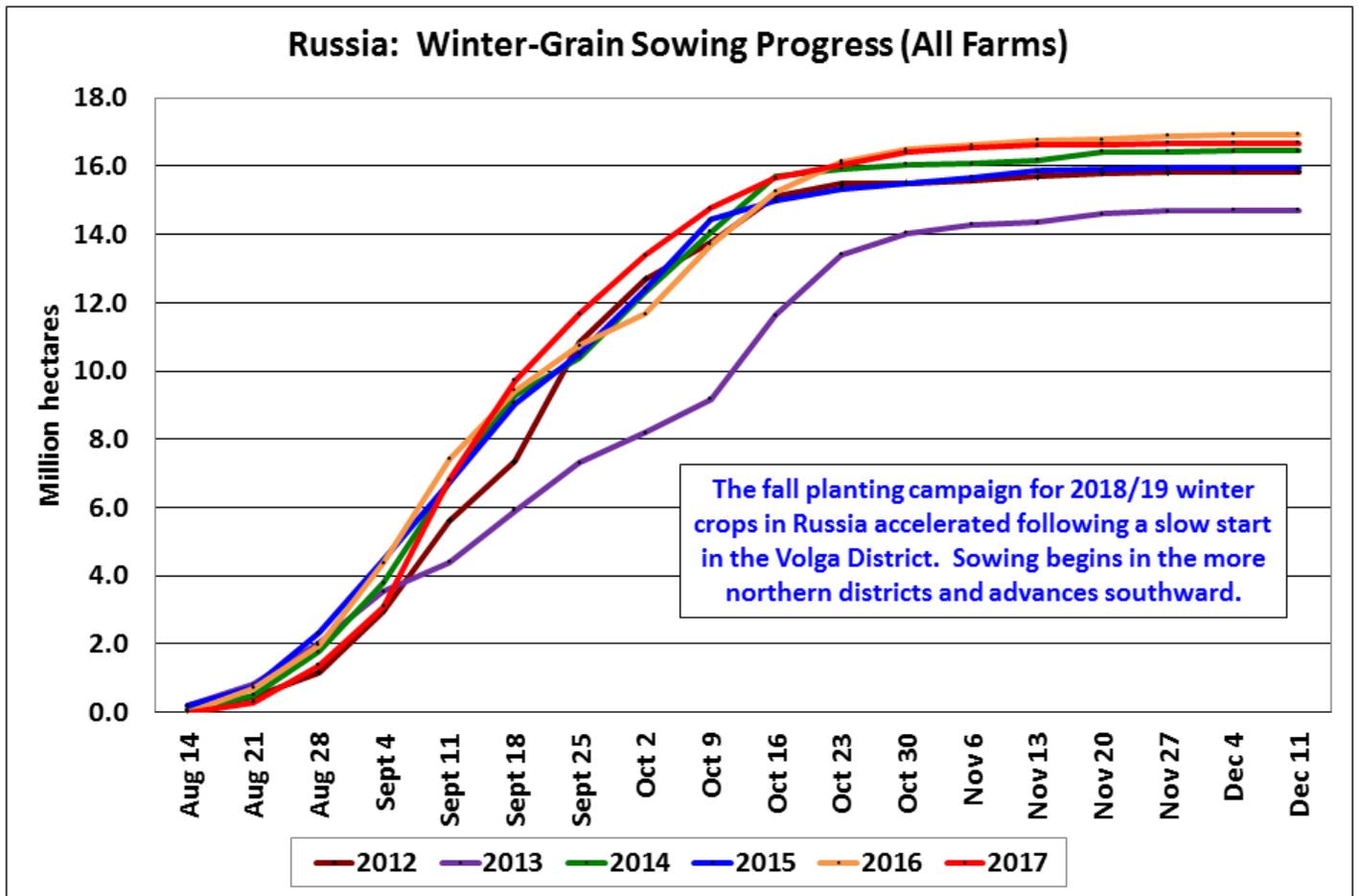


Figure 1.



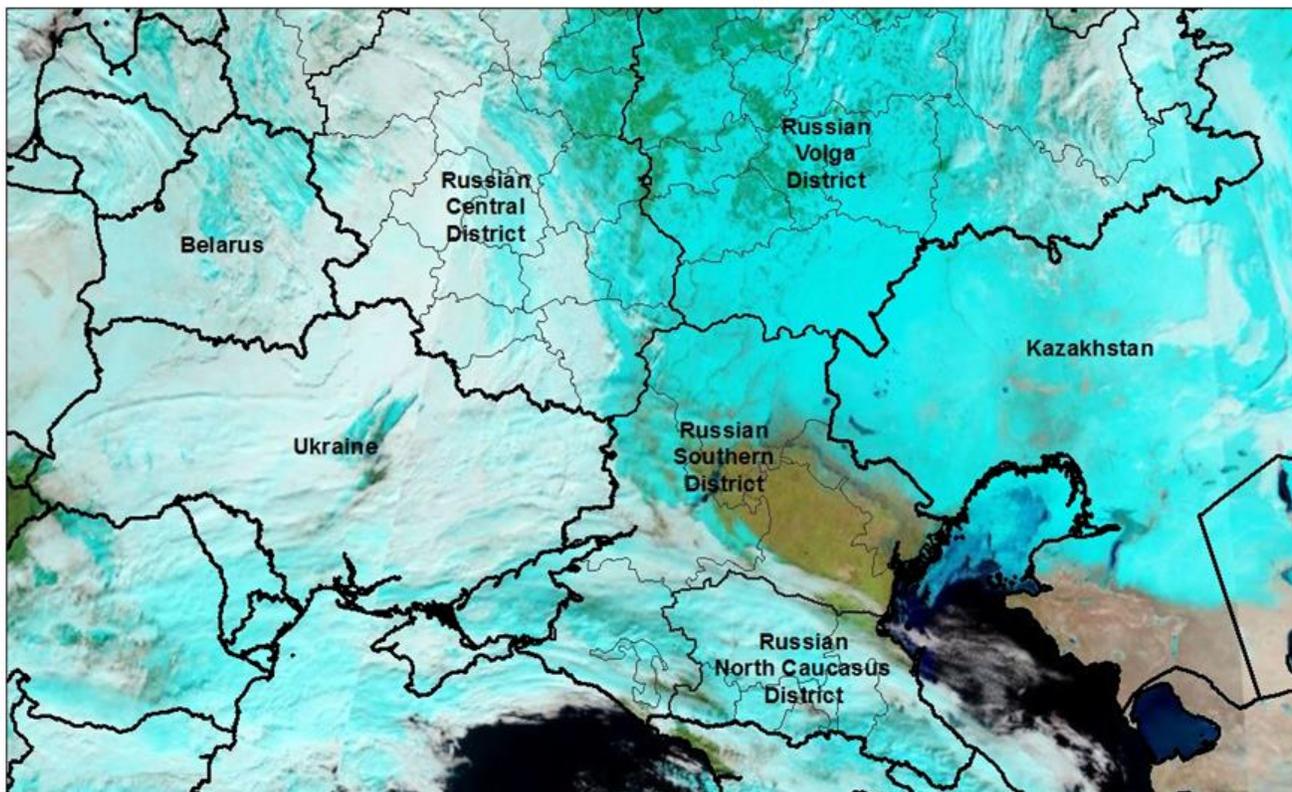
Source: Russian Ministry of Agriculture

Figure 2.



Source: Russian Ministry of Agriculture

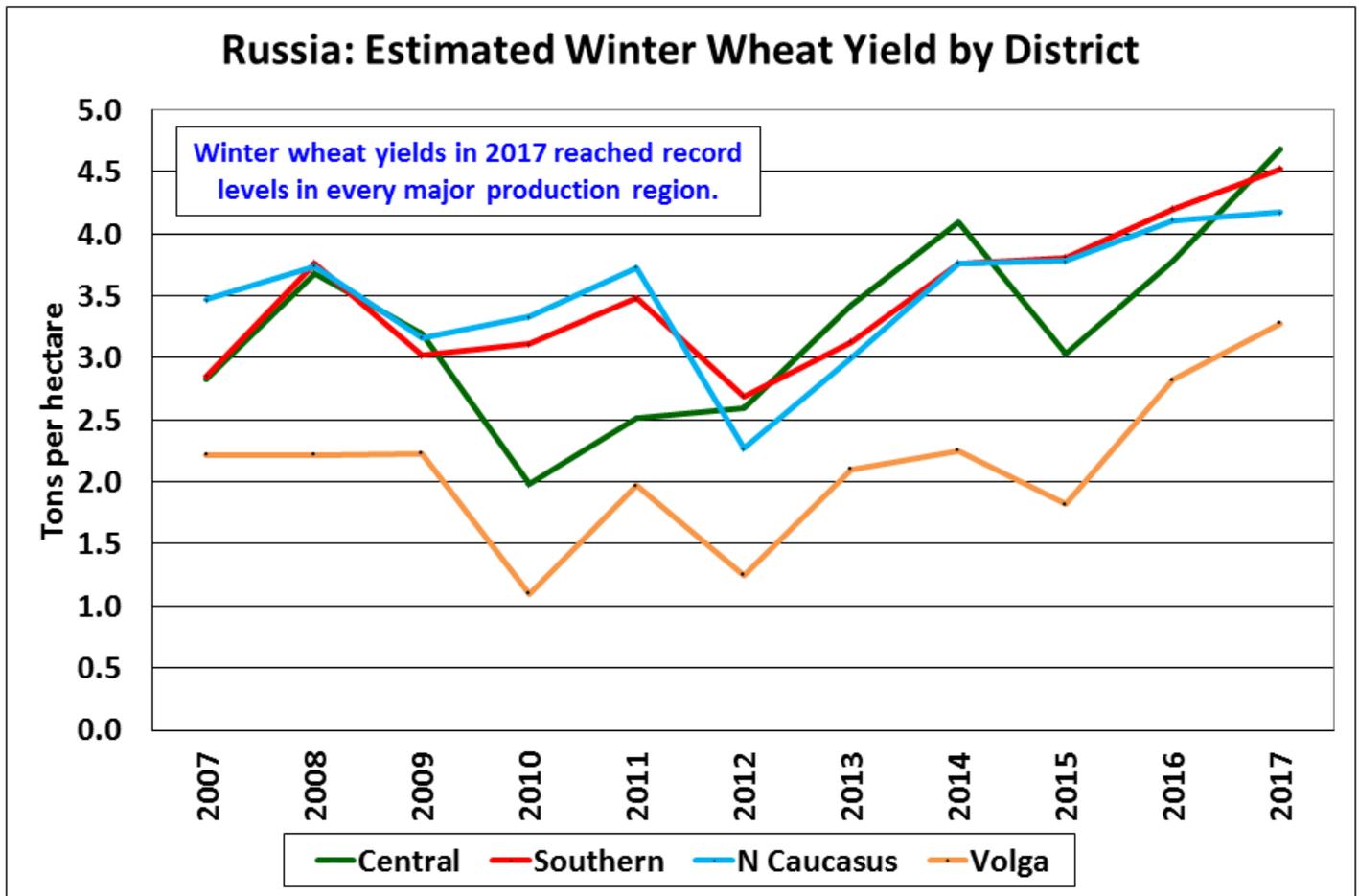
Figure 3.
**MODIS Satellite Imagery
Snow Cover on February 11, 2018**



MODIS satellite imagery indicates snow cover in the Central and Volga Districts of Russia, in the key parts of the Southern District, and in the North Caucasus District. Blue denotes snow and white denotes clouds.

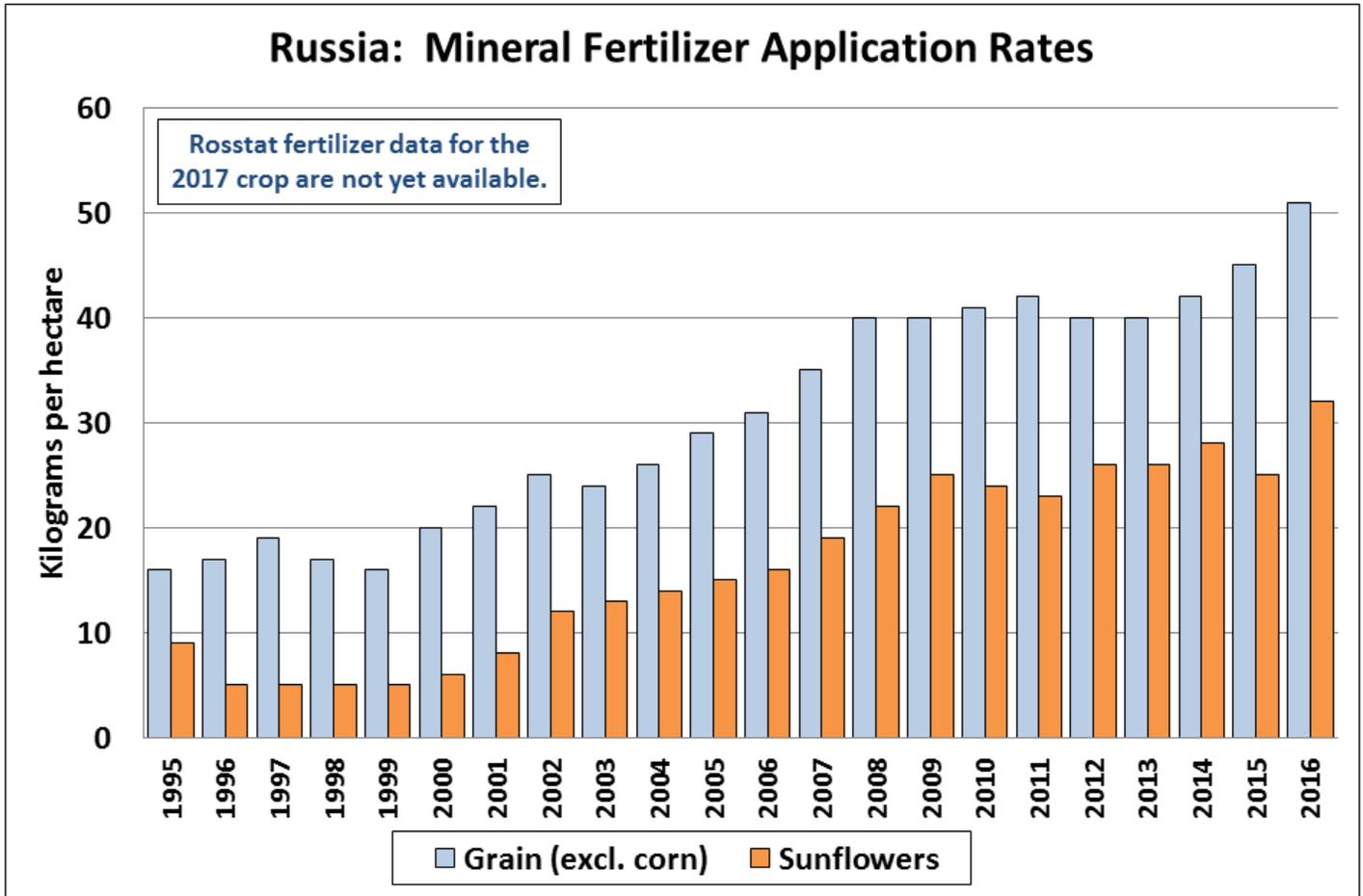
Source: USDA/NASA Global Agriculture Monitoring project (GLAM)

Figure 4.



Sources: Rosstat (2007-2016); USDA/FAS estimates (2017)

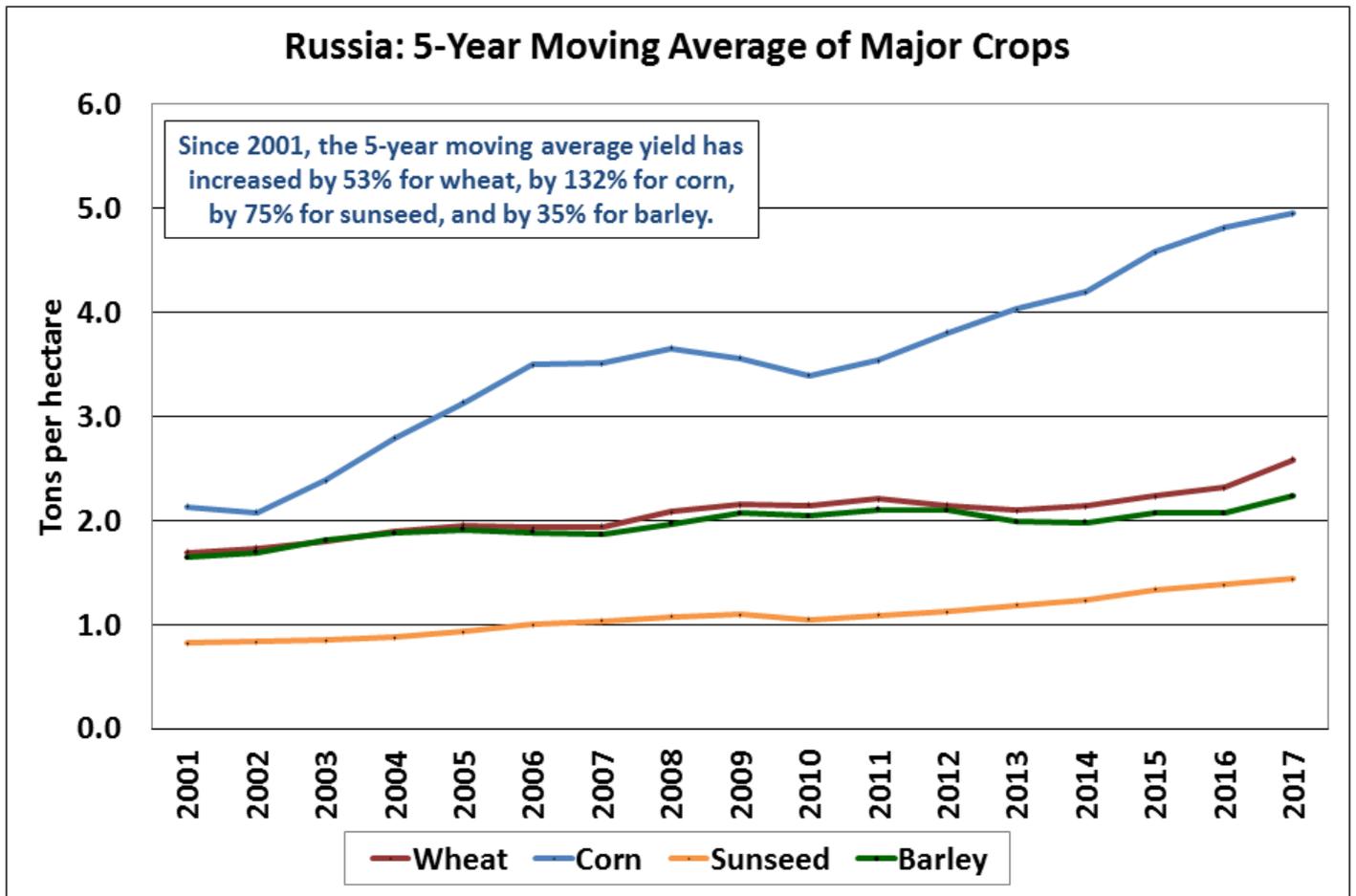
Figure 5.



Source: Rosstat



Figure 6.



Sources: Rosstat (2007-2016); USDA/FAS estimates (2017)

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Current area and production estimates for grains and other agricultural commodities are available on
IPAD's Agricultural Production page:
[Crop Explorer https://ipad.fas.usda.gov/cropexplorer/](https://ipad.fas.usda.gov/cropexplorer/)or

Production, Supply and Distribution Database (PSD Online):
<http://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdHome.aspx>

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