

Egypt aims to be 75 pct self-sufficient in wheat

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Egypt's Agriculture Minister Amin Abaza

Egypt's Agriculture Ministry official reported Tuesday that Egypt, the world's largest wheat importer, aims to be 75 percent self-sufficient in wheat in 10 years, up from 55 percent now

"We have self-sufficiency now of around 55 percent, and the government plan is ... to reach self-sufficiency of around 75 percent in the next 10 years," Hussein Soliman, an adviser to Egypt's agriculture minister, told a grains conference.

"We want to increase the area planted with wheat annually and also increase the amount of wheat produced per feddan," he said. "We also want to decrease the quantity wasted during the harvesting procedure."

Egypt, which depends heavily on subsidised bread to feed the poor, has one of the highest rates of per capita wheat consumption in the world, at around 120 kilograms per person per year. Egypt consumes around 14 million tonnes of wheat annually.

Soliman said Egypt produces around 8 million tonnes of wheat annually, and imports around 6 million tonnes.

Egypt has been mired in controversy over the quality of its wheat imports since it ordered the re-export earlier this year of Russian cargoes that it said did not abide by Egyptian quality specifications.

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