

# How could the war in Ukraine impact global food supplies?

Both Ukraine and Russia are some of the world's largest food exporters. How could global food be impacted?

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Ukraine has been one of the world's largest contributors to the World Food Programme – the UN agency that provides food aid to countries in crisis. The Head of the WFP – David Beasley [estimates that](#) it provides 40% of its wheat.

The war has now reversed this flow: the WFP is now working to provide Ukrainians with the supplies they need in this crisis.

The war in Ukraine could have profound impacts on global food supplies, with far-reaching consequences for hunger and food security across the world. But it doesn't have to – there is time to react and to contain a larger crisis.

In this article, I present the data we need to understand the scale of their contribution, and which countries are most reliant on Ukraine for their food supplies.

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## Ukraine and Russia are among the world's largest exporters of cereal crops and oils

Ukraine and Russia both play a major role in global food markets. They are net exporters of several of the leading cereal crops: wheat, maize (corn), and barley. Both are also dominant exporters of sunflower oil, one of the world's dominant vegetable oils. Some countries – such as India – rely heavily on imports of sunflower oil for domestic food supplies.

In the charts I show their contribution to global food *exports* (how much is traded between countries); and global food *production*.

The charts show that in 2019 around one-quarter of global wheat exports come from Ukraine and Russia. One-fifth of global maize, and barley too. They are the source of nearly two-thirds of traded sunflower oil, with Ukraine alone accounting for almost half of global exports.

