



Foreign Agricultural Service

**GAIN Report**

Global Agriculture Information Network

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## **Bulgaria**

### **Grain and Feed**

### **Kosovo Wheat Situation**

## **2000**

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#### **Report Highlights:**

The Kosovo wheat crop has suffered from hot and dry weather conditions in the May-June period. However, local observers believe both wheat and corn benefitted from residual soil moisture during the dry period. The UN recently issued a press release strongly denying reports that the wheat crop is contaminated or poisoned because of local rumors related to soil contamination. USDA/FAS Sofia staff estimate the 2000 wheat crop at 200,000 MT.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Sofia [BU1], BU

**Agriculture Department Denies Contamination of Wheat Crop:**

The following is text from a press release issued by the United National Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on June 22, 2000:

"The Administrative Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development and Environmental Protection today strongly denied reports that the wheat crop to be harvested in the coming days is contaminated or poisoned. These reports have mainly come out of Klina, Malishevo, Skendraj and Glogovac. The co-head of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Maurizio Farinelli, said that there is no truth in these reports. He said the crop was grown from seeds imported from abroad. He said reports had also come in that the farmers may destroy this crop. He urged the farmers not to do so since there was nothing wrong with the wheat crop, the first after the conflict last year."

This report was issued in an effort to counter local rumors about depleted uranium which allegedly contaminated soil, water and crops. The UNMIK administration is strongly urging farmers to ignore the rumors and which involve not just wheat, but fodder and even livestock. To date, no confirmed contamination has been reported.

**Wheat Crop Estimates:** The FAO currently estimates the Kosovo wheat crop at 220,000MT. FAS Sofia forecasts a slightly smaller wheat crop of 200,000MT (unofficial data) reflecting area planted of 85,000HA and a yield of 2.34 MT/hectare. Experts from Pristina University forecast area planted at less than 79,000HA and yield at 2.25MT/hectare. According to some local observers, many of the fields are heavily infested with weeds and herbicide use was limited.

**Wheat Consumption and Demand:** FAS Sofia historical data points to total consumption needs of 400,000MT. Thus, an import gap of roughly 200,000MT (grain basis) is forecast. In the past, most of Kosovo's wheat imports came from Serbia. However, planned humanitarian flour donations should fill most of the implied gap during the MY00/01 period, if the wheat crop comes in at currently expected levels. The UN/WFP will supply emergency flour rations (and other basic foodstuffs) to just over 500,000 beneficiaries. During the summer of 1999, WFP coordinated donations of flour to 1.2 million families. Total population is currently estimated at just over 2 million people. There are some concerns that the large volume of donated flour undercut the domestic market and local mills are anxious to begin milling the new crop.