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THE PRICE GAP BETWEEN KAZAKH AND RUSSIAN EXPORT WHEAT, NOVEMBER 2017 TO SEPTEMBER 2026: WHAT MONTHLY FAO PRICES SHOW ABOUT SPRING 2022 AND AUTUMN 2023

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Abstract: Kazakhstan and Russia both export wheat, and the price of Kazakh wheat at the Saryagash railway station, near the border with Uzbekistan, is sometimes far below and sometimes far above the price of Russian wheat in Russia's deep-sea ports. This study compares the two monthly export prices published by FAO (USD per tonne) for the 105 months from November 2017 to September 2026 in which both are available. The two prices are for different terms of delivery (at a railway station and on board a ship), so the gap includes transport costs and is not a pure price difference. On average the Kazakh price was 6.56 USD lower; it was lower in 65 months and higher in 40. The two months that a mentor gave him as examples are the two extremes of the whole period: in March 2022 Kazakh wheat was 100 USD cheaper (310 against 410 USD), and in October 2023 it was 82.25 USD dearer (313 against 230.75 USD). The two episodes moved in different ways. In March 2022 the Russian port price rose by 93.75 USD in one month while the Kazakh price, quoted only once that month, rose by 6.25 USD; by May the gap had narrowed to −10.5 USD, and in July, while Kazakh export quotas were in force, Kazakh wheat was 47.5

Keywords: wheat prices, export prices, Kazakhstan, Russia, price gap, grain harvest, FAO GIEWS, food security

1. Introduction

Kazakhstan has no access to the open sea (its only coast is on the Caspian Sea, which has no outlet to the ocean), yet it exports a large amount of wheat: for the 2023/24 marketing year FAO forecast its wheat exports at 9 million tonnes [1]. FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) publishes monthly export prices for both: Kazakh milling wheat delivered at the Saryagash station in the south of Kazakhstan [2] and Russian wheat offered free on board in the deep-sea ports [3]. Both series come from the same price agency, APK-Inform.

The difference between the two prices moves a lot. On 13 October 2026 a mentor proposed this topic to him, with two months as an example: in March 2022 Kazakh wheat at Saryagash cost 310 USD per tonne and Russian wheat in the ports

410 USD, while in October 2023 it was the other way round, 313 against 230.75 USD. The question offered was what the gap depends on (the Kazakh harvest, the world price or the season) and how quickly the Kazakh price follows the world price. Traders watch such gaps, and a student interested in commodity trading wants to know whether they can be explained.

Studies of wheat markets in the region give reasons to expect a gap. Price transmission models for Central Asia and the South Caucasus found “a strong influence of trade costs on market integration in Central Asia” and higher transportation costs and unofficial payments in Central Asian wheat trade [4]. A study of eight large exporters found that Russian and Ukrainian export prices adjust to price changes in France, the USA and Canada [5]. A study of Kazakh, Russian and Ukrainian exports in 1996–2012 found that these countries can charge different prices in some importing countries, while in most of them they face competition or set common markups [6]. These studies use econometric models of trade costs and pricing behaviour and end before the war of 2022 and the poor Kazakh harvest of 2023. This paper is simpler and descriptive: it follows one export price of each country through those two recent episodes, month by month.

The study asks three questions. (1) How large was the gap between the two prices from November 2017 to September 2026, and how often was Kazakh wheat cheaper? (2) How unusual were spring 2022 and autumn 2023, and which of the two prices moved? (3) Do the timing of the price changes, the official harvest figures and the reports of the time agree with the author's explanations?

2. The author's hypothesis

On 16 October 2026 the author was asked to explain why Kazakh wheat was

100 USD cheaper than Russian wheat in March 2022 and 80 USD dearer in October 2023. At that time he had seen only these two months, not the monthly series. The same evening he wrote (translated from Russian; the original is given in the Appendix):

“In March 2022 our wheat was cheaper because of the start of the war, because of which the ports in the Black Sea were blocked and world prices became high, and Kazakhstan sold grain to its neighbours cheaply. By October 2023 our wheat had suffered badly from droughts and rains. Because of this there was a shortage of wheat, while demand stayed high, which is why the price of wheat in Kazakhstan shot up by 80, I think.”

This is an explanation of two months that he already knew, not a prediction of unknown numbers. It contains two claims that the data can partly check. For 2022: the gap opened because world (here, Russian port) prices rose with the war while the Kazakh price did not. For 2023: the Kazakh price rose because the harvest was damaged by drought and rain. The prices alone can show which price moved and when; whether the harvest was smaller and why must come from other sources (Section 4.5).

3. Data and methods

Prices. Both series were downloaded from the FAO GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) database on 13 November 2026 [2, 3]. Both are export prices in US dollars per tonne. FAO publishes them as weekly quotes and as monthly values that it marks as calculated. The Kazakh series begins in November 2017 and its last monthly value is October 2026; the Russian series ends in September 2026. The study window is therefore November 2017 to September 2026, 107 months. The Kazakh series has no value for June and August 2022, so the analysis uses the 105 months in which both prices exist. The FAO monthly value is the main measure.

The gap. For each month the gap is the Kazakh price minus the Russian price. A negative gap means that Kazakh wheat was cheaper. The two prices are not for the same place or the same terms of delivery: the Kazakh price is for wheat delivered at a railway station near the Uzbek border, the Russian price for wheat loaded on a ship. The gap therefore contains transport costs, different buyers and possibly different wheat quality, and is not a profit that a trader could earn. The level of the gap is reported, but the conclusions rest mainly on how it changed.

Indicators. For the whole period: mean, median and standard deviation of the gap, the lowest and highest months, and the number of months in which Kazakh wheat was cheaper. To judge how unusual a month was, its gap is compared with the period before the war, November 2017 to January 2022 (51 months), using the zscore: the gap minus the mean of that period, divided by its standard deviation. The gap in one month is strongly related to the gap in the month before ($r = 0.84$), so the months are not independent, and the z-score shows only how far a month lies from the pre-war average, not how likely it was. Each month of the two episodes, spring 2022 (March to

May) and autumn 2023 (September to November), is also ranked among all 105 months. To see which price moved, the change in the gap between two months is split into the change of the Kazakh price and the change of the Russian price. To ask how quickly the Kazakh price follows the Russian price, the monthly change in the Kazakh price is correlated (Pearson's r) with the change in the Russian price in the same month and one, two and three months earlier. These are descriptive measures; no significance tests were made, because monthly prices depend on the previous month and the episodes are few.

Weekly quotes. Around March 2022 the weekly quotes of both series were read to see the exact timing. They also show how many quotes stand behind each monthly value.

Harvest. Grain and wheat harvests were taken from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan: the 2022 bulletin and its volume 2 tables [7], and the 2024 bulletin, its volume 2 tables and its Diagram 4 with the grain harvest of 2020–2024 [8]. The Bureau gives the harvest in two weights: the initial weight and the weight after cleaning and drying (“after processing”); the latter is used unless stated otherwise. The 2023 wheat harvest is not printed in these files; it was derived from the 2024 wheat harvest and the Bureau's index of 2024 against 2023. Reports of the time were taken from the FAO GIEWS country briefs on Kazakhstan [1] and from a news report of 19 September 2023 [9].

Robustness. The main results were recomputed (a) with monthly values rebuilt as the mean of FAO's weekly quotes, (b) without September 2026, the newest month, (c) with the second dollar field that FAO publishes, which differs from the main field in one month, and (d) with the copy of the data downloaded on 1 November 2026, from which the chart shown to the author was made.

All numbers were computed by one script from the files downloaded from FAO and the Bureau.

4. Results

4.1. The gap over the whole period

Over the 105 months the mean Kazakh price was 240.58 USD and the mean Russian price 247.14 USD per tonne. The mean gap was −6.56 USD (median −11.25, standard deviation 34.0). Kazakh wheat was cheaper in 65 months (61.9%) and dearer in 40. The two prices moved together over the years (Figure 1): the correlation of the monthly price levels was r = 0.74.

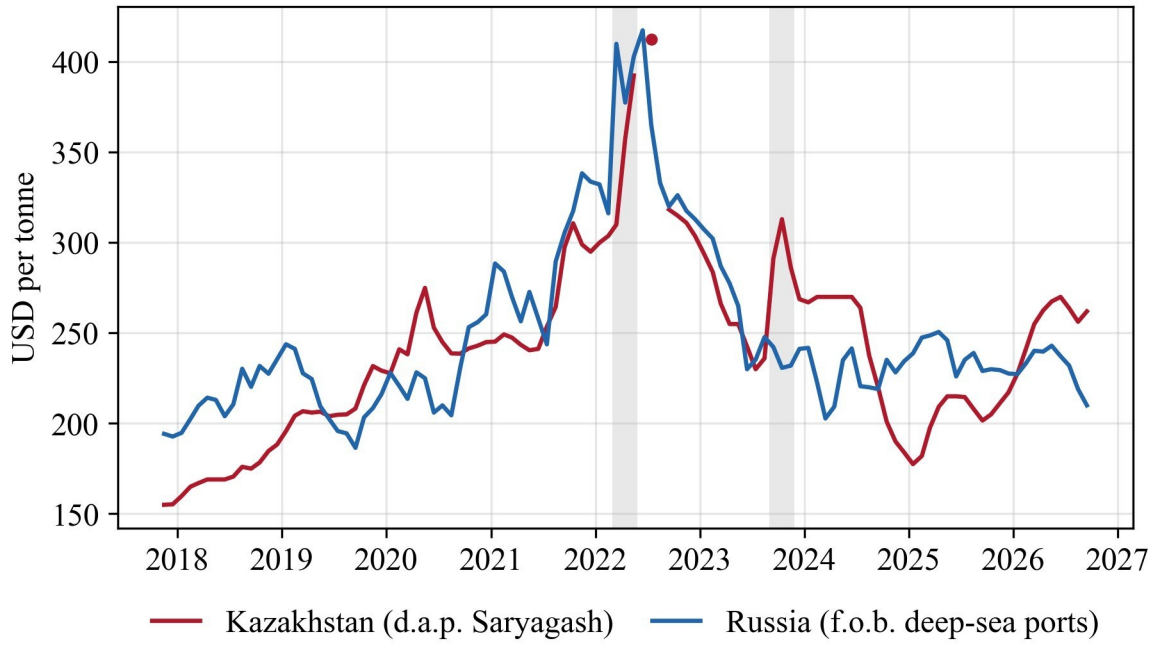


Figure 1. Monthly export prices of wheat, USD per tonne, November 2017 – September 2026.

Shaded: March–May 2022 and September–November 2023. The Kazakh line breaks in June and August 2022, when FAO has no value; July 2022 is shown as a point. Source: FAO GIEWS FPMA, data of APK-Inform Agency [2, 3].

The gap was not stable (Figure 2, Table 1). Kazakh wheat was cheaper in every month of 2018 (mean gap −43.53 USD) and of 2025 (−32.83 USD), and dearer in every month of 2026 so far (24.93 USD; in January by only 0.25 USD). In the years between, the sign changed several times.

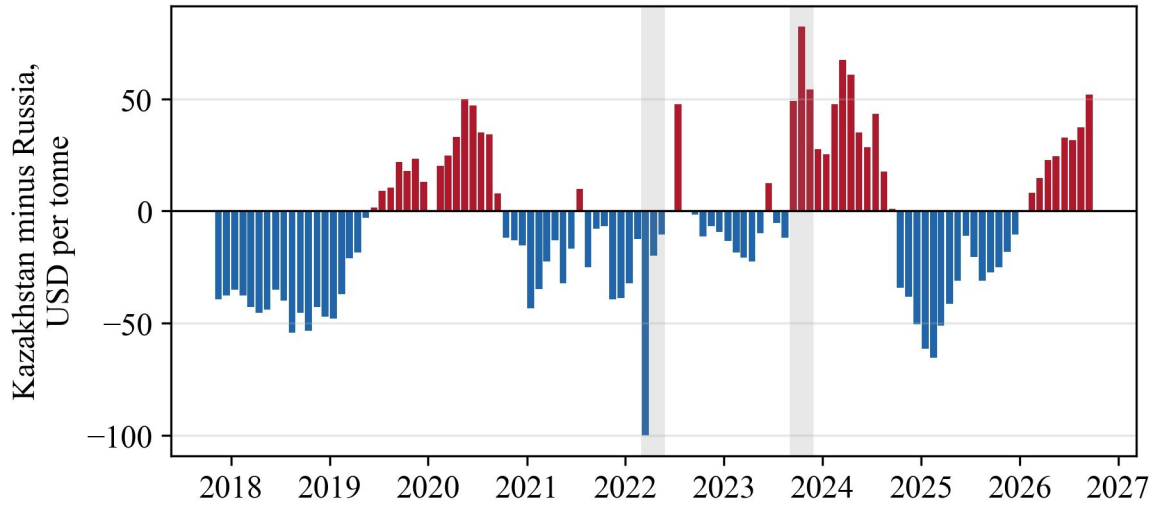


Figure 2. The gap: Kazakh price minus Russian price, USD per tonne. Red: Kazakh wheat dearer; blue: cheaper. Shaded: March–May 2022 and September–November 2023. Source: computed from FAO GIEWS FPMA [2, 3].

Table 1. Mean monthly export prices and the gap by year

Year	Months	Kazakhstan, USD/t	Russia, USD/t	Gap, USD/t	Months Kazakh dearer
2017 (Nov–Dec)	2	155.13	193.50	−38.38	0
2018	12	172.66	216.18	−43.53	0
2019	12	210.29	212.86	−2.57	7
2020	12	245.68	228.03	17.65	8
2021	12	265.63	288.19	−22.56	1
2022	10	332.43	348.09	−15.65	1
2023	12	268.48	258.21	10.27	5
2024	12	242.79	225.86	16.93	9
2025	12	204.49	237.32	−32.83	0
2026 (Jan–Sep)	9	256.25	231.32	24.93	9
All months	105	240.58	247.14	−6.56	40

Gap: Kazakh price minus Russian price; negative means that Kazakh wheat was cheaper. 2022 has 10 months because the Kazakh series has no value for June and August. Source: computed from FAO GIEWS FPMA [2, 3].

4.2. Spring 2022

March 2022 has the lowest gap of all 105 months: −100 USD (310 against 410 USD). Compared with the period before the war, whose mean gap was −14.14 USD with a standard deviation of 28.95 USD, this is a z-score of −2.97. The gap was created by the Russian price. From February to March 2022 the Russian port price rose by 93.75 USD, from 316.25 to 410 USD, while the Kazakh price rose by 6.25 USD, from 303.75 to 310 USD (Table 2).

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Table 2. The two episodes month by month

Month	Kazakh price, USD/t	Russian price, USD/t	Gap, USD/t	Change of Kazakh price	Change of Russian price	Rank of gap, from lowest	z-score
Feb 2022	303.75	316.25	−12.50	3.75	−16.00	50	0.06
Mar 2022	310.00	410.00	−100.00	6.25	93.75	1	−2.97
Apr 2022	357.50	377.50	−20.00	47.50	−32.50	41	−0.20
May 2022	392.50	403.00	−10.50	35.00	25.50	55	0.13
Sep 2023	291.25	242.25	49.00	55.25	−5.55	99	2.18
Oct 2023	313.00	230.75	82.25	21.75	−11.50	105	3.33
Nov 2023	286.25	232.00	54.25	−26.75	1.25	102	2.36

Change: from the previous month, USD per tonne. Rank: 1 is the lowest gap (Kazakh wheat cheapest relative to Russian) among 105 months. z-score: relative to November 2017 – January 2022 (mean −14.14, standard deviation 28.95); against all 105 months instead, the z-scores are −2.75 for March 2022 and 1.63, 2.61 and 1.79 for September, October and November 2023. Source: computed from FAO GIEWS FPMA [2, 3].

The episode was short. In April the Kazakh price rose by 47.5 USD while the Russian price fell, and the gap narrowed to −20 USD; in May it was −10.5 USD. The mean gap for March to May 2022, −43.5 USD, was close to the spring of 2018 (−44.0 USD) and is the second lowest spring of the nine (2018–2026). Only March was extreme.

The weekly quotes show the timing and a weakness of the data. The last weekly quotes before the war began on 24 February 2022 are those of 18 February: 305 USD for Kazakh and 313 USD for Russian wheat; on 25 February they were 305 and 316 USD. In March the Russian price was quoted three times: 340 USD on 4 March, 460 USD on 18 March and 435 USD on 25 March. The Kazakh price was quoted only once that month, 310 USD on 25 March, when the weekly gap was −125 USD. By 15 April the Kazakh quote was 350 USD against 375 USD for Russian wheat, and on 20 May both were 400 USD. March 2022 is the only month of the 105 in which the Kazakh monthly value rests on a single weekly quote (November 2017, the first month, has no weekly quote at all). In April, May and July the Kazakh price was quoted twice a month and in June and August not at all.

July 2022, the only summer month with a Kazakh value, went the other way.

Kazakh wheat was 47.5 USD dearer than Russian (412.5 against 365 USD), tied with

February 2024 as the eighth-highest gap of the 105 months (z-score 2.13), and 412.5 USD is the highest Kazakh monthly value of the whole series. July fell in the period of Kazakh export quotas (Section 5).

4.3. Autumn 2023

October 2023 has the highest gap of all 105 months: 82.25 USD (313 against 230.75 USD), a z-score of 3.33. September (49.0 USD) and November (54.25 USD) rank 7th and 4th from the top. The mean gap for September to November 2023, 61.83 USD, is the highest autumn of the eight in the data (2018–2025); the next highest, 2019, was 20.93 USD.

This time the Kazakh price moved. From August to October 2023 it rose by 77 USD, from 236 to 313 USD, while the Russian price fell by 17.05 USD, from 247.8 to 230.75 USD; the gap widened by 94.05 USD. The weekly quotes date the jump: the Kazakh price was 240 USD on 1 and 8 September, 270 USD on 15 September, 325 USD on 22 September and 330 USD on 29 September, while the Russian price drifted from 250 to 237 USD.

The premium did not disappear quickly. After October 2023 the Kazakh price fell, but the gap stayed positive for 13 months in a row, from September 2023 to September 2024 (in the last month by only 1.0 USD), with a second peak of 67.25 USD in March 2024. In October 2024 it turned to −34.2 USD.

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4.4. How the two prices move together

Although the levels of the two prices are strongly related (r = 0.74), their changes from one month to the next are almost unrelated in the same month: r = 0.10 for 102 pairs of monthly changes, and the two prices moved in the same direction in 52 of the 94 months in which both changed. The change in the Kazakh price was more closely related to the change in the Russian price one month earlier (r = 0.39) than in the same month; with two months the correlation was 0.19 and with three months −0.17. Much of the one-month link comes from a single pair, the Russian jump of March 2022 followed by the Kazakh rise of April 2022: without that pair r falls from 0.39 to 0.23 (101 pairs). Without all three spring 2022 months it is 0.34 (99 pairs), because in May 2022 the two prices moved in opposite directions. The link is therefore weak and depends mostly on one month. It is a description of the average month, not a test, and the episodes in this paper do not all follow it: in autumn 2023 the Kazakh price rose while the Russian price was falling.

4.5. The harvest

The Bureau of National Statistics reports the grain harvest (including rice and pulses, weight after processing) as 20,065.3 thousand tonnes in 2020, 16,375.9 in 2021, 22,030.5 in 2022, 17,096.6 in 2023 and 25,204.8 in 2024 [8]. The 2023 harvest was therefore 22.4% smaller than the 2022 harvest. For wheat alone the fall was larger: 16,404.5 thousand tonnes in 2022 [7] against 12,110.9 thousand tonnes in 2023, derived from the 2024 tables [8], a fall of 26.2%. FAO's brief of March 2024 put 2023 wheat production at 12.1 million tonnes, about 25% below the previous year [1].

On 4 November 2026 the author reported, with a link to the Bureau's publications page, 23.1 million tonnes for 2022 and 17.1 million tonnes for 2023. His figure for 2023 agrees with the Bureau's. The figure 23.1 for 2022 was not found in the Bureau files read for this study; the closest is the initial weight of the 2022 grain harvest, 23,165.6 thousand tonnes, before cleaning and drying reduced it by 4.9% to 22,030.5 thousand tonnes [7]. This paper uses the weight after processing for all years.

Table 3 sets each year's harvest beside the mean gap of September–November of the same year.

Table 3. Grain harvest and the price gap in the autumn of the same year

Harvest year	Grain harvest, thousand tonnes	Mean gap, September– November, USD/t
2020	20,065.3	−5.58
2021	16,375.9	−18.05
2022	22,030.5	−6.51
2023	17,096.6	61.83
2024	25,204.8	−23.82

Harvest: grains including rice and pulses, weight after processing, Bureau of National Statistics, Diagram 4 [8]. Gap: Kazakh price minus Russian price, mean of September, October and November [2, 3].

The table does not show a simple rule. The 2023 harvest was small and the autumn premium was the largest. But the 2021 harvest was even smaller, 16,375.9 thousand tonnes, and in autumn 2021 Kazakh wheat was cheaper than Russian by 18.05 USD on average. The 2024 harvest was the largest of the five years, and the gap turned negative in October 2024, the month after the premium of 2023–2024 ended. Five harvests are too few to measure an effect.

4.6. Robustness

Table 4 repeats the main results with the other versions of the data.

Table 4. The main results in other versions of the data, USD per tonne

Version	Months	Mean gap	Kazakh cheaper, months	Mar 2022	Oct 2023

FAO monthly values (main)	105	−6.56	65	−100.00	82.25
Monthly means of weekly quotes	104	−6.53	63	−101.67	86.50
Without September 2026	104	−7.12	65	−100.00	82.25
Second dollar field of FAO	105	−6.62	65	−100.00	82.25
Data downloaded 1 November 2026	105	−6.64	65	−100.00	82.25

Gap: Kazakh price minus Russian price. In every version March 2022 is the lowest month and October 2023 the highest. Source: computed from FAO GIEWS FPMA [2, 3].

In every version the extremes are the same two months and the mean gap stays between −7.12 and −6.53 USD. FAO's monthly values are not always the plain mean of its weekly quotes: they differ by more than 0.5 USD in 38 of the 104 Kazakh months that have weekly quotes and in 61 of 107 Russian months, by at most 11.25 USD (Kazakhstan, September 2021) and 7 USD (Russia, July 2022). With weekly means the gap in September 2023 is 37.2 USD instead of 49.0, while October 2023 rises to 86.5 USD. The newest Kazakh value changed between the two downloads: on 1 November 2026 FAO gave 253.75 USD for September 2026, on 13 November 262.0 USD. Since this paper uses data downloaded on 13 November, its numbers for 2026 may still change.

5. Discussion

On 1 November 2026 the author received the monthly table of both prices and their difference, and a chart of the two prices like Figure 1. On 2 November he wrote (translated from Russian; original in the Appendix):

“Hello, I looked at the chart and: 1. In spring 2022 our wheat at Saryagash was cheaper than Russian wheat in the ports, this agrees with my guess that despite the wars we sold wheat at a lower price. 2. In autumn 2023 our wheat became noticeably more expensive than Russian wheat; because of the drought and rains our harvest stopped and decreased, a shortage arose, and local prices jumped. Because of this I think the chart quite agrees with my guess.”

Spring 2022. The data agree with his reading that Kazakh wheat was cheaper in spring 2022, and with one part of his explanation: the gap appeared because the Russian price jumped in March 2022, the first full month of the war, while the Kazakh price hardly moved between its quotes of 25 February (305 USD) and 25 March (310 USD). Two qualifications follow from Section 4.2. First, the gap was short: in March it was the lowest of the whole period, but by May it was close to the usual level, and the spring as a whole was no lower than spring 2018. Second, the March Kazakh value rests on one weekly quote, so the size of the gap, 100 USD, is less certain than the fact that a gap opened. The prices say nothing about how much grain Kazakhstan sold or to whom. They also do not show whether the ports were blocked; this study did not examine shipping, and the Russian port price continued to be quoted in March. FAO's brief of September 2022 adds two policies of that spring: on 14 March 2022 Russia introduced a temporary ban on exports of wheat and other cereals to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, and from 14 April Kazakhstan restricted its own exports of wheat and flour with quotas, extended through 30 September and suspended on 13 September 2022 [1]. The Kazakh price rose by 47.5 USD in April and by 35 USD in May; in July, the only quota month with a Kazakh value, Kazakh wheat was 47.5 USD dearer than Russian, and the months without a Kazakh value, June and August, also fall in the quota period. Whether the quotas, the Russian ban or something else made the Kazakh price catch up cannot be told from these data.

Autumn 2023. Here the data agree with the order of events in his explanation. The Kazakh price rose in September 2023, while the Russian price was falling, and the jump happened in the second half of September (270 USD on 15 September, 325 USD on 22 September), when the government was reporting a slow, rain-hit harvest [9]. The harvest was indeed smaller: the Bureau's figures show 22.4% less grain and about 26% less wheat than in 2022. The reason for the smaller harvest is documented by sources found partly by the author himself. After the mentor pointed out

that the price data alone do not show drought or rain, the author found a news report of 19 September 2023 and sent this quotation from the Minister of Agriculture (translated from Russian): “Prolonged rains in the main grain-growing regions, which lasted more than three weeks, made their own adjustments. This led to a deterioration in grain quality, its sprouting, and low yields of grain crops in general” [9]. In the same report the Prime Minister said that the summer drought had been followed by autumn downpours [9], and FAO later wrote that drought as well as excessive rain had reduced yields and grain quality in the north [1]. So the first link of his explanation, weather to a smaller harvest, is supported by official sources.

The second link, a smaller harvest to a higher price than Russian wheat, is consistent with the prices but not proven by them. Three facts limit it. First, in 2021 the harvest was even smaller and no premium appeared (Table 3). Second, Kazakhstan restricted wheat imports during this period: in April 2023 it announced a six-month ban on imports of wheat by road, because local wheat was facing competition from cheaper Russian grain, and in September 2023 it adopted a broader ban on wheat imports, which was extended in March 2024 for another six months [1]. Such a ban keeps cheaper Russian wheat out of the Kazakh market and can let the Kazakh price stay above the Russian one. The premium lasted from September 2023 to September 2024, a period in which both the small harvest and the import ban applied, so the two explanations cannot be separated with these data. Third, the gap also contains transport costs and trade costs, which earlier work found to be important in Central Asia [4], and these may change over time. The road-only ban of April 2023 did not coincide with a premium: from April to August Kazakh wheat was still cheaper than Russian port wheat in four of the five months (gaps between −22.5 and 12.5 USD). FAO described Russian grain as cheaper than Kazakh grain inside Kazakhstan at that time [1], so the Russian port price used here is not the price at which Russian wheat competed in the Kazakh market. His word “shortage” is also stronger than the data: the prices show that Kazakh wheat became dearer, not that buyers could not get it.

The figure of 80 USD for October 2023 in his message was not his own estimate: it was given to him before he wrote his hypothesis (Section 2); the data give 82.25 USD.

The original question offered to the author also asked how quickly the Kazakh price catches up with the world price. In this study the Russian port price stands in for the world price, and the answer is mixed: the monthly changes give only weak evidence that the Kazakh price follows the Russian price with a delay of about one month ($r = 0.39$, 0.23 without April 2022 and 0.34 without March–May 2022; Section 4.4), and in 2022 the gap closed within two months before turning into a Kazakh premium in July; but in 2023 the Kazakh price moved on its own and stayed above the Russian price for more than a year.

Limitations. First, the two prices are for different places and terms of delivery, and the protein content and class of the wheat are not stated by FAO, so the level of the gap is not a pure price difference. Second, the Kazakh series is thin in 2022: one quote in March, two in April and May, none in June and August. Third, FAO's monthly values are not always the mean of its weekly quotes, and its newest values can be revised. Fourth, the study covers two episodes and nine years; no model or significance test was used, and the correlations describe the period only. Fifth, harvests were compared for five years only, and the harvest that matters for prices may be the Russian and world harvest as well as the Kazakh one, which this study did not measure. Sixth, policies such as export quotas and import bans are taken from FAO briefs, which describe them but do not measure their effect. Seventh, the Russian port price is not the price of Russian wheat sold into Kazakhstan, which FAO described in April 2023 as lower.

6. Conclusion

From November 2017 to September 2026 Kazakh export wheat at Saryagash was on average 6.56 USD per tonne cheaper than Russian wheat in the deep-sea ports, cheaper in 65 of 105 months and dearer in 40. The two months given to the author as examples are the two extremes of the period: March 2022 (−100 USD) and October 2023 (+82.25 USD). In March 2022 the Russian price jumped and the Kazakh price, quoted once, did not; the gap closed within two months, and by July

2022 Kazakh wheat was dearer. In autumn 2023 the Kazakh price jumped while the Russian price fell, and the premium lasted thirteen months. The author's explanation of 2022, that world prices rose with the war while Kazakh wheat stayed cheap, matches which price moved. His explanation of 2023 is supported in its first step, since official statistics confirm a much smaller harvest, the Minister of Agriculture blamed prolonged rains, the Prime Minister named the summer drought, and FAO named drought as well as excessive rain, but the step from the harvest to the price is not proven: a smaller harvest in 2021 brought no premium, and a ban on wheat imports was in force for most or all of the premium. For a trader the lesson of the data is that the gap between neighbouring wheat markets can be large and can last for a year, and that its causes must be looked for outside the price series.

Appendix. The author's messages in the original Russian

16 October 2026 (Section 2): «В марте 2022 году наша пшеница была дешёвле изза начала войны, изза чего порты в чёрном море заблоировали и мировые цены высокие стали, а Казахстан продавал зерно соседям по дешёвке. К 2023 октябрю у нас из за засух и дождей пшеница сильно пострадала. Изза чего произошел дефицит пшеницы, а спрос остался высоким, изза чего цена пшеницы в каз взлетела на 80 думаю»

2 November 2026 (Section 5): «Здраствуйте, посмотрел график и: / 1. Весной 2022 года наша пшеница на Сарыагаше была дешевле российской в портах, это совпадает с моей догадкой то что несмотря на войны мы продавали пшеницу по более низкой цене / 2. Осенью 2023 года наша пшеница стала заметно дороже российской, из-за засухи и дождей у нас перестал и уменьшелся количество урожая, возник дефицит, и локальные цены подскочили. / Из за чего график думаю вполне сходит с моей догадкой»

4 November 2026 (Section 4.5): «2022 год 23,1 млн тонн. / 2023 год: 17,1 млн тонн / Вот ссылка / https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/businessstatistics/statforrest-village-hunt-fish/ publications/»

8 November 2026, the quotation he found (Section 5): ««Свои коррективы внесли продолжительные дожди в основных зерносеющих регионах, которые продолжались более трех недель. Это привело к ухудшению качества зерна, его прорастанию, а также низкой урожайности зерновых культур в целом», — заявил глава минсельхоза. / Вот ссылка https://kz.kursiv.media/2023-09-19/zhrbmin-zerno/»

Author contributions and use of AI tools

On 16 October 2026 the author chose the first of five directions that a mentor had proposed on 13 October 2026; the mentor had recommended this one. The topic, the two example months and the question of what the gap depends on were proposed by a mentor; the price series were chosen by the mentors. The author wrote his explanation of the two months on 16 October (Section 2), his reading of the chart on 2 November (Section 5), the harvest figures he reported on 4 November (Section 4.5) and, on 8 November, the news report with the Minister's quotation (Section 5); these are quoted unchanged in the Appendix (line breaks shown as /) and translated in the text. His mentor Kurakbay Myrzabek, the scientific supervisor named above, working with a generative AI tool (Claude, Anthropic), downloaded the price and harvest data, wrote and ran the analysis code, made the tables and figures, found and read the other sources cited and wrote the English text of this paper apart from the quoted passages; the author did not write that text. The author's messages were translated from Russian with the same tool. No number was invented: every number comes from the output of the analysis code, from simple arithmetic on it, or from a cited source. Every cited source was opened; [4], [5] and [6] were read as abstracts only. The author and his scientific supervisor are responsible for the content.

Data availability

The price data are public in the FAO GIEWS FPMA database [2, 3] and the harvest data on the website of the Bureau of National Statistics [7, 8]. The monthly table of both prices and the gap and the analysis code are available from the scientific supervisor on request.

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Conflicts of interest

The author takes part in the ADMIT mentoring programme, a paid educational service, whose mentor carried out the analysis and wrote the text as described above.

The author declares no other conflict of interest. No funding was received.

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