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From: Corey Flintoff, NPR
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The impacts of a warming climate on Russian agriculture

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says last month was the warmest January on record. That sets off alarm bells for climate scientists, but for the average person living in a northern climate, it might not sound so bad.

That's what many people are saying these days in Russia, where the expected icy winter has failed to materialize this year – to widespread joy. Of course, any climate scientist will tell you that an unusually warm month — or even a whole warm winter — doesn't mean much. It's the long-term trend that counts.

But that's not how it appears to the popular imagination, says [George Safonov](#), who heads the Center for Environmental and Natural Resource Economics at the [Higher School of Economics](#) in Moscow. He says there's a big temptation in northern countries to believe that warmer weather can bring economic opportunities, such as improving conditions for farming.

"Before 2010, we had a rising harvest rate for crops, and that was explained as a very positive impact of climate change," he says. "It was not easy to convince people that this is not correct."

[Two happy farmers with tractor](#) image via Shutterstock.

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