

RUSS -

LAND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM CUT BACK

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The following is a Radio Liberty Research Bulletin  
(CRD 214/69) of June 13, 1969:

Virtually all of the material inputs into agriculture during the current five-year plan period, which were promised at the March 1965 plenum, have been cut back with varying degrees of severity; this applies to tractors, trucks, farm machinery, electricity, gas, drainage, etc. Indeed, the only - albeit most important - planned major input which will be met is the scheduled increase in money earnings for the kolkhozniks. A notable casualty of the pruning of funds allocated to agriculture has been the vast program outlined for irrigation.

At the March plenum, Brezhnev declared that over three million hectares of land would be brought under irrigation at a cost of some five billion rubles (Pravda, March 27, 1965). In the following year, this was scaled down to "2.5 - 3 million hectares" (Ibid., February 20, 1966). Now, in an interview with a Pravda correspondent, the Minister of Land Improvement and Water Management, E.E. Alekseevski, reveals that the area actually brought under irrigation during the period May 1966 - May 1969 amounts to just one million hectares (Ibid., May 29, 1969). This would indicate an underfulfillment of about 50 per cent of the original target. (KB)

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