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COMMUNIST AREA

USSR: Agriculture
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BONANZA FARM REPORT

That current agricultural output would likely approximate the record level reached in 1966 was one of the revealing assertions made in the report of the chief of the State Planning Committee, N.K. Baibakov, before the Supreme Soviet.

In his report on the projected plans for the development of the national economy for 1968, 1969, and 1970, the Kremlin's chief planner claimed that the significant increase in the growth of the agricultural sector was one of the most important results of the first two years of the current five-year plan 1966-70.

Despite unfavorable weather conditions in a number of regions in the country, the gross volume of farm production is expected to be about on the level with the record output of 1966. Particularly noteworthy was the sharp increase in state purchases of livestock products this year, Baibakov said. This would indicate that the main impetus contributing to the current growth was the livestock sector; the technical crops did well too.

The performance of the agricultural sector is no mean achievement, but it must be analyzed in perspective for this Jubilee year, when the accent is all on progress. The record grain harvest of 1966 yielded more feed supplies that in turn made possible the livestock gains of this year. And as the 1965-66 livestock output was below the growth rate of the crop sector during the same period, the resurgence was a cyclical response to abundant feed supplies. It is axiomatic that the livestock output is a function of the preceding harvest. So the record

1) Pravda, 11 October 1967.

harvest of 1966 is responsible for the good livestock showing this year, and as livestock products are high value commodities they account for much of the growth this year in gross agricultural production.

Baibakov made no public comment on the grain harvest for this year. Western observers consider a 15-18 percent shortfall from last year's all-time output a realistic estimate. Of the three main granaries in the USSR, the Ukraine and SW European Russia enjoyed excellent but not record grain yields this year. In the third region, the Virgin Lands and western Siberia, where harvesting lasted until the first week of October, the delivery reports to date indicate an average or poor crop. In last year's record, it should be noted, all three of the grain regions came through with record yields. Thus, the lag in the grain output this year was compensated for by the rise in the livestock sector which in turn accounts for the overall good performance in agriculture.

Last December, in his Supreme Soviet report, Baibakov reported a 10 percent increase in agricultural output over 1965 and projected a growth of 4 percent for 1967.² This year, he acknowledged the average growth during the first two years of the five-year plan as 4.2 percent per annum. The original draft of the plan stipulated an annual growth of 4.6 percent.³ So it appears that even two excellent years in agriculture were not sufficient to meet the planned levels.

The dynamics of agricultural growth in recent years shape up as follows:

Gross Agricultural Output, 1962 to 1967

Percentage increase over preceding year

Average Cumulative 1959-62	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
2.4	0.9	-7.5	14.	2.	10.	-1.6*	7.4**

*anticipated

**planned

ECE Report 1965, I p. 19.

Pravda, 16 December 1966.

SSSR v tsifrakh 1966, p. 81

1967 - Baibakov, Pravda, 11.10.67

2) Pravda, 16 December 1966.

3) Malyshev, CSA report, Pravda, 24 May 1966.

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Agricultural Investment 1966-68

(billion rubles)

		Planned	Actual
1966	Total	11.4	10.3
	state	6.1	5.3
	kolkhoz	5.3	5.0
1967	Total	11.3	10.45
	state	5.7	5.25
	kolkhoz	5.6	5.2
1968	Total	12.4	-
	state	6.4	-
	kolkhoz	6.0	-

Pravda, 8 December 1965, 16 December 1966, 11 October 1967.

During the current plan the level of investments in agriculture were set at 71 billion rubles, or an average of 14.2 billion rubles a year. So far, in 1966 there was a 10 percent slippage from the planned amount and an 8 percent drop indicated for this year. The kolkhoz share was more constant than the state's allocations it appeared. Baibakov in his speech complained that "unfortunately" the plans for capital investment in agriculture were not being fulfilled so that measures for capital construction in the countryside had been initiated through state funded construction agencies, apparently in addition to the formal budget allocations. Whether the 71 billion ruble target for the plan will be met depends on a further rise in the annual allocation of funds to agriculture.

