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COMMUNIST AREA

● GFR, EE & USSR: Agri-
culture

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FARM EXHIBIT AT OKTOBERFEST

Attracted by the strong brew and braying bands of the beer tents at Munich's Oktoberfest, not many of the million visitors to the Oktoberfest will pause to visit the agricultural exhibit at the south end of the Wiese. Yet every three years the Pavarian farm exhibition, sponsored by the Land Government, runs concurrently with the October festivities. In itself, such an exhibit of farm machinery, livestock, equipment, and food products is not particularly unusual. Its nominal appeal is local, social, and educational for town and country visitors alike.

Seen, however, in the perspective of the contrast between the organization and operation of the agriculture of the Communist East European countries and the western free world the impact of the exhibit is illuminating and loaded with political significance.

In this context the Bavarian farm show offers two primary features: 1) Its realistic educational approach to the farm problem; and 2) A dynamic demonstration of technological developments in the mechanization and improvement of production processes.

Through the media of films, diagrams, and running commentaries the problems and solutions of Bavarian agriculture are presented. The drift of young people from the farms to the cities, common to all countries, is a problem in Germany because of the more favorable opportunities in industry for better paying employment. Many of the farms are not competitive because of the small scale, topography, or parcelization. Overall, Bavaria is the largest agricultural land in the Federal Republic of Germany producing a third of the national output of grains, potatoes, beef and milk, products of which it has a surplus; in pork, poultry, and some vegetables it has a deficit. In order to become profitable and competitive under European Common Market conditions there must be structural changes made on the individual farms.

At this point, the technical services of the state and cooperative agencies are available without cost for comprehensive planning entirely on a voluntary basis. There is no coercion or compulsion applied in the essential planning for restructuring the individual farm. On the basis of the replanned farm, the state or private banks furnish long-term credits.

In the planning process consolidation of land parcels is urged. Where the type of farming warrants larger fields, land acquisition is recommended. Of primary importance, however, is the type of farming enterprise to be chosen. In today's market, specialization is the crux of the operation. The era of diversified farming is past. Under Bavarian conditions and in line with the EEC market projections the most profitable farming enterprises are pork production, poultry farming, and gardening. Dairy and beef husbandry are less profitable. But the essential decision is to specialize in one branch, regardless of farm size.

At this juncture a striking contrast with Communist agrarian policy is evident. Whereas the East European socialized farming systems are obsessed with large scale farming, the Bavarian studies show that in the two most profitable enterprises -- pigs and poultry -- small land areas are profitable and net labor income is independent of farm size. Thus, a one-man, $7\frac{1}{2}$ hectare mechanized farm of 500 pigs has a net labor income of 18,500 DM a year. Similar plans for poultry, dairy, beef and specialized farming operating units are worked out in the exhibit.

Both the state agricultural agency and the cooperative "Bauernsiedlung" organization assist the interested farmer in drawing up a complete reorganization plan for the individual farm. Rearrangements in buildings and their redesign to adapt to the new plan are worked out, as is the degree of mechanization. On the complete farm plan then, based on productivity and profitability, state or private banks finance the restructuring of the farm. Without the integrated farm plan as drawn up by the specialist and farmer, bank loans of comparable size are not recommended.

It is a striking example of free choice, cooperative planning between state and the private farms for the benefit of a productive, profitable and free agriculture.

In the farm machinery sector of the exhibition, which covers five hectares of space, the contrast between the two political sectors of Europe is further evident. For while the Soviet Union and those East European countries with a developed machine industry monotonously stress heavy tractors and ponderous field machinery in the farm exhibits, the Bavarian show presents a balanced and thoroughly integrated machinery industry.

The massive Soviet models of tractors and combines seen at foreign shows are designed to overwhelm the visitor with their size but, in actuality, the Soviet concentration on a few types of large-scale power units reveals a lag in integrated mechanization of agriculture. As a result scores of routine production processes are still largely done by hand.

The Munich farm exhibit, however, features hundreds of variable-sized machines and equipment that lighten and speed-up the innumerable farm operations with the emphasis on hydraulic-operated attachments to tractors. Tractor power in Bavaria, too, is on the increase. A decade ago the average power of a tractor was 12-15 H.P.; today the average power has risen to 32 H.P.

West German soils are not inherently fertile, yet they produce some of the world's highest yields. The Bavarian agricultural show provides the reasons for this: heavy application of balanced chemical fertilizers along with heavy organic matter coverage, reliance on high-yielding seeds, the suppression of weeds through herbicides, and timely working of the soil.

The accent in mechanization is on improving the operations of the family-type farm. The role of farmer cooperatives, democratically controlled by the members, is given special recognition as an ideal and dynamic organization to assure farmers a fair share of the national income and representation in the decision-making circles of the government.

The educational exhibit casts a hard look at the farm problem and comes up with positive solutions to make rural living profitable and permanent. The entire exhibition is a convincing testimonial to the superiority and productivity of the free-choice, family-type system of farming. This system derives its advantage from the private ownership and initiative common to the Western world where technology, as well as enlightened state policy, is used to lift the level of living among the numerically-declining, yet ever vital, farming community.