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KAZAKH SHEEPFOLDS (III)

Delegates to the II Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party (21-24 June) were confronted with a recurrent problem in the economic development of the second largest republic in the Soviet Union: while the mid-year industrial goals were fulfilled on schedule, agricultural output fell far short of the (half-year) plan.

Last year's grain deliveries in Kazakhstan fell 100 million poods (1.64 million tons - 24%) short of the target and the overall harvest declined 14 percent.¹ Khrushchev charged the leadership with mismanagement of the tractor and combine resources whereby 1.7 million hectares of grain were left unharvested and lost in the fields. This failure set off a chain reaction of dismissals for N. I. Belyaev, heretofore one of the prime farm specialists in the Party, first from the first secretaryship of the republic, then from the Presidium of the CC, and finally as head of the Rostov obkom.

The half-year progress report on agricultural output in Kazakhstan deals with livestock products as grain and cotton deliveries were completed late in 1959. As Kazakhstan is to become a primary livestock producing area in the economy of the USSR, the performance table needs to be read in this reference.

Plan Vs. Performance - Kazakh SSR²

Mid-year Deliveries 1960*

	<u>Meat</u>	<u>Milk</u>	<u>Wool</u>
Planned Output (Jan.-June)	240,633	501,000	
Actual Output " "	135,208	341,700	3,635 less than last year, same period.

* Tons

¹ The drop in grain was partially offset by a rise in livestock products during 1959, when meat deliveries reached 647,000 T or 68% above 1958. (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 27 January 1960) Private plots contributed approximately 35% of the total meat.

² Report of I. Yu. Yusupov, Secretary CC, CP Kazakhstan. (Kaz. Pravda, 23 June 1960.)

This is a 43% shortfall for meat and 32 percent for milk deliveries for the half-year mark. In relation to the 1960 total goals: meat 700,000 T; milk 1 million T; wool 86,000 T, the shortages become more apparent in perspective, although meat deliveries are normally heavier in the latter half period.

The phenomena of unfulfilled production targets in Soviet agriculture are endemic to the system and not always newsworthy. In the Kazakh case, however, they illustrate the peculiar and unplannable logistics of biological production. This is of primary import as the main effort of the 7-year Plan is to double meat production, an incredible task. Livestock output is dominantly the function of feed inputs: poor harvests effect a drop in the following year's livestock output, unless emergency slaughterings are carried out to conserve feed supplies as took place in the Northern Caucasus this year.³ So the rather good showing in livestock product during 1959 was largely the result of the excellent harvest of the previous year, although even then the plan was not reached.⁴

Thus while Party speakers at the Kazakh plenary session of the CC placed the blame on cadres, losses from wintering of livestock, inadequate shelters, and some feed shortages -- the usual polemics at plenums on agriculture -- the really decisive data for the setback in livestock for this and the next half-year are in the CSA report for 1959 - Kazakhstan: the hay storage goal was filled by only 67%, feed silage 42%, and straw 29%.⁵ The setback in the grain harvest has been noted. No wonder livestock losses were heavy this winter.

As Kazakhstan is to play a major role in the all-union plan to double meat production in the 7-year Plan, concentrating on sheep and beef raising against a gradual cut-back in grain farming, the logistics of the ecology of plants, livestock, and Party are of decisive significance if Khrushchev's ambitious goal to catch up with the USA in livestock products is to be realized. Thus far the trio has a long road ahead, and the march will not be in unison.

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³ Background Information, 12 April 1960.

⁴ This is an interesting and revealing addenda to Belyaev's political obituary, that although he was awarded a medal for "labor valor" before his dismissal from the Kazakh First secretary post (Pravda, 16 Jan. 1960), he had pledged 800,000 T. meat for 1959 at the XXI Party Congress (Izvestia, 29 Jan. 1959) but actually came through with 647,000 T (supra). This may seem badgering a point, but the competitive tempo aroused by Riazan Oblast's Larionov in overfulfilling meat pledges put a premium on the careers of high Party officials in "keeping pledges" of production performances. Where 1st Secretary Larionov rode with the tide of success, Belyaev was a casualty in the pledge-performance Party struggle.

⁵ Ibid., 27 Jan. 1959.