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USSR: Economics

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"LAND STEWARDSHIP" POSSIBLE UNDER THE NEW PROVISION OF THE PROPOSED SOVIET KOLKHOZ REGULATIONS

Summary: A provision in the draft Soviet kolkhoz statute offers the opportunity to tie land and other productive resources more closely to small kolkhoz production units and members. Utilization of this provision could re-instill personal involvement, which is so necessary to increased production in the long run and to the maintenance of the productiveness of agricultural resources.

Throughout the years, one of the problems facing collective farms in the Soviet Union and in other East European countries has been the lack of a permanent personal attachment of the members to the land under kolkhoz cultivation. It has frequently been recognized that re-instilling this feeling is a pre-condition to even a partial solution of the question of maintaining the fertility of the land over the long haul.

A provision of the new draft of the Soviet model kolkhoz regulations may help to facilitate the redevelopment of the much-needed feeling of "land stewardship". The proposal specifically states that "land plots, tractors, machines and implements, working and productive animals, essential structures, and the means of production are allotted to the collective farm's productive sections for a number of years."* If properly used, this provision could re-awaken the interest of members in the maintenance of the long-run fertility of the soil and the proper maintenance of the various other productive implements and input factors.

The degree of success in the re-awakening of the memberships' interest will largely depend on the magnitude of the "collective farm's production sections." The relationship will tend to be inverse -- i.e., the larger the section the more diffused the interest. Here lies one of the major keys to a successful re-awakening of the feeling of "stewardship" for the productive forces utilized on the part of each collective farm member.

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*Pravda, 24 April 1969.