

- Research and Evaluation - cz
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The heretofore reluctantly acknowledged shortages of meat and lard in the Soviet Union were given definitive dimensions in the semi-annual economic report of the Central Statistical Administration (Pravda, 21 July).

The output of meat and lard, excluding the private holdings of farmers and workers, reached 1.3 million tons during the first six months of 1961, or only 93 percent of last year's mid-year level, the CSA reported.

This lag becomes more meaningful - and Soviet consumers need not be reminded - when seen in perspective to the meat fiasco of 1960 - a 19 percent failure of planned production and one of Khrushchev's biggest disappointments domestically.

Or, more significantly, this yield from the socialized sector of agriculture made available only 12 1/2 kilograms meat and lard for each urban consumer during the first half of the year.¹ Without the private herds this performance is on the level of meat consumption among the most backward Asian nations. Accordingly Khrushchev's praise of horsemeat as a wholesome food in his June speech at Alma Ata was not wholly a political sop to his Asian audience.

The technological backwardness of the Soviet meat industry is readily apparent from the data. The annual commercial output of meat and fats was 4.4 million tons last year - so only 30 percent of the vital protein-mineral food is produced in the first half of the year. And in view of the admitted shortage of refrigerator capacity no effective stockpiling is possible to smoothen the flow of meat into consumer channels.

The 7 Year Plan called for a doubling of meat and fat yields to 16 million tons; after 2 1/2 years the achievement comes to 9 million tons. And this includes the horse meat. Khrushchev's meat goal is clearly a slippery, shrivelled sausage.

¹The private herds accounted for 52 percent of the total meat and lard output in 1960. The processed meat is exclusively allocated for non-farm consumption, so the 1.3 million tons would be disposable among the 100+ million city dwellers.

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