

Munich, 16 December 1969 (Communist Area Analysis Department:
USSR - cz)

A surprise in the economic report of Gosplan chief, N.K. Baibakov, to the Supreme Soviet was his assertion that the Soviet grain harvest this year reached 160,5 million tons, (1) gross weight.

Most Western estimates had placed it at 140-150 million tons, although the RFE projections since summer had predicted a potential of 160 million tons. (2)

This performance would place this years' grain crop as the third best in history -- all three occurring during the current plan.

The line-up in order of the record Soviet grain crops are:
(gross yields)

1966	-	171.2 million tons		
1968	-	169.5	"	"
1969	-	160.5	"	"
1964	-	152.1	"	"
1967	-	147.9	"	"

Despite unfavorable early season weather, the Ukraine, Central Black Earth Belt, and the Urals came through with excellent harvests. The Virgin Lands in Kazakhstan and western Siberia seem to have had good average yields. Only the north Caucasus and the lower Volga regions, among the leading grain regions, had poor crops. Had these important granaries come through with a good yield the all-time record might have been surpassed.

The dockage (excess moisture and foreign matter in the grain) this year will likely be the largest on record, so that a 15 to 20 percent discount must be applied to arrive at a net harvest figure. A larger share of the grain than usual will be

(1) Radio Moscow, 16 December 1969.

(2) RFE Research reports of 29 August, 19 September, 10 October and 9 November 1969.

fit for livestock feeding only. No doubt the Soviet decision to buy 135 million bushels of wheat from Canada is primarily predicated on the need to improve the quality of cereal flour for domestic consumption, particularly during the Lenin anniversary year.

In short, an excellent crop, even when loaded with excess ballast, has been fielded. The current plan target of 170 million tons (average for 5 years), however, will not be realized.

RF/1800/61