

# RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

## COMMUNIST AREA

- USSR: Agriculture  
8 November 1965

### NOVEMBER HARVEST

Keynote speakers at the ceremonies in commemoration of the October revolution in the Soviet Union usually indicate the dimensions of the harvest, particularly if it is at all bountiful or, on the other hand, if the existing political climate makes it expedient. Thus, at last year's celebrations, the speaker, newly elected party secretary L.I. Brezhnev, merely claimed that the grain delivery plan had been overfulfilled. In reality, the 1964 harvest was of bumper proportions, with a record set for grain deliveries to the state, but the admission of such an achievement would have credited Khrushchev under whose administration the near record crop of last year was achieved.

This year, however, the spokesman for agriculture on the Party Presidium of the Central Committee, D.S. Polyansky, did the honors as orator at the 48th anniversary of the October revolution and devoted more time than his predecessors to agricultural affairs. He repeated in broad outline the new regime's agrarian policies as set out at the March 1965 plenum and again in subsequent resolutions. There were no innovations in policy announced. However, as this year's harvest is the first for which the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership is responsible, Polyansky went all out to make a bad year look as impressive as possible.

Polyansky credited state and collective farmers with better organization in bringing in this year's harvest, which was handicapped by poor weather conditions. On the vital issue of the harvest results, he revealed:

The overall output of agriculture will ... as a whole exceed the level attained in any other year, although it may be two or three percent below the

indices of the bumper crop year of 1964. The amount of grain produced in a number of regions will be smaller, because of the drought, than provided for by the plan, but the party and the state have taken measures to make it possible to safeguard the normal supply of bread to the population and to meet the other requirements of the country for bread products.

The indices of the "bumper crop year for 1964" were the highest ever in grain but the lowest in livestock products since 1958. As the livestock products show up as more valuable in terms of weighted gross output the rise in livestock output during 1965 caused a boost in the gross figure. Another important determinant is that a good grain harvest is reflected in the following year by increased livestock products. Thus Polyansky's assertion that the overall farm output index would be a few points less than 1964 may be valid as the livestock index in that year was the lowest during the entire plan period. The good livestock showing this year can be attributed to the excellent harvest of 1964 and emergency slaughtering in the Virgin Lands and Siberia because of last summer's drought. In terms of net national product, however, the indices will be lower because of the reduction in livestock numbers.

It is well to remember that, as yet, there has been no official statement on the massive grain imports contracted for during the 1965/66 year as a result of this year's harvest setback. Over 9 million tons of wheat have been purchased thus far. This is obviously what Polyansky had in mind when he assured his listeners that the party and state had taken measures to safeguard the normal supply of bread to the population. But no direct admission of imports was acknowledged.

1) Pravda, 7 November 1965.

2) Index of Farm Output: USSR  
1940 = 100

<u>Year</u>	<u>Gross Output</u>	<u>Crops</u>	<u>Livestock</u>
1958	156	147	180
1959	157	140	194
1960	160	147	193
1961	165	149	202
1962	167	149	207
1963	155	136	194
1964	173	173	183
1965 (Estimate)	169	150	200

Another instance of overzealous reporting was the assertion that farms would have as much grain for internal use as they had last year. It so happens that grain procurements were cut by 10 million tons this year -- which will be made up by the 9 million tons of imports.

Fairly good crops of sugar beets, potatoes, and vegetables are reported but the only crop destined to meet the Seven-Year plan goal seems to be cotton, which long has enjoyed the benefits of irrigation and fertilizer. No other major crop (except possibly sugar beets), or livestock commodity, will come near reaching the excessive Khrushchev-inspired goals of the plan.

Last year's good harvest had a positive effect on livestock output. So did the lifting of restrictions on the private herds of the peasants and workers. Meat and milk production should exceed the top 1963 levels but fall short of the planned goals by 60 to 70 percent respectively. Milk yields per cow were raised by 295 kilograms this year -- a great achievement claimed Polyansky -- but earlier Brezhnev had warned these yields had dropped 370 kilograms in five years.

In the first six years of the current Seven-Year plan the increase in farm output has been 10 percent compared to the 70 percent envisaged by the plan, according to Brezhnev. The last year of the big farm plan that failed was particularly undistinguished. The 1965 target had envisaged an eight percent increase in agricultural production. Now it appears a two to three percent shortfall will be realized from last year's performance. This is a singularly inauspicious beginning for the new Kremlin regime.

Nonetheless, Polyansky, in enumerating the measures designed to spark an upsurge in agriculture, resorted to a timeworn slogan of Khrushchev's in his exhortatory closing appeal:

We now have everything necessary for the collective farm countryside to proceed more rapidly along the path of prosperity.

Livestock	Crops	Gross Output	Year
181	141	131	1958
181	141	131	1959
181	141	131	1960
181	141	131	1961
181	141	131	1962
181	141	131	1963
181	141	131	1964
181	141	131	1965 (estimate)

3) At March plenum, Pravda, 22 March 1965.