

**THE SOCIALIZED AGRICULTURE
OF THE USSR**

PLANS AND PERFORMANCE

By
NAUM JASNY



STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Stanford, California

**THE SOCIALIZED AGRICULTURE OF THE USSR
PLANS AND PERFORMANCE**

A Publication of the

FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Established at Stanford University, California, in 1921, jointly by Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Trustees of Leland Stanford Junior University, for research in the production, distribution, and consumption of food

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Grain Economics Series

No. 5. *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR: Plans and Performance*, by NAUM JASNY, July 1949

No. 4. *World Grain Review and Outlook, 1945*, by HELEN C. FARNSWORTH and V. P. TIMOSHENKO with a Statistical Appendix by ROSAMOND H. PEIRCE, May 1945

No. 3. *The Rice Economy of Monsoon Asia*, by V. D. WICKIZER and M. K. BENNETT, November 1941

No. 2. *Competition among Grains*, by NAUM JASNY, January 1940

No. 1. *Agricultural Russia and the Wheat Problem*, by V. P. TIMOSHENKO, September 1932

A complete list of publications of the Food Research Institute will be furnished on request.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

LONDON: GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE BAKER AND TAYLOR COMPANY
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 3

HENRY M. SNYDER & COMPANY
440 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 16

W. S. HALL & COMPANY
457 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 22

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DEDICATED

TO

*those in Soviet Russia—far away and
yet so near—who believe in science,
unadorned and unadulterated science;
statistics, simply factual statistics; plain
truth, untarnished and unvarnished.*

DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

How does a socialized agriculture work? What of its organization, controls, output, labor productivity, and product distribution? The time is not ripe for any general or definitive answer to these imperious questions, but Soviet experience affords a challenging opportunity to dig out partial and tentative answers relating specifically to that experience.

Typically glowing accounts by Soviet spokesmen are punctuated from time to time by wholesale charges and occasional purges, as in 1946. From visiting journalists, other foreign visitors, and recent emigrés come widely divergent answers. Initial prejudices, partisanship, differences in range of observations, and variations in degrees of credulity and competence help to account for such divergences. The subject demands skillful and intensive research, with the maximum use of the considerable though inadequate information that Soviet policy permits, sometimes unwittingly, to become available to the public at home and abroad. It is this kind of research that is embodied in the present work.

The writer of this book lived in Russia until after the Bolshevik Revolution. In World War I he worked on food problems as a member of the staff of the Economics Division of the All-Russian Union of Cities. Under the Kerensky regime of February–October 1917 he was an associate member of the Supreme Food Council and one of the advisers of the Supreme Economic Council. Later he served the Soviet government in Western Europe as a grain expert in trade representations in Germany. To the official *Encyclopedia of Russian Exports* (published in Russian, Berlin, 1st ed., 1926, 2d ed., 1928) he contributed the long section on "Grain," writing most of it and editing the rest.

During the last few years of his residence in Germany, he served as a foreign correspondent of the Food Research Institute, preparing memoranda on grain developments in Germany and the USSR. Since he came to the United States in 1933, he has written for the Institute two issues of *Wheat Studies*—

“Wheat Problems and Policies in Germany” (November 1936), and “Wheat Prices and Milling Costs in Classical Rome” (March 1944)—and one book, *Competition among Grains* (January 1940). He has also made important contributions to the study of tractors and, more recently, to the understanding of wheat, flour, and bread in classical antiquity. In our judgment, based on an association covering about twenty years, he is a thorough, ingenious, and trustworthy scholar.

The Institute has done its utmost to facilitate his completion of this extraordinarily difficult task. As the writer himself brings out in his Introduction, it is too much to expect that anyone, anywhere, can present a perfectly true picture of the evolution and results of the Soviet agricultural system. Some errors of fact and interpretation are inevitable in such a work, and we hope that subsequent research will correct any that the book contains. Yet we are satisfied that it constitutes a major contribution toward reliable understanding of a highly important subject that has been obscure and confused.

In the production of this book the Institute has been significantly aided by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation.

J. S. DAVIS

July 1949

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When this study reaches the reader, the necessity of thorough research on the Soviet economy will not need emphasis. It was different early in 1946 when the Food Research Institute decided to help me to go on with the project. A share of any credit that may be forthcoming goes to the Institute and its Executive Director, Dr. M. K. Bennett.

Mr. P. Stanley King, of the Institute, did a big job on the study, going over the whole manuscript thoroughly and checking computations, the argument, and so on. Much of the final wording is his. The charts and maps are entirely his work.

The manuscript, when first submitted, consisted of two parts. At the suggestion of Dr. J. S. Davis, the material was rearranged into five parts. Many other improvements were made as a result of his scrutiny.

Dr. V. P. Timoshenko, who is in the first rank among students of Russian and Soviet agriculture, took pains to read the study from beginning to end. No manuscript could fail to profit substantially from the suggestions of such an expert.

This study, like most of my others, is based primarily on material in the library of the United States Department of Agriculture. But it is not the books used there that one recalls after the burdensome job is done. It is the friendly atmosphere of the place. Names cannot be given; there are too many. But everywhere—in the reading room, in circulation, in the catalogue section—everybody is helpful, and helpful in such a way that it is pure pleasure to go there, to be there.

N. J.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	3
Aims of this study, 3—The approach, 5—Handicaps, 6—Character of the results, 15—The USSR vs. the United States, 16—Plan of the book, 17	

PART I. A SUMMARY VIEW

II. THE SOCIALIZATION DRIVE AND THE PROCUREMENT SYSTEM	23
Conditions leading to collectivization, 23—Faith in the big enterprise, 26—Compulsion, 30—The results, 33—A glance into the future, 37—Five-Year Plans in operation, 38	
III. THE SOCIALIZED FARMS	43
Sovkhozy, 43—Kolkhozy, 49—The new territories, 59	
IV. PRODUCTION AND INCOME: GOALS AND RESULTS	61
Investment, 61—Mechanization, 62—Output, 64—Production by commodities, 70—Income, 73	
V. MARKETINGS AND CONSUMPTION	77
Marketings, 77—Consumption, 84	

PART II. BACKGROUND

VI. NATURAL RESOURCES AND POPULATION	103
A general view, 103—Climate, 108—Soils, 112—Natural conditions of the USSR and the United States, 113—Land utilization, 115—Land reserves, 118—Agricultural regions, 122—Land resources and population, 129	
VII. LAND TENURE AND DE-STRATIFICATION	133
Pre-Revolution land tenure, 134—The "Russian way," 139—The Stolypin reform, 141—Pre-Revolution drift in land tenure, 143—Stratification in agriculture, 146—Post-Revolution land tenure, 151	
VIII. PRE-COLLECTIVIZATION PEASANT FARMING	161
"Class" composition: an over-all view, 161—The 1927 survey of peasant economy, 163—Family size, 165—Means of production, 166—Land tenure, 171—Sale and hire of labor, 173—Income and wealth, 176—Per capita data, 177—Regional variations, 179	

CHAPTER	PAGE
IX. PRE-REVOLUTION INCOME AND PRODUCTION	183
Incomes, 183—Farm machinery and fertilizer, 184—Production, 187—Marketings, 191—Exports, 193—Rigidity of production, 196—World War I, 198	
X. DECLINE AND RECOVERY AFTER THE REVOLUTION	200
Decline, 200—Recovery, 202—Technical factors, 203—Price relationships, 205—Production, 213—Marketings and peasant consumption, 222—Exports, 231	
 PART III. SOCIALIZED ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL	
XI. SOVKHOZY	235
Before the drive, 235—1st Plan Period: goals, 237—1st Plan Period: failure and its causes, 246—2d Plan Period, 252—3d Plan Period, 259—The prewar status, 261—War-time and postwar developments, 267	
XII. MACHINE-TRACTOR STATIONS	269
Forerunners of the MTS, 269—Early experience with MTS, 273—The MTS as mature institutions, 280	
XIII. EARLY KOLKHOZY AND THE BIG DRIVE	296
The early period, 298—The drive, 304—Kulaki and individual peasants, 311—Kolkhoz enlargement, 315—Kolkhoz specialization, 319—The end of the commune and TOZ, 320—The cost of collectivization, 322	
XIV. KOLKHOZY: ORGANIZATION	325
The charter, 327—Membership, 327—Management, 329—Labor force, 334	
XV. KOLKHOZY: PROPERTY COLLECTIVIZED AND OPERATIONS	338
Land, 339—Machinery, 342—Livestock, 343—Operations, 358	
XVI. OBLIGATORY DELIVERIES AND KOLKHOZ MARKETS	363
The first commandment, 363—Delivery techniques in general, 366—Delivery techniques for specified products, 371—Kolkhoz markets and government commercial stores, 383	
XVII. MAN POWER: UTILIZATION	389
The central problem, 389—The obligation to work and the work itself, 391—Trudoden, 401—Premiums, 405—Trudodni statistics, 410—Trudodni and workdays related to output, 413	

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVIII. MAN POWER: PRODUCTIVITY	415
Labor productivity before collectivization, 420—Kolkhozy, 423—Kolkhoznik enterprises, 433—Sovkhozy, 436—Socialized agriculture as a whole, 438—The USSR and other countries, 441	
 PART IV. SOCIALIZED PRODUCTION: PLANS AND RESULTS	
XIX. MECHANIZATION	449
General: goals and attainments, 450—Total power, 455—The tractor, 460—Rural electrification, 475—Grain harvesting, 475	
XX. TECHNIQUES OTHER THAN MECHANIZATION	483
Land improvements, 483—Various techniques, 485—Fertilizer, 494—Improvements in livestock, 501	
XXI. TOTAL CROP PRODUCTION	502
1st Plan Period, 502—2d Plan Period, 516—3d Plan Period, 520—War, 522—4th Plan Period, 523—Changes in regional distribution of cropped plowland, 526—Cropped plowland by crop groups: recapitulation, 529	
XXII. GRAIN	532
Acreages, 532—Yields and outputs, 538—Utilization, 550—Procurements, 561	
XXIII. TECHNICAL CROPS	562
Fibers, 562—Oilseeds, 573—Sugar beets, 580—Tobacco, 585—Rubber, 586	
XXIV. POTATOES, VEGETABLES, AND FRUITS	587
Potatoes, 587—Vegetables, 595—Potatoes and vegetables for large cities, 603—Fruits and berries, 604	
XXV. FEED	607
Total feed, 607—Hay, 612—Straw and chaff, 618—Feed roots and silage, 618—Pasture, 619	
XXVI. LIVESTOCK	620
1st Plan Period, 620—2d Plan Period, 623—3d Plan Period, 625—4th Plan Period, 630—Regional variations, 632	
XXVII. ANIMAL PRODUCTS	638
Meat, 638—Milk, 648—Eggs, 652—Wool and Hides, 653—Total Animal Products, 653	

PART V. OVER-ALL PRODUCTION AND INCOME

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXVIII. TOTAL PRODUCTION	657
The indexes: Soviet, 657—Gross production: computed, 668—Production - for - sale - and - consumption index: computed, 674—Income from agriculture: computed, 676—Addendum, 680	
XXIX. DISTRIBUTION OF KOLKHOZ OUTPUT AND KOLKHOZNIK INCOMES	683
Receipts and outlays of the kolkhozy, 683—Kolkhoznik receipts from the kolkhozy, 688—Kolkhoznik receipts from own enterprises, 698—Kolkhoznik receipts from the two major sources, 699—Income of the population engaged in agriculture, 701	

APPENDIX NOTES

NOTE	
A. POPULATION ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE, 1928 TO 1939	709
Before collectivization, 710—After collectivization, 711—1939 compared with 1926-27, 713	
B. INVESTMENT	714
C. "UNCHANGABLE 1926-27 PRICES" OF TRUCKS, AUTOMOBILES, AND TRACTORS	717
Trucks and automobiles, 718—Tractors, 719—Concluding remarks, 721	
D. AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES DURING THE NEP	721
E. KONTRAKTATSIYA DURING THE NEP	722
F. WHEAT IN THE NON-CHERNOZEM ZONE	723
G. METHODS OF ESTIMATING CROPS	725
Pre-Revolutionary statistics, 725—1920 through 1932, 727—Biological crop: early period, 728—Biological crop: mature system, 730	
H. ASCERTAINING THE BARN CROPS OF GRAIN, 1933-39	736
Reconstruction from statements of official analysts, 739—Mixed approach, 744	
I. GRAIN YIELDS COMPARED WITH YIELDS OF OTHER MAJOR CROPS	746
For 1933-36, 746—1937 and 1938, 748	
J. UTILIZATION OF GRAIN IN SPECIFIED PERIODS AND YEARS	748
The data, 748—Food, 750—Feed, 752—Other items, 756—Total utilization, 759	
K. BREAD-FLOUR MARGINS	760

CONTENTS

XV

NOTE	PAGE
L. SUGAR BEETS IN ALTAI KRAI	761
M. LIVESTOCK NUMBERS, 1939-41	762
N. DEDUCTIONS FROM THE VALUE OF GROSS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (SOVIET SENSE) TO OBTAIN THE VALUE OF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FOR SALE AND FOR CONSUMPTION IN THE FARM HOME	764
O. DEPRECIATION AND OUTLAY ON NON-AGRICULTURAL MATERIALS Depreciation, 766—Materials of non-agricultural origin, 769	766

APPENDIX TABLES FOR CHARTS

APPENDIX TABLES FOR CHARTS	773
--------------------------------------	-----

SOURCES CITED

SOURCES CITED	801
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INDEX

INDEX	817
-----------------	-----

LIST OF MAPS

MAP 1. Soviet Socialist Republics of the USSR and Principal Divisions of the RSFSR	104
MAP 2. Natural Divisions of the USSR	105
MAP 3. Average Annual Precipitation in the USSR	106
MAP 4. Soils of the USSR	107