

THE STATE FARMS OF THE U.S.S.R.

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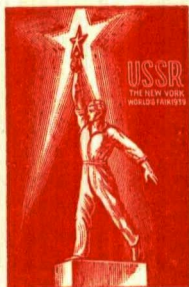


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THE STATE FARMS OF THE U.S.S.R.

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OLD Russia was primarily a country of small-scale peasant agriculture. The great mass of the peasants held tiny plots of land while hundreds of millions of acres of the best land belonged to the royal family, the church, the nobility, and the kulaks, who exploited the poverty of the peasants to cultivate their estates. The only agricultural implements available to the peasants were primitive wooden plows and harrows that did little more than scratch the soil. Peasant farming before the Revolution was a constant struggle for meager harvests, under the threat of drought and famine.

Agriculture in the Soviet Union presents a totally different picture. The peasants

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have pooled their resources in large-scale collective farms, the *kolkhozes*. Moreover, 6,350 machine and tractor stations have been opened—state enterprises through which the Soviet Government renders the collective farmers scientific and technical assistance. In 1938 there were 483,500 tractors at work in the fields of the Soviet Union, 153,500 harvester combines and hundreds of thousands of other, complex agricultural machines. In addition to the collective farms, which are cooperative bodies of peasants working and owning the implements in common, there are large-scale state agricultural enterprises, state farms, which are run on industrial lines.

The first farms were organized by the Soviet Government in 1918, but their rapid development began in 1928-29 when, on the initiative of Stalin, large state grain farms using modern methods were organized all over the country. By the spring of 1930, 143 state grain farms had been organized. After them came large-scale stock-raising farms.



In the Laboratory of the Bairam-Ali (State Sericultural Farm (Turkmen S.S.R))

There are state farms in all parts of the vast Soviet Union: in the steppes of North Caucasus, the Crimea, the steppes of Orenburg, the Trans-Volga districts, and the spreading plains of Kazakhstan and Siberia.

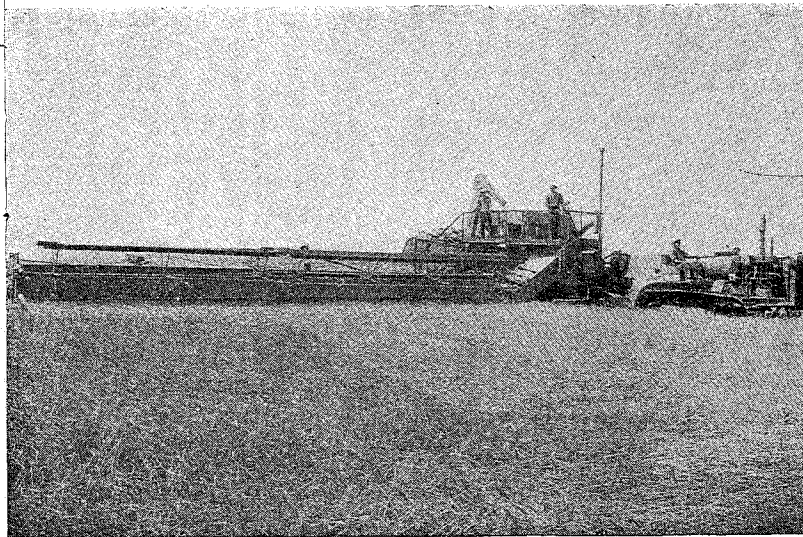
The history of the state farms is one of the chapters in the great campaign for the reorganization of agriculture, the development of large-scale Socialist farms. As a result of this struggle the Soviet Government broke the resistance of the enemies of the Soviet people, who tried to frustrate the development of state farms by sabotage. Hundreds of large state grain farms and stock-raising farms are now thriving in all parts of the Soviet Union and have become an abundant source of grain, meat, milk and other supplies.

Already in 1930 the state grain farms supplied the country with 553,650 tons of grain. In 1933-37 the state grain farms and stock-raising farms, controlled by the People's Commissariat of State Farms, supplied the country with 9,136,600 tons of grain,

1,120,400 tons of meat, 4,095,000 tons of milk and 65,500 tons of wool.

In order to put an end to kulak exploitation and save the peasants from hunger and poverty it was necessary to show them in practice all the benefits and the advantages of large-scale, mechanized Socialist agriculture. The state farms, equipped with up-to-date machinery and rationalized with the latest methods of agronomy and scientific animal husbandry, showed the peasants the advantages of large-scale Socialist agriculture. Thereby they played a great part in collectivization, the reorganization of peasant farming on modern lines.

By January 1, 1939, the number of state farms in the U.S.S.R. had reached 3,957. They now occupy an immense area of 168,000,000 acres. The majority of the state farms have been organized on land where tsarist Russia, with its backward agriculture, could make nothing grow. In other words, tens of millions of acres of land, previously uncultivated, have been brought under the plough. There are state



Wide-Cut Harvester Combine

farms in all the republics and regions of the U.S.S.R., even in localities where the population had previously been non-agricultural.

Besides producing foodstuffs for the urban industrial centers—grain, meat, milk, butter, fruit and vegetables—the state farms supply raw material for our industries—cotton, flax, wool, sugar beet, vegetable and essential oils, etc.

There are also special state farms for breeding reindeer and various animals valuable for their fur, such as sables, martens, raccoons, and silver foxes.

The existing state farms are classified as follows:

Grain-growing.	477	farms
Cattle-breeding	771	„
Pig-breeding	629	„
Sheep-raising.	200	„
Growing cotton and other fiber crops.	54	„
Growing special crops (tea, tobacco, etc.)	114	„
Fruit, vegetable and vine-growing.	645	„
Studs.	118	„
Reindeer-breeding	31	„

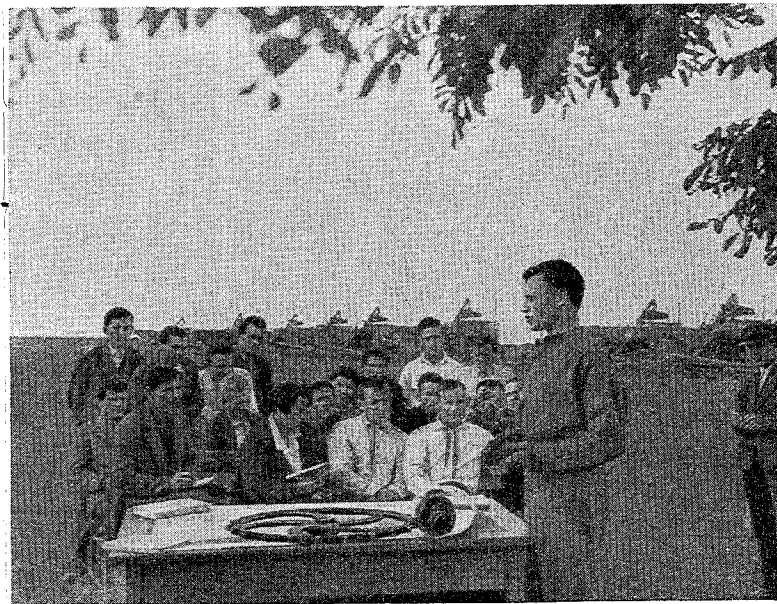
Poultry-raising	102 farms
Suburban (chiefly for vegetables and dairy produce, and miscel- laneous)	816 ..

The scope of state farming may be seen from the fact that the total sown area of the state farms in 1938 was 30,628,000 acres.

The total livestock of the state farms is 2,597,000 head of cattle, 1,830,000 head of hogs and 5,676,000 head of sheep.

Under the first two Five-Year Plans the state invested about 15,000,000,000 rubles in the development of state farms and their technical re-equipment.

The state farms are powerfully equipped with machinery. The number of tractors, harvester combines, motor trucks and various farm machines is growing from year to year. The quality of these machines is constantly improving: old types of machines are being replaced by modern and more powerful ones. A good proportion of the tractors now in use on the state farms are of the large caterpillar type, while Diesel tractors



Combine operators taking technical instruction on the Timoshevskaya State Grain Farm (Krasnodar Territory)

and gas generator tractors are being introduced on a wide scale, and, with them, the giant harvester combine.

In the last ten years the number of tractors in the state farms has increased $12\frac{1}{2}$ times, aggregating 1,751,800 horse power. In the state farms there are 26,000 harvester combines and 30,600 motor trucks.

In the state grain farms 94.5 per cent of all work is now being done by mechanical traction while the harvesting is done exclusively by combines.

The wide use of machines on the state farms and collective farms has introduced new occupations in the countryside—tractor driving, combine operating, mechanics, truck driving, which were unknown in the old Russian countryside. In order to satisfy this demand for skilled labor a great network of technical schools has been organized. Many of the schools are located directly on the state farms. Between 1931 and 1937 the state farms under the People's Commissariat of State Farms alone trained 200,000 tractor drivers, 52,000 combine

operators, 25,000 assistant combine operators, 6,000 mechanics and 27,000 foremen for grain farms and stock farms. The state farms run various schools and study courses to train skilled personnel not only for themselves, but for the kolkhoz farms too.

The state farms employ great numbers of agronomists, engineers, animal breeding experts, and veterinary surgeons. These professions are taught in a large number of special agricultural institutes and colleges. Through the institutes and colleges under its jurisdiction, the People's Commissariat of State Farms has in the last five years trained 2,000 engineers, 2,600 agronomists, 7,500 animal breeding experts, 3,500 veterinary surgeons. Furthermore, large numbers of agricultural experts for the state farms have been trained in other institutes of education.

The leading workers in the state farms—the Stakhanovites—are making world records with their tractors, harvester combines and other machines.

The tractor driver Belenko, of the “Ba-



Reindeer on the State Farm at Cape Peschany
(Far Eastern Territory)

taiski" State Farm (Rostov Region), decorated by the government for his distinguished services, ploughed 5,965 acres in one season, while the tractor driver Kostenko of the Kropotkin State Grain Farm (Krasnodar Territory) ploughed 6,538 acres.

The tractor drivers Kopytko and Kovtun of the "Gigant" State Farm in North Caucasus, sowed 642 acres a day with 6 seeders hitched to a tractor of the caterpillar type.

During the harvest season of 1938 Bankin, a combine operator of the Privolensk State Cattle Farm (Rostov Region), harvested 6,290 acres of grain with a tandem of two combines, while Galunchikov, a combine operator of the "Podovinnoye" State Farm (Chelyabinsk Region), harvested over 3,700 acres and threshed 3,500 tons of grain.

Labor productivity is increasing in the state stock-raising farms also.

In 1938, for instance, Ulyana Barkova of the state dairy farm "Karavayevo" (Yaroslavl Region), got 8.8 tons of milk per cow. Kuznetsova of the "Kurkino" State Dairy Farm (Vologda Region) has reared over

1,000 calves without losing a single one. Every year, Lavrishko, the grazier of the Proletarsky Sheep Farm, North Caucasus, has 150 new lambs for every hundred ewes.

Modern machinery efficiently used has greatly increased the productivity of labor on the state farms and their output. In 1938 the state farms supplied the state with almost ten times more grain and meat and five times more dairy produce than in 1929.

The Soviet Government is taking good care that the workers in the state farms should have proper working conditions and living conditions.

The earnings of the regular workers in the state farms have increased more than two and a half times since 1932. In 1932 the annual earnings of the regular workers averaged out at 910 rubles, in 1938 the average was 2,396 rubles (an increase of 163 per cent). This increase has been particularly great in the case of the workers employed on the pig breeding farms: from 777 rubles a year to 2,499 rubles—a more than three-fold



Harvesting on an Experimental State Grain Farm
(Rostov Region)

increase. In the same period the workers in the state sheep farms increased their earnings by 169 per cent (from 847 to 2,278 rubles a year), the workers in the state dairy and meat farms—by 160 per cent (from 854 to 2,219 rubles a year) and the workers in the state grain farms by 128 per cent (from 1,201 to 2,742 rubles a year).

There has been a considerable increase in recent years in the wages of tractor drivers, combine operators, milkmaids, and other skilled workers. In August 1935 tractor drivers earned an average of 216 rubles a month during the harvest. In August 1938 the average was already 383 rubles (an increase of 77 per cent). In April 1935, milkmaids earned an average of 96 rubles a month. In 1938 they earned 174 rubles (an increase of 81 per cent).

The Stakhanovites are greatly increasing their earnings. For instance, the tractor driver Babich of the Krivoy Rog State Grain Farm in six months of 1938 earned 5,500 rubles. The milkmaids of the "Lesniye Poliany" State Dairy Farm (Moscow Region)

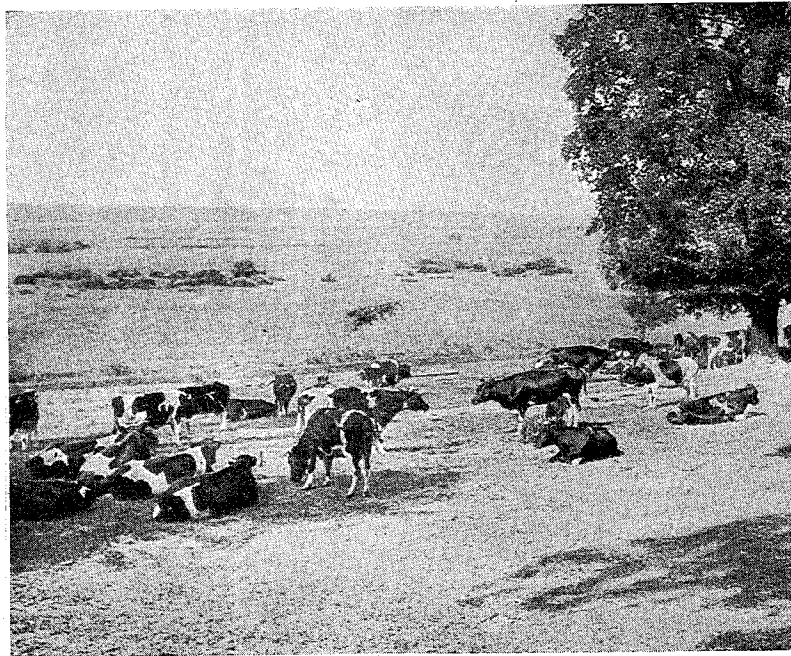
Markina and Rindina earned from 800 to 1,000 rubles a month.

The state farms have an eight-hour day. Every worker has an annual vacation with pay. Many workers spend their vacations in sanatoria and rest homes at the expense of the state.

Many state farms are real townships, populated by thousands of people. Every state farm maintains nurseries, maternity homes, hospitals, clinics and schools, all expenses being borne by the state.

There is little to distinguish life in the state farms from the life of the workers in the towns. In the "Electrozavod" State Grain Farm (Chkalov Region), for instance, the workers have a club, a moving picture theater, a large library, 9 elementary and secondary schools, courses in agricultural training, a hospital with 35 beds, a clinic, a drug store, nurseries, etc.

One hundred and thirty comfortable and well-designed houses have been built for the workers. All the apartments have electricity and radio installations,



East-Frieslander Cows on the "Taraskovo" State Dairy and Stock-Raising Farm (Kashirsky District, Moscow Region)

Who are the men who manage these great enterprises?

They are engineers and agronomists, most of them former workers, collective farmers, agricultural laborers who came to the state farms to perform simple, unskilled labor and acquired experience and a preliminary training which they later continued in special schools and colleges.

Here is the story of Denis Pavlovich Drieg, the assistant director of the Chkalov large-scale state grain farm (Zaporozhye Region). The son of a farm laborer, he began at the state farm as a shepherd. After completing short courses in tractor driving he began to work as a tractor driver, then became a combine operator. Later on he graduated from the Institute of Mechanization. He has been decorated by the government for his distinguished work.

Or another example—Piskarev, the director of the Ust-Medveditsk State Cattle Farm (Stalingrad Region) the son of a workingman. His career can be stated briefly: he worked in the engine room of a Volga steamer, then at

a corn mill. Later he became an artificer and gave up his trade to study at an agricultural institute. Eventually he became the technical director of the October State Farm (Voronezh Region). Now he directs a great stock farm.

Many state farms are already models of good organization and efficiency.

One of the oldest and best-known state farms, not only in the U.S.S.R., but also to people abroad, is the "Gigant" Grain Farm in the steppes of the North Caucasus. In the last two years it has averaged about 0.8 tons of winter wheat per acre from an area of 39,500 acres. This farm also has 3,200 head of cattle, 5,400 sheep, 700 pigs, 260 horses. In two years it has produced 10,500,000 rubles' worth of foodstuffs and made a profit of 2,785,000 rubles.

The „Kirov" State Grain Farm, situated in an arid zone of Kazakhstan which has a rainfall of only 220 mm. a year, now gets good harvests regularly. In 1938 it averaged 0.8 tons of grain per acre from an area of 61,750 acres.

In the "Karavayevo" State Dairy Farm the yield of milk in 1938 was 6.15 tons per cow from 251 cows. Almost half of the livestock are cows which have calved for the first and second time and give an unusually high yield of milk for their age. Since her second calving, for instance, the cow "Blagodats" has yielded 9 tons of milk. The record making cow "Poslushnitsa" which was reared on the same farm yielded 16.3 tons of milk during her sixth lactation (1937 and the beginning of 1938).

The Proletarsky Sheep Farm has 22,000 head of *précocé* (early-maturity) sheep. In 1938, 122 lambs were obtained per hundred ewes, and in 1939, 147 winter (February) lambs per 100 ewes were obtained in six flocks. This state farm shears an average of 9.9 lbs of wool per year per sheep. All the ewes on this farm have been subjected to artificial semination for some years past.

Another pedigree sheep farm, the "Bolshhevik" (Orjonikidze Territory) has 34,000 sheep of the "Soviet Rambouillet" breed, a cross between the local merino and the

American Rambouillet. The Soviet Rambouillet combines the weight of the American Rambouillet with a heavy fleece. The best of them weigh 264 pounds and higher and yield 35 pounds of wool at a shearing. The average fleece per sheep on this state farm weighs 13.9 pounds. In 1938 the state farm sold 6,000 pedigree breeders to the collective farms.

The achievements of the state farms are very considerable. But even greater tasks face them during the Third Five-Year Plan period.

One of the aims of the Third Five-Year Plan for the Economic Development of the U.S.S.R. (1938-42) is, by continuing the mechanization of agriculture, to increase the productivity of labor in the state farms and make thriving concerns of them all.

