

# Saskatchewan Demonstration Farm Project

In October 1995, during a visit to Ukraine, Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow stated that the food and agricultural sector of Ukraine's economy represents an enormous potential market for Saskatchewan's agricultural industries. Saskatchewan's agricultural technology, crop species, agronomy and livestock management practices could be adapted to Ukraine's conditions and Saskatchewan agri-business was interested in Ukraine as a trading partner. At that time, Premier Romanow proposed a demonstration farm project to be located at the Pereyaslav-Khmelnitskiy state farm near Kyiv. This state farm was already cooperating in a joint venture in livestock genetics with Semex Canada, training farm managers and workers in livestock management from all over Ukraine. The Saskatchewan demonstration farm project was to compliment these activities by introducing forage production methods and farm machinery for grain production.

Saskatchewan's farm machinery manufacturers, Brandt Industries and Flexi-coil Limited, donated farm equipment to be used on the farm to demonstrate Western Canadian farming practices, while Newfield Seeds provided forage seed for the demonstration project. Other companies are now considering joining in to expand the project. The project was to provide training in modern farming practices to Ukrainian farmers, both in Ukraine and through work experience on farms in Saskatchewan. The project initially intended to assist Ukraine's agricultural economy reform and change, with economic benefits to the agri-food sectors of both Saskatchewan and Ukraine.

### Farm Machinery Sector

The first phase of the Saskatchewan demonstration farm was the introduction of current Western Canadian farm machinery to the farm in Ukraine. The farm machinery sector effectively demonstration how its farm machinery can improve the productivity of Ukraine's farm land at the Pereyaslav-Khmelnitskiy farm. The machinery showed modern farm practices such as seeding crops with reduced tillage. These cropping practices will be compared in terms of productivity and efficiency to cropping

practices using typical farm machinery currently in use on Ukrainian farms in a side-by-side demonstration.

The machinery is also being used as a form of advertising, and has resulted in sales. The demonstrations have shown that Canadian farm machinery is more cost effective, and requires less energy to operate. Saskatchewan technology also increases productivity because the reduced tillage practices conserve moisture and soil, thus making crops seeded less susceptible to drought.

The first phase of the project has been very successful and has produced an increased awareness of what better farm technology and practices can accomplish. There have been some problems, such as getting farm equipment into Ukraine through constantly-changing customs and inspections processes. The resolution of such problems is important if the scale of marketing farm machinery by Canadian manufacturers into Ukraine is to increase significantly. Convincing farm workers to change their farming practices is also a slow process. Other manufacturers have expressed interest in joining the project to demonstrate their equipment, and it is anticipated that the machinery located at the farm will enable it to become a central marketing and sales depot.

The farm technology sector of Saskatchewan's demonstration farm is being managed by Alex Strelieff, a Saskatchewan farmer and businessman whose Canadian and Ukrainian experience has contributed

to the success of this project.

### Livestock Sector

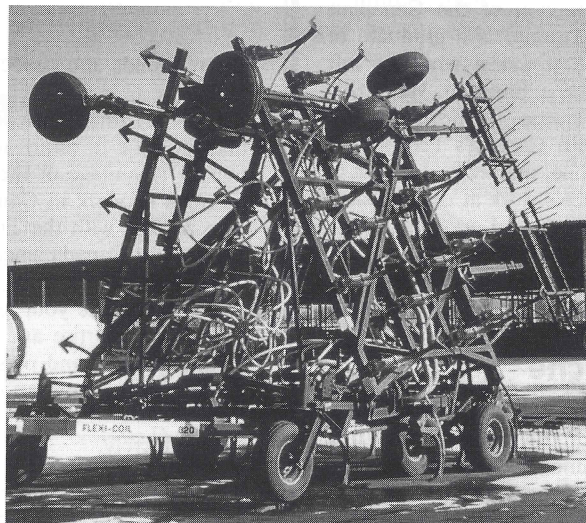
Building on this initial success in the farm technology sector, in October 1996, Saskatchewan's Deputy Premier Dwain Lingenfelter signed an agreement with the Main Selection Centre at the Pereyaslav-Khmelnitskiy state farm to expand the province's involvement in Ukraine's agri-food sector. The second phase of the project involves the introduction of livestock genetics and livestock management to the farm. This will be done once there is permanent forage, because forage crops in Ukraine are not hardy enough to withstand freezing temperatures during winter. The overall objective is to improve livestock management for increased beef production and to extend these practices to other livestock farms in Ukraine.

Because currently Ukraine's livestock herd is predominantly a dual dairy type which does not respond effectively to improvements in livestock management, new beef livestock breeds will be introduced. The overall approach is an integrated one, and management skills, such as animal nutrition are taught simultaneously.

### Conclusion

The successful completion of the first phase of this farm project has shown the value in expanding the farm demonstration project, which should involve other farm machinery manufacturers to complement those already demonstrating their technology. Expansion should also include a wider variety of commodities. The purpose to this point has been to market and demonstrate improved farming practices using modern farm machinery and practices can increase productivity while conserving soil and moisture and cutting operating costs.

This has been a cooperative partnership between government and the private sector, working together for common goals. To-date, no developmental funding has been involved. With the demonstrated success, it is anticipated that funding can be obtained -- thus providing new business opportunities for the agri-food sectors of both Canada and Ukraine.



*Pereyaslav-Khmelnitskiy demonstration farm: Modern air-seeder, one of 20 sold to-date to Ukraine by Saskatchewan's Flexicoil.*