



HARNESSING UKRAINE'S AGRICULTURAL WEALTH

CLIMATE AND LAND RESOURCES

Ukraine's agriculture is subject to a variety of microclimatic regions. The predominant lowland is interrupted by several regions of modest elevation, such as the Donets ridge in the southeast, the Volyn-Podolsk plateau in the west, and the Dnipro ridge. The drainage pattern is quite extensive, with the Dnister, and the northern Donets (a tributary of the Don). The Carpathians and their foothills in the southwest, together with the Crimean mountains along the southern coast of the Crimean peninsula, constitute the only real mountainous sections of Ukraine. The three main regions that characterize Ukraine also correspond to the main physiographical elements that affect the agriculture system. These are the Donets-Dnipro, the southwest, and the south.

In 1992, total agricultural land amounted to 42.4 million hectares, of which about 32 million hectares are arable. Of the arable land, about 640,000 hectares are perennial crops (orchards); 5,5 million hectares are used for meadows and pastures; and 30.1 million hectares are under various crops (about 1.4 million hectares are under fallow). Of the crop land, 14,7 million hectares are under cereals; 3,6 million

hectares under industrial crops; 2,2 million hectares under potato and other vegetables; and the balance of about 9.6 million hectares is under fodder, including corn silage, green fodder, and perennial grass.

AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

The level of agricultural technology in Ukraine generally remains below that of other industrialized nations, a deficiency that coexists with a high level of scientific knowledge; However, the lag between research findings and their application continues to be unusually long. There is an increasing awareness in the government of the need to modernize the farm sector, and to acquire and assimilate the newest technologies, especially in the areas of livestock breeding and grain production. Yet, there is no complete understanding that effective diffusion of newly acquired technology will require basic changes in the structure of the economy and the farm system as well as in the habits and skills of Ukrainian farmers.

Ukraine's 7.7 million farm working grow grains and oil seeds beets, potatoes, vegetables and fruit and tend livestock of all kinds, providing more than 20% of Ukraine's net material product. Agricultural production fell by 16.8% in 1992, while during the first six months of 1993, farm production fell by another 11.9%. Ukraine's farm are experiencing shortages of seeds, pesticides and fertilizers as well as a lack of harvesting and other farm equipment. Finally, most of them still belong to the state: more than 90% of all farms are state-owned and are usually much less productive than the few, tiny private plots.

MECHANIZATION

In 1991, there were about 473,000 tractors in Ukraine compared to 2.6 million in the entire Former Soviet Union. On average, agriculture in Ukraine was more mechanized than in the rest of the FSU. In Ukraine, there were about 65 hectares of arable land per tractor, compared to about 84 hectares in the fsu. In addition, there were about 107,000 combine harvesters, or one combine per 132 hectares of grain crops,



Doing business at the Ukrainian Embassy in Ottawa.

L-r: G. Soltys, Director for Ault Milk's Ukraine Operations, Dennis Goretsky, Head of the Canadian Embassy's Commercial Section in Kyiv, Mykhaylo Tytarenko, First Secretary for Trade & Economy at the Ukrainian Embassy, and Borys Polyachenko, First Secretary for Science and Technology.

compared to about 160 hectares per combine in the FSU. The average ratio in the EC is one tractor per 18 hectares of arable land, and one cereal combine for 71 hectares of grains. A comparison with some former socialist countries shows one tractor per 62 hectares in Romania, and one per 11 hectares in Yugoslavia. Romania uses one combine per 99 hectares of grain. However, the horsepower per tractor in Ukraine is probably higher than in western Europe, which is typically a small-scale private production system; By contrast, large-scale collective farming operations prevails in Ukraine.

While the supply of most machinery and equipment remained relatively stable over the past six years, The number of combine harvesters declined by about 5 percent. The official estimate is that there is no shortage of heavy, general purpose tractors. Officially, there is substantial shortage of medium and small-size cultivating tractors (between 30 and 100 hp), maize harvesting combines, potato harvesting combines, and silage-harvesting combines. There is also a shortage of grain-drying equipment may have detrimental impact on the quality of animal feed and livestock production in general. ■

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