

# Soviet grain imports reviewed

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today reduced its estimate of 1975 grain production in the Soviet Union to 137 million metric tons, but forecast no further surge in 1975-76 Soviet grain imports as a result of the sharp drop from earlier production estimates. USDA analysts said it would be early to mid-1976 before more information would be available concerning the longer term implications of the extremely short Soviet harvest.

A harvest of 137 million tons was indicated in a statement by the Chairman of the Planning and Budget Commission at a recent Supreme Soviet session, providing the first official Soviet indication of the size of the 1975 crop. The last previous estimate by USDA was 160 million tons, issued Oct. 24.

The estimate of 137 million tons is almost 80 million tons below the original Soviet target for 1975 and almost 60 million tons less than the 1974 crop. It will be the smallest Soviet grain crop since the 1965 harvest of 121 million tons. The record is 222.5 million tons in 1973. USDA estimated the composition of the 137 million ton harvest as wheat, 65 million tons; coarse grains, 62 million tons, and miscellaneous grains, 10 million tons. USDA officials said it was unlikely that the new estimate would mean a significant grain import increase from their estimate on Oct. 24 of 27 million tons for the current July-June season and somewhat over 30 million tons for the 15-month July-September period.

In the Oct. 24 estimate, import handling capacity was suggested as a limiting factor, and unloading delays that have arisen since then tend to confirm that imports probably will not go significantly beyond 27 to 30 million tons. Noting that the Soviets have increased their rate of livestock slaughter, particularly of hogs and poultry, to cope with a limited availability of grain, USDA analysts said a grain crop of 137 million tons will require a sharp reduction, perhaps 20 to 25 percent, in the Soviet use of grain for livestock feed for the 1975-76 season. For longer term implications, the analysts will watch the trend in Soviet imports of livestock products and what happens at the 25th Communist Party Congress scheduled for February. While a much sharper reduction in animal feeding is now in prospect for 1976, the production loss could still be offset at least in part by short-term imports of livestock products, which are in relatively plentiful supply on world markets. The period of peak short-fall in domestic meat output in the Soviet Union would be most likely to occur in the spring months of 1976. If the Soviets turn to the world market for livestock products, it will indicate the extent to which Soviet authorities are determined to continue with the policy of meeting growing consumer demand for products such as meat and dairy products. Another important indication will come from the goals for production of livestock products in the plan for 1976 through 1980 scheduled to be presented at the February Party Congress.

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## Milk output rises

HARRISBURG — Milk production in Pennsylvania during November totaled 545 million pounds, up 1 percent from a year ago according to the Crop Reporting Service.



The number of milk cows in the Commonwealth during November was 686,000 head, unchanged from the previous month but 2,000 below a year earlier.

Milk production per cow averaged 795 pounds in November, up 1 percent from a year ago and 2 per-

cent above November 1973.

United States Milk production during November is estimated at 8,832 million pounds, up 1.9 percent from a year earlier.

U.S. milk production per cow averaged 795 pounds, 21 pounds above a year ago and 35 pounds above November, 1973. The estimated number of milk cows at 11,108,000 head is 18,000 below a month earlier and 1 percent below a year ago.

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