

# Prospects good for East European farm trade

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A slight decline this calendar year in U.S. wheat exports to Eastern Europe may be more than offset by larger shipments of corn and soybean meal, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In a report released by the department's Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service, economists said U.S. farm exports to Eastern

Europe will be worth nearly \$1.3 billion, five to 10 per cent above 1978.

This favorable outlook is based on higher export prices and a demand for imported feeds that will remain at least at the 1978 level.

Agricultural growth plans in Eastern Europe this year range from a projected two per cent increase in the German Democratic

Republic to a seven per cent increase in Bulgaria. All country plans emphasize the need to reduce imports and increase exports. Reflecting the region's concern over feed grain imports, the area planted to corn and barley is expected to increase. Plans also call for expanded oilseed output. The larger area set for feed grain and oilseed production will be offset by a reduced area

planted in potatoes and low yielding forage crops.

In the livestock sector, plans generally call for a slower growth rate of livestock numbers and for increased meat production through greater feeding efficiency rather than larger livestock inventories.

Last year, Eastern Europe's gross agricultural production rose slightly, but less than planned. Grain, sunflowerseed, and soybean harvests reached record

levels. Potato output climbed, but sugarbeet and tobacco production declined. The region continued to rebuild its livestock herds, and hog, sheep, and poultry inventories stood at record levels in January, 1979.

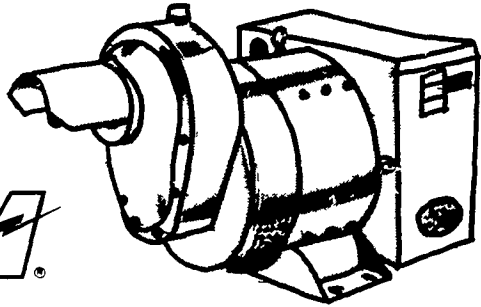
U.S. agricultural exports to Eastern Europe rose from \$900 million in 1977 to \$1.2 billion in 1978. Poland remained the area's leading market for U.S. farm goods, taking more than \$500 million, but the German Democratic Republic,

Romania and Yugoslavia each imported more than \$100 million. Grains, oilseeds and oilseed products were the principal exports, accounting for over four-fifths of total shipments.

Single copies of "Eastern Europe Agricultural Situation, Review of 1978 and Outlook for 1979," are available free from ESCS Publications, Room 0054-S, USDA, Washington, D.C., 20250.

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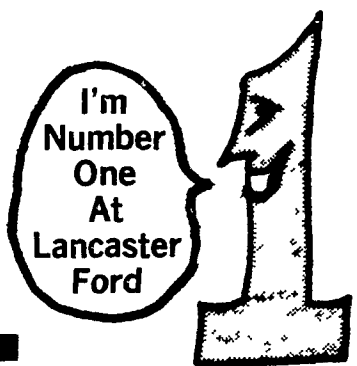
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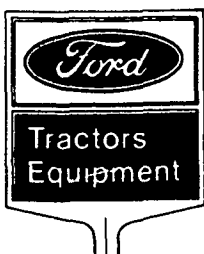
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