

■ IIA A plan of a collective farm

MTS stations

There were 2500 machine and tractor stations (MTS). Established to support collective farms, they maintained and hired out machinery. Typically, peasants had to hand over twenty per cent of their produce for this service. But the MTS stations were also used to control the countryside. Each MTS had a political department. Its job was to root out anti-soviet elements and troublemakers, and establish party cells in local areas. It was also there to ensure that every kolkhoz handed over its quota of grain.

Relationship of the collective farm to the towns

The first priority of the collective farm was to deliver quotas of grain and other food products to the state. The state paid very low prices, then sold the produce to the towns at slightly higher prices. Once the state quota had been met, peasants could sell any surplus at the local market. This came mostly from the peasants' private plots and was the main source of milk, butter, eggs, etc., for the urban population.

How were collective farmers paid?

Workers on the kolkhoz received no wages. They were credited with 'workdays' in exchange for their labour on the collective fields. At the end of the year, the profits of the farm would be divided up according to the workdays each peasant had put in. Since most farms made little profit, most peasants received little in the way of money. This made the private plots on the kolkhoz very important. The peasants could use these to supplement their own diet and sell any extra produce to the towns.

